



Afrindian Fictions

*Diaspora, Race, and National Desire
in South Africa*

Pallavi Rastogi



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Are Indians Africans Too, or

When Does a Subcontinental Become a Citizen?

In January 2003, the Indian government sponsored a convention of expatriates from the Indian diaspora. Sixty-three countries were represented. Participants included heads of state from Mauritius and Fiji, Nobel laureates V. S. Naipaul and Amartya Sen, as well as diasporics of Indian origin from Malaysia, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Caribbean, and South Africa. At the conference, antiapartheid activist and writer Fatima Meer rejected the designate of Indian diaspora, arguing that South Africans of Indian origin had fought for acceptance too long and too hard to so easily abandon the South African as the primary signifier of cultural identity (quoted in Waldman).¹ For Meer, identifying as diasporic Indian would necessarily privilege the Indian aspect of South African identity and consequently erase this community's struggle for recognition in South Africa. Meer identified a problem—that of national longing and belonging—that surfaces with regularity in the global South Asian diaspora but resonates with particular force in the polarized racial climate of South Africa.²

Afrindian Fictions: Diaspora, Race, and National Desire in South Africa argues that Indians desire South African citizenship in the fullest sense of the word, a need for national anchorage that is a consequence of their erasure in both the apartheid and postapartheid consciousness.³ This longing for belonging is asserted through an “Afrindian” identity.⁴

The term suggests both an Africanization of Indian selfhood and an Indianization of South Africa. The former is achieved by an affiliation with the indigenous population and an attachment to the African land, while the latter is demonstrated through tracing the changes wrought in South Africa by the Indian presence. Changing oneself as well as being an agent of change in order to claim a South African national identity is the central dialectic underpinning Indian fiction in South Africa.

Yet my analysis of South African Indian fiction does not merely analyze the themes, preoccupations, and generic shifts in a neglected body of work. *Afrindian Fictions* also challenges some of the normative assumptions of postcolonial/diaspora criticism. Although diasporic literary studies have traditionally celebrated cultural fusion, the field has become increasingly codified in terms of the attention it has given to a particular “contact zone”: migration from the third world (Africa, the Caribbean, South Asia) to the first (the UK, the United States, Canada) is often commemorated as the exemplary type of intercultural mingling.⁵ Postcolonial scholarship, including trends in both South Asian and South African studies, also inclines to be preoccupied with the relationship between the white colonizers and the nonwhite colonized, thus unintentionally reifying the dominance of the West and of whiteness.

Afrindian Fictions unsettles that paradigm of racial interaction and focuses instead on how different *nonwhite* constituencies interact with each other in *non-Western* geographies.⁶ It asks, in other words, what happens when migration occurs over an East-South axis rather than an East-West/North-South one. If postcolonial literature has traditionally challenged the hegemony of colonialist metanarratives, South African Indian writing challenges the tendency in postcolonial criticism to create metanarratives of its own.⁷ In subverting the dominance of the East-West migratory story in diaspora studies as well as the black-white dyad of South African scholarship, South African Indian fiction counters the internal canons formed within postcolonial literature.⁸

Afrindian Fictions helps develop a new framework of racial contact and diasporic exchange based on the movement of Indians to South Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; their impact on the collective psyche of a land torn asunder by the repressive machinery of apartheid; and, in turn, the influence of the South African political landscape on the construction of an identity that occupies another place in the black-and-white map of South African race relations. Through an analysis of fiction from the 1970s onward, I trace the specificity of the Indian presence in South Africa and also construct an interpretive lens with which to view the intersection of diaspora, postcoloniality, Indianness, and apartheid.

My attentiveness to political occasion, particularly to the rapidly changing scenario in South Africa in which Indian fiction is composed, underscores the overtly political nature of South African Indian writing itself.

The aesthetic richness of South African Indian writing is also nourished by developments in postcolonial literature in general and by South African and South Asian diasporic literature in particular. Indian fiction reveals many of the concerns of mainstream South African literary discourse articulated by writers such as J. M. Coetzee, Nadine Gordimer, Alex La Guma, and Zakes Mda among others. These include “certain dynamics of South African society, such as tensions between the generations, class divisions and aspirations, political alliances, clashing accounts of tradition, and so on” (Attwell 180) as well as the themes of oppression under apartheid, racial solidarity, and anxieties about the new nation. South African Indian writing further reflects South Asian diasporic issues expressed by “canonical” writers such as Salman Rushdie, Bharati Mukherjee, and Hanif Kureishi. Transnational identities, generational conflicts, and return to roots are dominant concerns here. Because South African Indian fiction is intimately shaped and conditioned by postcolonial literature, it is an exciting new field within that body of writing; yet its difference from the postcolonial norm enables us to look at two important subfields in postcolonial studies—South African literature and South Asian diasporic literature—through an alternative hermeneutic lens.

My intervention also fills the gap in critical studies on South African Indian fiction in particular and South African Indian literature in general. There is very little literary scholarship available on Indians in South Africa. This may be because there has been a surge in fiction published by South African Indians only in the last two decades following the imminent and actual demise of apartheid. However, it must be remembered that literary publication often has little to do with literary proliferation. South African Indians have been narrating their stories since the time they were transported from India as indentured labor in the middle of the nineteenth century, yet their voices are only being heard now.⁹

The reasons for the paucity of scholarship on Indians in South Africa have much to do with Indians occupying a middle place in a dichotomous racial model that had no room for shades of gray, both in its oppressive and oppositional modes.¹⁰ The Indian presence in South Africa disturbed what Loren Kruger describes as “the binary black/white opposition that has structured *anti*apartheid, as well as apartheid, discourse” (“Black” 115). This rupture has been barely recognized as many, if not most, studies of apartheid and its legacy in postcolonial South Africa still conceive of South African race relations as unfolding across a black-white axis.

Rosemary Jolly similarly argues that “as critics, teachers, and students, we need to forge a language beyond apartheid that refuses to hypostatize South Africa as the model in which the colonized black and the settler white eternally confront each other in the ‘ultimate racism’” (371). The Indian presence complicates the binary of settler and indigene by introducing a third state of national being: that of postcolonial diasporic.¹¹ Yet the antiapartheid movement could not encourage such subtleties for fear of diminishing the effectiveness of a unified onslaught against segregation. The specificity of Indian identity was often erased from the grand narrative of the freedom struggle that sought to incorporate all nonwhite people under a singular “black” identity forged by the commonality of white oppression.

Jolly further warns us that “there are . . . marked differences within the black community of South Africa, which includes the Xhosa, the Sotho, the Zulu, immigrants of Indian heritage, and the Cape ‘coloreds’ of Malay heritage, to name but a few. The differences among these groups are elided, and the hegemony of apartheid maintained, when the groups’ literatures are consigned to the monolithic category ‘Black South African literature’” (372). *Afrindian Fictions* takes up Jolly’s challenge to extend our responses to South African culture beyond the dichotomy of African victim and European oppressor, explode the homogenizing impulses of a unitary black identity, and explore the diversity within “black” literary expression.

One must not be quick to ascribe the sin of omission solely to South African historiography and literary criticism. Students of the phenomenon known as the Great Indian Diaspora are just as likely to erase South African Indians from the diasporic imagination. As Vijay Mishra points out, “the homogenization of all Indian diasporas in terms of the politics of disarticulation/rearticulation with reference to Britain, America or Canada has led to the fetishization of the new diaspora and an amnesiac disavowal of the old . . . what is striking is the relative absence of critical cultural histories of this diaspora” (“Diasporic Imaginary” 427). Similarly, Makarand Paranjape asserts:

While the writings of the old diaspora are utterly marginalized, they find a new currency when they re-enter the world of discourse via the new diaspora. . . . The subordinate culture of the old diaspora can only be recognized if it reinvents itself in the image of the dominant culture of the metropolis. (10)

The issues that we typically associate with diaspora are those pertaining to

Indian diasporas in the West, including unsettling the power of whiteness, challenging the perception of one's alleged cultural and religious backwardness in the economically developed regions where the migrant has relocated, maintaining emotional and financial ties with the home country, and fearing assimilation into "corrupt" Western culture. Only when the old diaspora reveals those issues—usually when migration reoccurs from South to North—do we give this diaspora some critical valence.¹²

Since the South African Indian diaspora also manifests diasporic anxieties that are altered or complicated by apartheid, we often fail to recognize those issues as diasporic, a critical blindness exacerbated by an already narrow definition of migratory exchange in literary scholarship. South African Indians—though displaying what Emmanuel Nelson defines as a "shared diasporic sensibility . . . issues of identity, problems of history, confrontation with racism, intergenerational conflicts, difficulties in building new supportive communities" (xv)—are also actively engaged in the life of the nation, consciously identifying as South Africans first and Indians next despite their relative anonymity in the national spectrum. If South African Indians themselves resist being cast in the role of Indian diasporics, Meer's emphatic declaration quoted in the opening sentences of the introduction being a testimony to this rejection, then it is easier to explain why South Asian diaspora studies have long disregarded a presence that sees Indianness as a secondary allegiance.

South African Indian fiction is only now being recognized as a distinct literary entity. Thus postcolonial scholarship still has enormous holes to fill in its knowledge of this oeuvre. Scholars such as Loren Kruger and Betty Govinden have commented on the erasure of South African Indian literature in South African and South Asian "literary bibliography" (Kruger, "Black" 137, n11; Govinden, "Learning Myself Anew"). A new effort at redressing this absence usually means a *token incorporation* of this body of writing in both fields of critical study.¹³ While books on white South African writers such as Nadine Gordimer and J. M. Coetzee have been published from the 1980s onward, there has been an interest in black South African writing only recently.¹⁴ Despite the proliferation of texts studying South African literature in more inclusive ways, the works of South African Indian writers remain neglected.¹⁵

For example, Christopher Heywood's recently published survey of South African fiction, entitled *A History of South African Literature* (2004), claims that South Africa has five distinct literary groups: "Khoisan, Nguni-Sotho, Afrikaans, English, and Indian." Yet Indian writing is not analyzed in much detail here. As Kruger points out, even Michael Chapman's magisterial examination of South African writing, entitled *Southern African*

Literatures (1996), ignores “the important work of writers whose oblique position vis-à-vis this [black and white] conflict should not exclude them from South African literary history. No South Africans of Indian descent appear in his list of authors” (“Black” 137, n13).

The numerous books, anthologies and journals commemorating the “new” South Africa either erase the Indian presence or incline toward nominal recognition. *Modern Fiction Studies* produced a magisterial special issue entitled “South African Fiction after Apartheid” in 2000; no article on Indian writing appeared here.¹⁶ Derek Attridge and Rosemary Jolly’s *Writing South Africa: Literature, Apartheid and Democracy, 1970–1995* (1998) does not include an essay on Indian writing, even though the collection as a whole reflects at length on the nature, tone, and composition of contemporary South African writing.¹⁷ Nahem Yousaf’s *Apartheid Narratives* (2001), again, has only one essay on Indian “apartheid narratives.” Theodore Sheckels’s *The Lion and the Freeway: A Thematic Analysis of South African Literature* (1996) mentions only one South African Indian writer, Ahmed Essop.¹⁸

The news from South Asian diaspora studies is only a little more heartening. Scholarship, including books and essays, on Western-based writers such as Bharati Mukherjee, Amitav Ghosh, V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, and Hanif Kureishi abounds.¹⁹ Books studying literary production in these diasporas have also been recently published.²⁰ Yet no book-length studies of the South African Indian diaspora—either of individual writers or of the literature in its totality—exist. Additionally, many anthologies and collections on the South Asian diaspora only recognize non-Western diasporas as well as the South African Indian community in cursory, rather than comprehensive, ways.²¹

However, in the last few years, some scholars have begun to craft alternative trajectories of diasporic exchange. Much of this scholarship centers on Indo-Caribbean writers; perhaps the singular success of V. S. Naipaul drew attention to this presence. For example, Brinda Mehta’s *Diasporic (Dis)Locations: Indian Women Negotiate the Kala Pani* (2004) is a groundbreaking book that uses the “discourse of kala pani,” or crossing the “black waters,” to think about the gendered specificity of the Indian experience in the Caribbean. Marina Carter and Khal Torabully’s *Coolitude: An Anthology of the Labour Diaspora* (2002) offers the idea of a “coolie memory” that unites Indians of indentured origin all over the world, but mentions South African Indians only in passing (215). Both texts, however, offer extremely useful techniques for thinking about Indian-black relations in non-Western regions.

Closer to my project geographically is Loren Kruger’s (2001) essay on Achmat Dangor, where she emphasizes the need to craft South-South

models of diaspora through the South African Indian presence.²² While I am deeply indebted to scholars such as Mehta, Carter, Torabully, and Kruger, I push their ideas further in order to construct a model of diasporic encounters based on an East-South paradigm in South Africa. I deliberately use the phrase “East-South” rather than the more common “South-South.” The phrase “South-South” highlights the similarity of economic “underdevelopment” but elides the heterogeneity of different geographies. “East-South” is more attentive to the cultural specificity of and the internal diversity within economically “undeveloped” regions of the world.

I also build on some of the critical essays that reflect on the “older diasporas,” Vijay Mishra’s term for what he calls the diasporas of “classic capitalism” that came into being through the British Empire (421). These include Mishra’s seminal essay “The Diasporic Imaginary” and Makarand Paranjape’s expansion of Mishra’s work. While this scholarship is extremely useful, it has two limitations for my project: Like *Coolitude*, it claims that all indentured immigrants share a common consciousness. The South African Indian population, with its admixture of slaves, laborers, and traders, disrupts the formulation of a homogenous “coolie” selfhood. Mishra and Paranjape also do not really take into account the role of political circumstance in reconceptualizing some of the common anxieties of indentured migrants all over the world.²³

My extensive comparative focus on South African Indian fiction that foregrounds its ever-shifting shape will enable further scrutiny of the textual representation of nonnormative diasporic interactions as they have played out in South Africa and in Indian diasporas in other neglected geographies. It will also engender a literary interest in other peripheral groups in South Africa that fall outside of the dominant black-white pattern, such as the writings of the Cape Malay/Coloured community. Given the importance of South Africa and the South Asian diaspora in postcolonial studies, the excavation of a body of writing that bestows wholeness and complexity on these very important fields as well as introduces the world to an emergent, exciting, and aesthetically dense body of literature becomes a compelling necessity.

Rethorizing the South Asian Diaspora and Race in South Africa

The impact of South African Indian literature on postcolonial studies can be further explained by outlining the broad issues underpinning this fiction. Analyzing these literary themes reveals the dialectic of sameness and difference from South Asian and South African literary discourses

that gives South African Indian fiction its distinctive texture. First and foremost, Indians rupture the polarized arrangement of race on which apartheid was predicated and which postapartheid South Africa has maintained. The Indian presence in South Africa invites us to address the question of what it means to be Indian African in a land divided into an unyielding binary of indigenous African versus settler African.

The South African Indian diaspora is rendered distinctive by the racial tensions engendered by apartheid and preserved even after the end of segregation. Despite its simplistic structure, apartheid created an intricate racial situation: Indians were inserted in a geographic location controlled by a powerful European minority settled in the midst of dispossessed Africans. Indians have had to contend with the forces of whiteness even as they struggled to forge community with the Africans. The triangulated relationship between European settler, African indigene, and Indian diasporic is unique to certain parts of Africa, and involves a reworking of the more common formula for racial interaction in South Africa provided by the authors of the influential *The Empire Writes Back*: that of white settler and black native locked in an unending combat.²⁴

Despite this tripartite configuration of races, the Indian relationship with blacks—in all its energy, joy, frustration, and mutual distrust—dominates South African Indian fiction. While whites are present, especially in apartheid-era fiction, as a structuring and mediating presence, South African Indian fiction is equally—perhaps even more—concerned with describing Indian relationships with black Africans, tracing racial solidarity in the apartheid period, and mourning its rupture in the postapartheid period. Khal Torabully's reflections on "Coolitude" in other labor diaspora societies are apposite here:

Coolitude also seeks to emphasize the community of visions between the slave and the indentured labourer, shared by their descendants, despite the fact that these two groups were placed in a situation of competition and conflict. As such coolitude may be seen as an attempt to bring the past and present of these groups into contact and to go beyond past conflicts and misrepresentations. (quoted in Carter 150)

Despite recognizing the need for harmony between Indians and blacks, "coolitude" serves as a limited model for Indian-African interaction in South Africa as apartheid, and its residue in our postcolonial lives and times, permanently conditions human relationships. Indian-African relationships are also complicated by the fact that in Africa, unlike other parts of the world, blacks are not descendants of slaves—that is, forced

migrant labor—like most Indians, but *indigenes*. Two dispossessed groups grappling with each other's presence in a land that historically belongs to one community but also has the other community forcefully staking ownership of that common space creates a situation distinctive to Indian-black relationships in Africa. Indians claiming ownership of land tilled by their indentured ancestors may mimic the violent appropriation of apartheid and colonialism or it may be a politically subversive move that gives subcontinentals, a group traditionally denied national belonging, claims to composite citizenship. This illegibility of political effect reflects the complicated history that Indians and Africans share.

The Indian presence in South Africa not only disrupts the binary of black indigene and white settler, but also extends migratory interaction beyond the dominant paradigm in South Asian diaspora studies: that of white native and nonwhite immigrant negotiating a shared (Western) space.²⁵ The questions of diaspora, especially those of national identity, minority belonging, cultural selfhood, and multiple allegiances, are refracted through an East-South prism in South Africa as well as complicated by the presence of apartheid. How does the rhetoric of colonialism, with its insistently hierarchical racial schema, determine the relationship between Indians and black Africans? How does the institutionalization of apartheid in 1948 bring Indians and blacks together even as it forces them apart? Is assimilation, engendered by Indians claiming a black identity during apartheid, less problematic than it is in the United States or the UK, where assimilation implies integration into white culture? What happens to solidarity when white oppression, the only force binding two dispossessed groups, ceases to be a factor in race relationships?

Indian fiction thus reflects on the specifically South African problems of diasporic identity such as establishing links with the black population while preserving Indianness, locating oneself within a binary racial formulation, and coming to terms with a legacy of migration based on indenture and slavery as well as trade.²⁶ Indian writers also tend to be extraordinarily aware of political circumstance, a consequence of the machinery of apartheid that invaded the consciousness of all it compassed in totalizing ways. In other words, *there is a direct and determinate relationship between politics and identity in South African Indian writing*. The atrocities of apartheid ensured that Indians always had material with which, and against which, they could create a literary sense of self.

Muthal Naidoo has further observed a dual focus to the articulation of Indian ethnicity in South Africa: "On the one hand, the consolidation and assertion of an Indian identity and culture, and, on the other, the desire to cut across ethnic boundaries and form alliances with other population

groups" (30). Despite their puncturing of racial categories, Indian authors often strategically mobilize an alternative identity, particularly during the apartheid period, in order to be absorbed within a greater community—be it black, Coloured, or in some cases even white—through which they can then seek political franchise. Relatedly, if there is a restrictive articulation of selfhood in this writing, it is usually as South African and not as Indian.²⁷

Indian racial and cultural identity, what one might call "Indianness," is therefore slippery.²⁸ In South Africa, Indianness is altered beyond purity, complicated by the desire to find a political voice only enabled through identification with a larger, non-Indian, community. Yet the contradictory pull of being Indian and the concomitant reluctance to sacrifice Indianness at the altar of a greater communal identity result in a multifarious designation of the Indian self. Consequently, what it means to be South African is also problematized. If Indians can absorb themselves into a black/Coloured/white identity, the lines drawn across communities on the basis of race, religion, and culture become increasingly blurred. The hazy contours of Indian identity in South Africa invite a deconstruction of the rigid apartheid *and* postapartheid categories of black, white, mixed race, and Indian. However, Indian fiction is not just preoccupied with asserting Africanization through racial affiliation. It also actively seeks to Indianize South Africa by interrogating the systemic erasure of Indians in public discourse, inserting Indian cultural practices into national life, and infusing literary conversation with Indian linguistic and cultural codes. Many writers, for example, refuse to italicize certain Indian words, indicating the naturalization of Indian languages in the national psyche.

Indian writing thus asserts a South African identity that never erases the particularity of Indianness even as it claims a *primary* affiliation with South Africa. The theme of longing for belonging is particularly germane in this diaspora as "India" occupies an inaccessible space.²⁹ Paranjape argues that the old diaspora recognized that "physical return was virtually impossible [therefore] an emotional or spiritual renewal was an ongoing necessity" (9). In the case of South African Indian fiction, even though the "Mother Country" is an icon charged with mythic resonances, there is rarely a desire to return even in a "spiritual" sense. India, then, exists as an empty symbol. The proclamation of a South African national identity, as well as the articulation of a permanent bond with an everyday South Africa rather than with an imagined India, dominates the thematic concerns of South African Indian fiction. The critical genealogy of Indian writing traced in this book asserts, above all, the Indian allegiance to South Africa.

Historicizing South African Indian Identity, Politics, and Identity Politics

The Indian commitment to South African life arises from anxieties about national belonging as well as from the community's extended stay in the country. Any literary narrative of Indian identity, therefore, must be contextualized against the history of subcontinental arrival in South Africa, their dispossession under colonialism and apartheid, and the political struggles they face in the democratic present. On November 16, 1860, the SS *Truro* arrived in South Africa, bringing 340 Indian laborers to work in the sugar fields in the British province of Natal. In her summary of the history of Indians in Africa, Arlene Elder explains that the earliest indentured Indians transported to South Africa were largely of the Hindu faith. Many of these laborers elected to remain in South Africa after the period of indenture had lapsed and acquired land, becoming "artisans of various sorts, moneylenders, small shopkeepers and traders" (116).

Loren Kruger adds that in addition to arriving as slaves well before indenture, many Indians chose to migrate to the African continent, where they could set up lucrative trading practices, making a vital distinction, therefore, between "indentured Indians" and "passenger Indians," all of whom would be codified as a single entity under the taxonomy of apartheid (Black 112).³⁰ Elder describes the passenger Indians as "mostly Muslims," who migrated to South Africa to establish what they thought would be profitable business enterprises. This community flourished commercially and spread its population to the Transvaal and Cape Colony (116–17). The white settlers, apprehensive of Indian financial prosperity, consequently promulgated divisive laws disempowering Indians.³¹

The distinction between indentured Indian and passenger Indian also has important repercussions on the so-called collective consciousness of the South African Indian community. South African Indian identities are always configured by multiple determinants such as indenture, migration for commercial purposes, language, religion, gender, and class. As a vastly heterogeneous community, speaking in tongues as varied as Gujarati, Tamil, Hindi, and Urdu, and also belonging to different religious faiths, South African Indians are marked more by difference than by similarity. All this makes it difficult to characterize the lives of Indians with a prescriptive label such as "the South African Indian Experience."

One cannot talk about the history of Indians in South Africa without mentioning *the* most famous South African Indian: Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Gandhi arrived in South Africa in 1893 as a young lawyer. He returned to India after twenty-one years, leaving behind one son and

his family in South Africa. Gandhi has often been criticized for failing to forge links with black Africans.³² Whatever his deficiencies, it is indisputable that Gandhi radicalized the South African Indian community by creating the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) in 1894 and the newspaper the *Indian Opinion* in 1903. Both entities served as forums of protest against the treatment of Indians in South Africa.

Historian Surendra Bhana also credits the NIC, and by extension Gandhi, with gestating *Indianness* as a sensibility:

[T]he Natal Indian Congress (NIC) sought to weld together the diverse cultural and religious immigrants from the Indian subcontinent into a single, coherent, and secular organization. In the process of the NIC's creation, "Indianness" came into being and subsequently became firmly embedded in South Africa's politics. In the early years of the NIC's existence, "Indianness," in its restricted sense, was central to the organization's efforts to win rights for the immigrants. ("Indianness Reconfigured" 100)

In addition to unifying the Indian population through the idea of a shared *Indianness* (that was, as Bhana points out, problematically dominated by a certain class), Gandhi also agitated against indenture and to have Indian marriages recognized by the law.

The impact of Gandhi on South African Indians, particularly in their response to political oppression, should not be underestimated. Later events in India, especially his humiliation of the British Empire through simple acts of defiance, also rendered Gandhi a symbol of hope, of what nonviolent resistance could achieve. The South African Gandhi opened up a space for political awareness among the Indian community, a social consciousness that underpins every text discussed in this book. Christopher Heywood says that "part of the Indian literary heritage in South Africa entails adopting, negotiating, and escaping the *Satyagraha* [Gandhi's strategy of nonviolent resistance] tradition" (231). In the fiction I examine, not only do we encounter the concept of *Satyagraha*, but Gandhi himself appears repeatedly as a mobilizing trope, a motif that distinguishes South African Indian fiction from its global counterparts, as no other Indian diaspora can claim Gandhi the way the South African one can.³³

Elder reports that "according to the 1980 census, there are 795,000 Indians in South Africa, more than on the rest of the African continent" (117). The 2001 census states that Indians in South Africa now number 1.1 million, or 2.5 percent of the entire population ("South Africa

Grows"). An overwhelming majority of South African Indians claim South African nationality by birth and not by legal change of citizenship. Yet, as social anthropologist Rehana Ebr.-Vally notes, until 1961, subcontinentals in South Africa were considered to be Indian "citizens" who were merely living in South Africa. In 1961, tired of India's complaints about the treatment of Indians under apartheid, the National Party conferred citizenship upon South African Indians. Indians now came exclusively under white South African jurisdiction and the Indian government had no *locus standi* to protest the mistreatment of "its" citizens. Not until 101 years after the SS *Truro* brought into Natal the first wave of indentured labor were Indians seen as South Africans under the law (Ebr.-Vally 84).

Indians, and all other nonwhite people, continued to be steadily disenfranchised following the institutionalization of apartheid in 1948. Various legislation marginalizing Indians included the Pegging Act (1943), which barred Indians from owning land in white areas. Although Indians were also subject to the vagaries of the Immorality Act (1950) prohibiting sexual relations between the different races, they were hit hardest by the Group Areas Act (1950), which appropriated Indian property in prime locations and relocated Indians to arid areas.³⁴ Indians may have been dispossessed by the apartheid regime, but a certain group of business-minded Indians managed to acquire vast amounts of wealth during the segregation years.³⁵ These rich traders and merchants exemplified the stereotype of the rapacious Indian that then became the stereotype for Indians in general. The perception of Indians as white stooges was further aggravated by the segregationist government deciding to grant privileges to a chosen few by amending the constitution in 1983 to include "separate and subordinate houses" for the Coloured and Indian populations. As Anne McClintock and Rob Nixon point out, "if the Coloureds and Indians were to be persuaded that they were entitled to white privileges, they could not be lumped together with the disenfranchised blacks under the category 'nonwhites'" (346). However, the Indian community overwhelmingly opposed the government's effort to fracture the will to power of nonwhite insurgency.

In that vein of resistance, many intrepid Indians, such as Fatima and Ismail Meer, Yusuf Dadoo, Monty Naicker, Indres Naidoo, and Ahmed Kathrada, actively participated in the antiapartheid movement.³⁶ Thousands of other anonymous Indians engaged in antigovernment uprisings throughout the apartheid years, including the Soweto demonstrations in the late 1970s.³⁷ Kogila Moodley says "Indians [also participated] in philanthropic activities outside the group, especially on behalf of Africans. These include Indian doctors offering lower cost medical attention to

African patients, businessmen raising bursaries for African university students, building a school in Kwazulu Natal and Indian manufacturers helping to set up factories to be run by Africans" (454). As even this brief recapitulation reveals, Indians have a long history of political activism and fraternity with black Africans.³⁸

Despite active solidarity during the apartheid period, the relationship between Africans and Indians has been historically fraught, especially in the province of KwaZulu Natal, where approximately 80 percent of the Indian population resides. As Ashwin Desai states, "by the end of the 1940s there were numerous potential points of conflict between African and Indian. At the level of the labour markets, Indians and Africans competed for jobs and joined racially exclusive unions to defend their interests. At the level of trade, Indian monopoly in the 1930s was challenged by an increasing number of aspirant African traders" (9). The tension between Indians and Africans was enhanced by the "in-between" position of Indians in the apartheid schema. Smitha Radhakrishnan points out that even though "Indians were denied citizenship rights . . . the hierarchical system of apartheid also offered Indians certain privileges over Africans due to their status as the buffer group. These privileges included a higher standard of education than Africans', relatively better housing and health care, and the earmarking of middle management and clerical jobs" ("Time" 267).³⁹

Mutual hostility between Indians and blacks reached its peak in 1949 with the Cato Manor riots, where "50 Indians and 87 Africans had been killed. Thousands of Indian stores and dwellings were destroyed or damaged" (Desai 12). In another explosion of festering relations between Indians and Africans, Phoenix Ashram, a commune built by Gandhi, was plundered and looted by Africans in 1985. The relationship between Indians and Africans was further vitiated by the elections of 1994, which saw an embarrassing number of Indians vote for the National Party, the political organization that instituted apartheid in 1948. Scholars interpret the 1994 Indian vote as fractured across class and reflecting deep anxieties about economic and political opportunities under a black government (Dhupelia-Mesthrie, Desai and Maharaj). The election of 1999 saw some Indians abandon the National Party and vote for the Democratic Party instead (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 27).

Indians are now actively participating in South African political life as never before. Historian Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie points out:

Under the new government, led by the ANC since 1994, several Indians occupy high-profile positions in cabinet, provincial and local gov-

ernment. President Mandela's cabinet had no fewer than five Indian cabinet members, a couple of Indian deputy ministers, and his personal adviser was an Indian . . . Thabo Mbeki's cabinet of 1999 has four full cabinet ministers who are Indian . . . the Speaker of Parliament is an Indian. The Chief Justice of the country is an Indian. (27)

Even though Indians have made rapid advances in postapartheid South Africa, certain trends, however, suggest that the new nation is not necessarily as multicultural and egalitarian as it imagined itself to be.

According to Dhupelia-Mesthrie, Indian insecurity in democratic South Africa stems from apprehension over "declining welfare grants, an increase in crime rates and a perceived decline in education as resources are shifted within the province [KwaZulu Natal]" (28). Thomas Hansen claims that the postapartheid period saw "a restructuring of the labour and employment laws in order to strengthen and empower the African majority. These measures resulted in massive job losses and the economic marginalization of the Indian community that for years had inhabited a relatively cushioned position in South Africa's economy" ("Melancholia" 297). Affirmative action, in particular, is an area of great contention: "A common refrain of Indians is that 'for years apartheid discriminated against us as we were too black, now we are not black enough to gain from affirmative action'" (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 28).

Race, then, is still a major determinant of government-granted privilege as well as a marker of Self-Sameness and Otherness. As Desai somberly reflects, "the emergence of the 'Rainbow Nation' signaled for many the beginning of new things. However, under the rubric of the rainbow it became apparent that the past was imposing itself on the present. For those who envisaged the loosening of their ethnic clothing they soon found it sticking more closely to their bodies as the political settlement unfolded" (108). Though the end of apartheid heralded a better world that had profound consequences for cultural production, among other things, for South African Indians, in many important ways, the more things changed, the more they remained the same.

South African Indian Identity and Fiction Today

As the brief history narrated above reveals, Indians have been systematically erased in the national consciousness by the apartheid regime that operated primarily on a black versus white register. This binary thinking

that froze people into uncrossable identities continued in the postapartheid period even as the new South Africa claimed to welcome, indeed celebrate, difference. As Radhakrishnan claims, “South African Indians gained citizenship but lost certain material privileges . . . [they are now] caught between the historical power of a white minority and the contemporary power of the African majority” (“Time” 263) and that the “post-apartheid state took care to not alienate white citizens, but according to the majority of South African Indians I interacted with . . . there was no similar explicit effort to include Indians” (268).⁴⁰

The spillage of apartheid ontologies into the postapartheid present is not surprising. In violently hierarchical and racialized societies, where “core universal values of equality, citizenship and justice were denied [to dispossessed groups,] . . . the granting of minimalist citizenship does not mean that these distinctions can now simply be erased” (Ahluwalia 510). Indians, therefore, have a profound unease about their place in South Africa, an apprehension exacerbated by their religious, linguistic, and cultural difference.⁴¹ Correspondingly, *Afrindian Fictions* rests on a simple argument: Indians desire South African citizenship in the most complete meaning of the term. I use citizenry not only in the juridical sense but also as implying national belonging and commitment to the nation-state. National belonging does not extend in one direction; rather, composite citizenry suggests that the citizen owns the nation just as the nation owns its citizens.

Here I echo C. L. R. James’s notion of “participatory” citizenship and “the good life [which is] that community between the individual and the state” (quoted in Mehta 131). According to Kent Worcester, James also:

[A]scribed the exceptional character of social life in ancient Greece to two main factors: mass participation in the institutions of the city-state and the dense emotional and political bonds harmonizing the individual with the wider community. Since . . . citizens . . . had an authentic voice in the polity, they felt an intense attachment to the city-state. (166)⁴²

South African Indian fiction exposes the thick “emotional and political bonds” that Indians share with “the wider community” in order to argue for national belonging. Pal Ahluwalia’s comments on citizenry in an Australian context are also apposite here. Calling for the necessity of creating “a single concept of post-colonial citizenship,” Ahluwalia argues that “this is not a process that can be decreed formally by legislation but is one that is tied integrally to the imagination. It is a process that has to recognise that becoming an Australian is not about conquering but about belonging to a political community of equal and consenting citizens” (504).

If citizenry is a “process,” facilitated by acts of the “imagination” rather than solely by law, literature then assumes a central role in acquiring national selfhood. In wholeheartedly embracing South African citizenry, Indian writers subordinate the transnational cosmopolitanism that has often characterized East-West diasporas by anchoring themselves firmly to the nation-state. *Afrindian Fictions* reinscribes the primacy of the nation in diaspora studies, a field that has increasingly normalized global migrancy and a worldly nationless sensibility as the predominant form of diasporic culture.⁴³ While diasporas can be nationalistic in their aspirations, the diasporic’s patriotic zeal is often directed toward the maintenance of the home country.⁴⁴ The South African Indian presence reveals an intense nationalism that is tied to the host country. Indians in South Africa also demonstrate how transnationalism (roots in multiple locations) and nationalism (the proud proclamation of a national identity in the “host” country) are not two mutually exclusive states of being.

The first half of the book studies Indian fiction during the apartheid period, while the second half studies Indian fiction following the dissolution of apartheid. Emphasizing the symbiotic relationship between genre and theme, I argue that Indian writers tended to use short fiction, including story collections and novellas, to assert national belonging during apartheid.⁴⁵ Material and ideological exigencies determined the provenance of form, as writing short fiction made economic sense because of the limited opportunities to publish under apartheid; the diversity of the short story collection also encapsulated the oppositional impulses of racial solidarity and ethnic specificity that Indians characteristically negotiated during the high point of segregation. The changing social scenario following the official end of apartheid in 1994 made the novel a more attractive form in democratic South Africa.

Less subject to the pressures of political solidarity, Indian writing becomes highly experimental in the postapartheid era, constantly bursting the boundaries of South African fictional convention by using historical, epic, romance, comic, and mystery novels to discuss themes of belonging, citizenry, racial identification, and the preoccupations of the new nation. While these tropes were also present in apartheid-era writing, the shift in political circumstance yields significant changes not only in genre but also in theme and ideology. Indian fiction during the apartheid period unhesitatingly identifies with black Africans in order to challenge the segregationist imperative and to accrue the voice and power of mass movements. The fictional representation of this interracial harmony comes undone following the end of apartheid.⁴⁶

Many Indian writers recognize their culpability in maintaining racial division even as they critique black Africans for an ethnocentrism of their

own. Although such a conceptualization suggests a pessimistic vision of race relations in contemporary South Africa, Indian fiction becomes more subtle—generically, thematically, and ideologically—in the postapartheid period. This variety necessarily engenders a more nuanced vision of race relations than was allowed by the dictates of the antiapartheid imperative that insisted on a common black identity to combat white oppression. Moreover, Indian criticism of the new South Africa emerges from emancipatory citizenship earned in the *old* South Africa. In their systemic oppression as well as in their participation in resistance politics, Indians acquired the right to call themselves South African during apartheid and, therefore, the right to critique the nation-state in the postapartheid period. Holding the postcolonial nation accountable for the failure of its promises, then, makes Indians more South African, not less.

I highlight the theme of national belonging through the idea of an “Afrindian” identity. As the term suggests, Indianness exists in South Africa in an *Africanized* state. In the apartheid period, Indians proclaim their African identity through *race*. In addition to affiliating with black Africans to attain political voice, some Indian writers foreground South Africa’s history of racial cross-fertilization to underscore the biological Africanization of Indian identity. In the transition and postapartheid periods (1990 onward), racial affiliation incorporates a spatial affiliation, particularly asserted through *place*. Many Indian writers highlight their bond with the land, thereby asserting their rootedness and belonging in the African soil. Yet another way of claiming citizenry emerges from appealing to the effects of the extended periodicity of the Indian presence in the African continent, something only East-South diasporas, which emerged from colonial economies, can do. Postapartheid fiction also asserts the Indianness of South Africa by revealing the hybridization of the national consciousness and by infusing the cultural imaginary with Indian themes, allusions, and cultural referents. Fiction composed in the democratic present thus signals to a movement from a tentative articulation of selfhood to a rambunctious celebration of the Indian presence in South Africa. All these literary gestures have the same agenda: to procure full and complete national belonging for Indians.⁴⁷

Chapter 1, “Indians in Short: Collectivity versus Specificity in the Apartheid Story,” studies the proliferation of the short story in apartheid-era Indian fiction. I situate three short story collections—Jayapruga Reddy’s *On the Fringe of Dreamtime* (1987), Agnes Sam’s *Jesus Is Indian* (1989) and Deena Padayachee’s *What’s Love Got to Do with It?* (1992)—against literary developments within black writing in general. The apartheid story is marked by the necessity to challenge the segregationist prescriptive. For

Indians, however, subscribing to the antiapartheid imperative was complicated by the existence of contradictory high anxieties: the neuroses engendered by their erasure from the public imagination and the alienation bred by racial, religious, cultural, and linguistic difference. Indians, therefore, felt the need to assert their South Africanness by proclaiming a shared blackness. However, a unitary black identity also risked effacing the Indianness already made fragile by migration and public invisibility. The variety provided by the short story collection offers an excellent opportunity for conveying these contradictory impulses of collectivity versus specificity.

I continue to study short fiction under apartheid in chapter 2, "Essop's Fables: Strategic Indianness, Political Occasion, and the 'Grand Old Man' of South African Indian Literature." The relationship between political occasion and ethnic identity reflects not only the investment of Indians in South African public life but also the instability of ethnicity during moments of political change. The changing Indianness encountered in Ahmed Essop's work enables us to examine key issues in diaspora studies such as assimilation, citizenry, and national belonging, and how these everyday concerns of migratory communities are altered by the unique context of apartheid. Essop's novella *The Emperor* (1984) cautions Indians against retreating into ethnic enclaves. The *Hajji Musa* collection (1978, 1988) reveals the interplay of different nonwhite cultures in the supposedly "Indian" area of Fordsburg. In *Noorjehan and Other Stories* (1990), published in the year that saw the beginning of the end of apartheid, Indians actively seek to absorb the white oppressor into the "new" multiracial South Africa, thereby earning their own place as participatory citizens rather than as *diasporics*.

A preoccupation with the role of Indians in the new nation also characterizes transition-era (1990–1994) fiction. Chapter 3, "National Longing, Natural Belonging: Flux and Rootedness in Achmat Dangor's *Kafka's Curse*," focuses on South Africa's evolution to a multicultural democracy. *Kafka's Curse* can be read as a short story cycle and as a novel. Its compositional structure encapsulates the shift in South African Indian fiction, particularly the move from realistic short fiction in the apartheid period to longer, more inventive narratives in the postapartheid period. The novel is dominated by the motifs of racial metamorphosis, transgression, and boundary crossing. In its relentless documentation of the possibility of movement, *Kafka's Curse* reveals the untenable natures of taxonomies that depend on strict boundaries and argues that all South Africans are in the state of flux typically associated with migratory populations. Yet the South African version of hybridity that emerges from centuries of covert

racial fertilization is characterized by neurosis and anxiety and is radically different from the intercultural fusion celebrated by diaspora theorists such as Homi Bhabha and Salman Rushdie.⁴⁸

The book then moves to the postapartheid period. Each chapter examines a different shift in Indian fiction in the democratic present, always situating literary turns against larger cultural and political changes. Chapter 4, "The Point of Return: Backward Glances in Farida Karodia's *Other Secrets*," contextualizes Karodia's writing against two important literary movements in postapartheid South Africa: returning to the apartheid past in order to understand the postapartheid present and participating in a new culture of introspection and psychological meditation. A literary sense of return orchestrates Karodia's rewriting of her own fictional narrative, *Daughters of the Twilight* (1986), in order to absorb the changing scenario of the present into her articulation of Afrindian identity in *Other Secrets* (2000). Literary return enables Karodia to thematize issues relevant to Indianness in postapartheid South Africa and also functions as a metaphor for the changes taking place in Indian identity and Indian writing from the apartheid to the postapartheid periods. The historical sense suggests a return to the past in order to plug the holes in national memory. By schematizing the psychic, cultural, and social lives of Indians under apartheid, Karodia's critical vigilance reveals how Indianness has altered itself to a South African context. The literal sense of return celebrates the exile's arrival in South Africa, a coming home that allows her to reconfigure the various facets of her identity enabling the emergence of a diverse Afrindian self.

While Karodia's fiction returns to the apartheid past, the parameters of historical recovery are pushed back even further by the two novels studied in chapter 5. "Lost in Transplantation: Recovering the History of Indian Arrival in South Africa" examines the migratory journey of Indians as indentured labor and as traders through two historical novels: Praba Moodley's *The Heart Knows No Colour* (2003) and Imraan Coovadia's *The Wedding* (2001). A preoccupation with narrating the act of migration has characterized all South Asian diasporas. The South African Indian recuperation of the migratory past demonstrates how the unique circumstances of Indian arrival in South Africa alter our understanding of diasporic paradigms. Descendants of indentured and passenger Indians differently articulate shared concerns such as egalitarian citizenship, memory, hidden histories, relationships to the British Empire, the Indian contribution to South African life, their oppression preceding apartheid, affiliation with black Africans, and the emergence of Afrindian identities. Yet, like other South African historical novels, Moodley's and Coovadia's

writings also have a presentist agenda: to garner these themes to affirm the South Africanness of Indians *and* the Indianness of South Africa in the here and now.

The last two chapters celebrate the literary inventiveness made possible in the postapartheid period. The final chapter, however, takes a very different turn in showcasing yet another important moment in democratic South Africa: the rupture of race relations. Chapter 6, "Citizen Other: The Implosion of Racial Harmony in Postapartheid South Africa," examines the postapartheid fiction of Ahmed Essop through the lens of Afrocentrism. As power changes hands from black to white, those inhabiting in-between states are assailed for being alien and foreign. *The King of Hearts* (1997) reflects on the fraught relationship between Indians and the other races during the postapartheid era, while *The Third Prophecy* (2004) problematizes the accommodation of the Indo-Islamic community within the contours of a secular nation. Like his apartheid-era writing, Essop's postapartheid fiction also comes back to the instability of ethnic identity in the time of rapid political change, even as it foregrounds the theme of unbelonging, alienation, and dispossession to expose the falsity of a nation's sense of self. The failure of postcoloniality reveals a disillusionment with the new nation-state that characterizes not only postapartheid South African writing but also most other postcolonial literatures.

The breakdown of racial solidarity and of postcoloniality itself is also reflected in a brief conclusion based on a study I conducted in Durban, South Africa, in December 2005. "New Directions or Same Old? Afrindian Identity and Fiction Today," reflects on subcontinental identity through a critical analysis of a seminar with the South African Indian literary community. The writers attending this meeting discussed issues consistently raised in this book: rage at an inward-looking Afrocentrism, a sense of unbelonging in the rainbow nation, despair at the insularity of South African Indians, and frustration over disavowal of the Indian past. "Every Indian has a story to tell," claimed a participant, "but no one is interested in listening to us." Since I want this book above all to have *listened* to the unheard stories that Indians have always had to tell,⁴⁹ *Afrindian Fiction* closes with interviews I conducted with important South African Indian authors, letting the writers tell the story of their stories in their own voice.

New Directions or Same Old?

Afrindian Identity and Fiction Today

Afrindian Fictions has focused on narrative acts, arguing that works of the imagination have powerful political implications for the citizenship-seeking agenda that characterizes South African Indian fiction. Yet the “fictionality” of fiction often reminds us of its distance from “reality,” even as fiction not only springs from material and political conditions but also determines our perception of those material and political conditions. In this brief conclusion, based on my visit to South Africa in December 2005, I analyze the difference between “imagined” and “lived” Afrindian identity. During my time in South Africa, I noticed that many of the issues central to this book—the cross-fertilization of races, the hybridity of Indian identity, the intense affiliation with black Africans, a disavowal of mythic India over everyday South Africa—did not seem important to many of the Indians with whom I interacted.¹ Is South African Indian fiction really that removed from the world in which it is produced? Or is fiction aware of the problematic ideologies underpinning the lived experience and merely offering a vision of an alternative *better* universe? Analyzing Louis Althusser, Jeff Lewis states that “art and literature are capable of creating a critical distance by which the subject may at least partially escape the controlling power of the ideological imaginary. . . . [T]he relationship between the imagined and real conditions of life . . . can somehow fracture the substance of the ideology by making us

‘see’ (97). South African Indian fiction is not only an escape from but also a corrective to the “controlling power” of quotidian ideology.

On December 28, 2005, Dr. Deena Padayachee organized a gathering of the South African Indian literary community in his Durban home.² Attendees included playwrights Ashwin Singh and Rajesh Gopie, scholar and community activist Ashwin Desai, literary critic Betty Govinden, first-time novelists and short story writers including Nazia Peer and Faezaa Simjee, poets, cartoonists, biographers, and scholars. In other words, the group represented the spectrum of South African Indian cultural expression. I asked the gathering to comment on the current state of Indianness in South Africa and the issues that animate Indian writing today. What followed was a lively discussion that was suffused with high emotion and the constant interjection of politics into a supposedly “literary” conversation. Initially I was frustrated. This was supposed to be a discussion on literature. What did the “ethnic cleansing” (a term repeatedly used by one of the two white men attending) of Indians and whites from the medical profession have to do with South African Indian literary production? I then realized that the repeated fusion of culture and politics only validated one of the central claims of this book: There is a direct and determinate relationship between political occasion and literary expression in South Africa, *even after* apartheid. Yet, as the conversation progressed, I was engrossed.

After having spoken to South African Indians at length during my stay in Durban and from the discussion at this gathering, I have concluded that Afrindian identity is underpinned by at least two antipodal political ideologies.³ One group believes that Indians are now victims of Afrocentrism following decades of oppression by Eurocentrism. The rhetoric is similar to that used by opponents of affirmative action in the United States: It benefits unqualified Africans at the expense of qualified Asians and whites. I certainly saw the implosion of racial solidarity that Ahmed Essop describes in his later fiction. Some Indians feel strongly that Afrocentrism had shattered the solidarity of the past by collapsing nationality with race. For example, a retired professor attending the seminar said that he went to a meeting for “Africans” in Pretoria. The attendees were all black. When they told him the meeting was for Africans only, he responded, “What do you think I am?” Indians, therefore, resent their elimination from a race-based national identity, one which they had ironically fostered by uniting under the umbrella category “black” during apartheid.

The second group, consisting mostly of academics and activists, is more self-critical, focusing on the racism of Indians and arguing that affirmative action is necessary for black Africans, as they have suffered the

most. In a recent e-mail, Mariam Akabor, author of a collection of stories entitled *Flat 9*, told me that among the most important issues “that Indians face in post-apartheid South Africa is how to deal with racism. The majority of Indians in SA are racist. It is sad but true. Many of the older generation Indian citizens became very used to the way life was during the apartheid days (especially the fact that in the race hierarchy, the Black people were below them) that they find it difficult to experience a total reverse in hierarchy since 1994” (May 23, 2006).

The political ideology of this liberal group of Indians echoes Parvathi Raman’s comments in an essay on progressive Indians in the 1940s: “Their diasporic sense of self was thus also embedded in ideals of modern citizenship, freedom and equality and visions of membership in a democratic South Africa” (230). While identifying as, and even taking pride in being, Indian, the central issue for this community is that of creating an egalitarian nation-state and establishing solidarity across class lines rather than those of race. The new South Africa has seen the rapid rise of a nonwhite middle class, but the vast majority of South Africans, particularly blacks, remain mired in the vicious cycle of poverty. This poverty, the second group of Indians believes, is the issue requiring instant redress. If the apartheid regime was inordinately successful in dividing people across race, the new government has equally successfully split people across class.⁴

The highlights of the seminar were the personal stories I heard that helped me define—as well as redefine—Afrindian identity. For example, one of the writers mentioned that on a family trip to India—accompanied in true subcontinental style by many members of her clan—her parents’ generation insisted on filling out Indian as their nationality on their immigration forms. The younger generation, of course, filled out South African as their nationality. The Indian immigration officer had to tell the older generation that their nationality was South African, not Indian.⁵ Another writer pointed out that when she watches cricket with her father and India plays South Africa, she finds that they are cheering for different teams. Yet another participant came up to me during the break and said, “If you find out what South African Indian identity is, please tell us, for we don’t know what we are.” When I said this confusion (“Are we Indian or South African or both? And if we are both, how do we be both?”) characterizes all Indian diasporas, she shook her head ruefully and said, “But in South Africa, it is worse.” While it is clear that the older generation may still cling to the fantasy of return to a mythologized India, the younger generation, although confused and even disaffected, has anchored itself firmly to the everyday reality of South Africa. The older generation’s

holding on to the idea of a mythic India also complicates what we have seen in this book project where most of the writers analyzed, no matter what their age, are harnessed firmly to South Africa.

Part of this confusion regarding national and cultural affiliation emerges from the opening up of India as a source of diasporic retrieval following the end of apartheid. India is present everywhere in South African Indian life.⁶ I noted this particularly in Durban, where a “Bollywoodized” Indian identity proliferates.⁷ I saw young Indian women wearing the latest *kurtis*, listening to Indian music, and watching Hindi movies that I—Indian born and bred and a voracious Bollywood fan—had not even heard of, let alone seen. South African Indians have been cut off from India for so long that when India became available to them, as it always had been for Indian diasporas in the West, the intensity of that cultural retrieval was extraordinarily fierce.⁸

Thomas Hansen, for example, describes the vast number of subcontinentals who returned to India following the end of apartheid. As Hansen points out, many of them had an adverse reaction to India. They didn’t expect it to be quite so dirty, backward, and third world—quite so “not-India,” in other words:

For the Pillays, as for so many others of their kind, their brush with India was an encounter with something disturbingly unknown, a place that made them feel very alien, very *South African* and very modern. It made them realise just how different they were, how “white” they were in their “work culture” and their habits, and how “inauthentic” their Indian-ness was. . . . Mrs. Pillay experienced India within a truly ‘orientalist’ framework: as authentic, a place imbued with a certain inner beauty and harmony, and a place that exuded history and timelessness. (“Diasporic Dispositions”; emphasis added)⁹

As we have observed in this book, South African Indians often approach Africa and Africans through the interpretive lens of Western colonialism. Here, Otherness is transposed onto what has always been historically apotheosized as the Self-Same: the “motherland” itself. The Pillays also collapse India into the stock stereotypes provided by Orientalist rhetoric: extreme poverty, timelessness, and spirituality.

The Pillays’ response to India also underlines the permanent failure of return. Many South African Indians visited India thinking it would be a triumphant coming home. Instead, return, as it often does, firmly established India’s essential difference and their South Africanness. In that vein, one man at our literary gathering even told me that he didn’t

think the “curries” he ate in India were as “authentic” as the South African ones. No matter how much South Africans may mythologize India, return always ruptures the fantasy of an idealized homeland as well as the very possibility of return itself. Ironically, this split from the Mother Country validates the South Africanness of Indians as their perception of the subcontinent is always inflected by South African history, culture, and politics.

Even though physical return exposes the hollowness of the myth of Mother India, many South African Indians—most of whom presumably have never been to India—adhere to a conservative, and therefore supposedly unsullied, Indianness in their daily lives. As a participant pointed out in the seminar, ties to India have led to a retreat inward and to the creation of a community that cherishes a fantasy of India that would be unreal to many Indian Indians. The progressive politics engendered by apartheid have been supplanted by a fealty to a very conservative *filmi* aspect of Indian culture in South Africa.¹⁰ From what I saw in Durban, many Indians are attempting to create a pure version of “Indian” identity, even though South African Indians can only reconstruct a South Africanized form of the Indian cultural past. The belatedness of this mythologizing of India, coming centuries after the original schism of migration, is an irony made possible by the isolation of South Africa during the apartheid years.

When the conversation eventually returned to literature, the most pressing question raised was: “What do we write about?” Many participants felt that the South African Indian experience was a local one and therefore did not resonate with the world outside. This explained the invisibility of South African Indian literature to those present at the gathering. I pointed out that the South African Indian experience is not necessarily local, but rather we allow Eurocentric aesthetics to determine our conceptions of local and global. We then had a lively discussion on whether Indians should write about their specificity of their own lives or “universalize” their voices. The published writers at the gathering said that ethically one has to be true to one’s own voice, and the only way to do so was to write about issues animating one’s life: In other words, the South African Indian experience should compass one’s writing. Yet many writers also bristled at a narrow, race-based approach to literature, arguing that their work should be expansively South African rather than insularly Indian. Part of the problem in making that distinction, however, is to presume that to be Indian is somehow *not* to be South African, a negotiation of national collectivity and ethnic specificity that fiction has also struggled to maintain.

Most participants further believed that their writing performed an important communal and archival function by recording stories that are often forgotten or dismissed as unimportant. In its commitment to remember, literature corrects a collective amnesia on the part of the Indian community, a disavowal engendered by the pursuit of material wealth that marginalized stories of the community's struggle and rich history. It was with great sadness that I noted the disrepair into which the Durban Cultural and Documentation Centre had fallen. The centre was established to function both as an archive and a museum. It contains rare artifacts from the indentured past as well as a wealth of archival material. Unfortunately, the centre was almost unusable. I had to plead with the staff to be allowed in, even though the centre was open to visitors. It was thanks to the kindness of one of the curators that I was able to enter the archives. Once inside, the scenes were shocking. Nothing was catalogued. Reams and reams of valuable documentation were lying around unused. Precious old artifacts were gathering dust. The curator said that there is no interest among the Indian community or the administration to preserve the Indian past. This is ironic, given that the provincial minister of education was an Indian, but also perhaps reflecting a fear that to be openly proud of being Indian is to be susceptible to accusations of apartheid-era racial insularity. Indians in South Africa thus seem to be caught between their own apathy, the indifference of a government for whom they are just not important enough, and an anxiety among progressives that ethnic pride is dangerous in the racially charged climate of postapartheid South Africa.¹¹

Another instance of a communal forgetting of the Indian past emerged during my visit to Phoenix, Gandhi's ashram in Durban. The ashram was uncurated and abandoned. The doors were open, and we were able to simply walk in to look at unguarded precious Gandhi memorabilia. Nor was this symptomatic only of Durban. When I visited Ahmed Essop in Johannesburg and found out that Gandhi's Tolstoy Farm was close to Lenasia, where Essop lives, I wanted to visit. Essop said that it had fallen into a state of absolute disrepair and that it was not safe to go there any more. "You'll probably be assaulted on your way there," he said grimly. I could not help but reflect on the irony that the road to the commune of the high priest of nonviolence was paved with the threat of violence. Parvathi Raman says that in the course of her "fieldwork in South Africa, many people seemed anxious to claim an association with Gandhi, however tenuous" (243, n12). That so many South African Indians take pride in Gandhi makes the neglect of the ashram and farm even more regrettable.

Paradoxically, ethnic pride proliferates among Indians, regularly mani-

festing itself through an exclusionary existence, racism toward black Africans, the mythologizing of the rags-to-riches history of Indians, and the “Bollywoodization” of Indian identity. Indianness in South Africa is polymorphous, full of gaps, fissures, and holes. My visit to South Africa, and my experience at the literary seminar conducted there, proved to me that there is no one, unified Indian voice and that disparate discourses influence Indian identity. It also reveals the structural determinacy of the apartheid past—political oppression, racial hermeneutics, national identity, and longing for belonging—that still prevails in the postapartheid period.

What, then, accounts for the distance between the literature analyzed in this book and the “reality” narrated above? If literature doesn’t merely reflect reality but also creates and conditions our perceptions of reality, then the gap between South African Indian literary composition and “reality” can be explained as not a disconnect of literature from reality as much as a *corrective*. Indian fiction projects an alternative universe that rectifies the community’s problematic ideologies. So, for example, fiction corrects the communal inability to archive the Indian past by proffering an alternative repository. Writers such as Farida Karodia, Imraan Coovadia, and Praba Moodley resurrect and memorialize the Indian past by returning to an erased history.¹² If many South African Indians cling to a mythologized India, fiction challenges this regressive impulse by anchoring itself to the everyday reality of South Africa. South African Indians have also been accused of racial and cultural insularity. Again, fiction showcases the centuries of racial intermingling undertaken by Indians.

The writers discussed in this book perform the function of “correction” and give us a progressive, albeit complex, version of Afrindian identity. Apartheid-era fiction articulates an intense solidarity with black South Africans and seeks citizenry through race. Even though Afrindian identity is never negated, it is usually *subsumed* by more pressing compulsions. The instability of subcontinental selfhood challenges the purist conception of South African Indian identity seen during my visit to Durban. That this fictional identity has a direct correspondence with South African political circumstances reveals that Indianness is not only influenced but also determined by the everyday reality of South African life. While all other postapartheid Indian writing is associated with a somewhat celebratory tone, it is only Ahmed Essop’s later writing that comes close to the rhetoric of disaffection I encountered during my time in South Africa. *Afrindian Fictions* has argued that Indians proudly and defiantly assert their place in South Africa; closing with Ahmed Essop’s latest fiction may expose the ultimate failure of that citizenship-seeking agenda.

Introduction

1. Meer's exact words were: "[W]e Indian South Africans have had to struggle hard to claim our South Africanness, and that is something we jealously guard. . . . We are not a diaspora of India" (quoted in Waldman).

2. Even though Indians in South Africa are also referred to as Indian South Africans, I refer to them as South African Indians in order to preserve the integrity of an identity that sees South Africa as a primary affiliation. Also see n27. I use the term "Indian" rather than "South Asian" to respect the self-identification of the Indian community in South Africa. I have never observed South African Indians—both in fiction and in "real life"—identifying themselves as South Asian.

Part of the title of this chapter—"When Does a Subcontinental Become a Citizen?"—is adapted from the title of Mahmood Mamdani's essay: "When Does a Settler Become a Native? The Colonial Roots of Citizenship."

3. In her reading of Ahmed Essop, Arlene Elder argues that "native-born Indians, both in East and South Africa, are shown to have been treated as full citizens, neither during nor after colonialism" (138). Similarly, Sangeeta Ray uses the South African Indian context to discuss the "deterritorialization of borders that seek to withhold access to 'citizenship' for some of its members on the basis of the lack of certain credentials" (3). Also see Agnes Sam's introduction to *Jesus Is Indian*: "Indians may have been excluded from South Africa's history because of the temporary status intended for them. They may even have considered themselves temporarily resident in South Africa (9). This erasure from the national consciousness is precisely what drives the desire for citizenry in South African Indian fiction. As Parvathi

Raman points out in context of “the struggles over urban space,” Indians have historically contested their lack of citizen rights (230), a struggle we can also locate in Indian fiction. I must also emphasize that my reference point is always fiction and not the so-called reality of South African Indian life, however much fiction and reality may influence each other.

4. Recently, I searched for the word “Afrindian” on Google. I found that it had been used in an unpublished PhD political science dissertation by Kumi Naidoo entitled “Class, Consciousness and Organisation: Indian Political Resistance in Durban, South Africa, 1979–1996” (Oxford: Magdalen College, 1997; available online at <http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/library-resources/thesis/kumi-naidoo/kumi-naidoo-index.htm>, retrieved on July 14, 2007). Naidoo’s use of the term seems similar to mine. She focuses on “the need for a development of an Afrindian identity, which encourages Indians to indigenise themselves to Africa without necessitating a need to negate their historical heritage.” However, her work focuses on “political resistance” rather than on literature.

5. The term “contact zone” is Mary Louise Pratt’s designation for intercultural exchange. See *Imperial Eyes* (6–7).

6. For an excellent analysis of Asian-black relationships, see Vijay Prashad’s *Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity*.

7. For example, Crane and Mohanram assert that the “canon . . . is continually questioned and opened up afresh by the postcolonial novel” (xiv).

8. In that vein, Loren Kruger argues for the “literary exploration of fictions that deconstruct or transform the ‘major’ or master narratives and the accompanying physical and political forces that have shaped South African lives to the present” (“Minor” 70). See also Barnard (8).

9. South African Indian self-expression can be traced back to newspapers such as the *Indian Opinion*, established in 1903 by Gandhi, and *Colonial News*, a competitor to *Indian Opinion* that was published from 1901 until 1904. These were followed by publications such as the Natal-based *Leader*, the *Graphic*, and *Indian Views* (Y. G. Reddy in Arkin et al., 196–97). In terms of cultural production, I base my assertion on the assumption that Indian indentured laborers sustained themselves on a rich body of myth and legend that they carried with them from the homeland in addition to testimonies of indentured labor found in texts such as *Documents of Indentured Labour* by Y. S. Meer, Marina Carter and Khal Torabully’s *Coolitude*, and Surendra Bhana and Joy Brain’s *Setting Down Roots: Indian Migrants in South Africa, 1860–1911*.

10. I am certainly not claiming that only Indians occupy this middle place between black and white. Groups such as the “Coloureds” and the “Cape Malays” also disturb the black-white paradigm of race relations. Each of these neglected communities deserves its own academic space. My project here is to study Indian literary production in South Africa and the impact that body of writing has on postcolonial studies. For a study of Coloured literature, see Grant Farred’s *Midfielder’s Moment*. Farred also focuses on how the Coloured community blurs racial binaries as well as on its contested relationship with blacks and whites. I should also point out that though I use the terms Coloureds, blacks, and whites throughout this book, I am

aware of their problematic connotations as well as their continued deployment by South Africans themselves.

11. The middle space occupied by Indians in the non-Western world has also been described by writers such as V. S. Naipaul and M. G. Vassanji. Ralph Singh in Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* (1967) claims that Indians in the fictional Caribbean island of Isabella (Trinidad) are "the late intruder, the picturesque Asiatic, linked to neither" ["slave-owner" or slave] (93). Vikram Lall, the narrator in Vassanji's appropriately titled *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* (2003), is an Indian keenly aware of being caught between the black indigenes and the white settlers of Kenya.

12. V. S. Naipaul (Trinidad, England), Samuel Selvon (Trinidad, England), and M. G. Vassanji (Kenya, Tanzania, Canada) are examples of this phenomenon.

13. What follows is a summary of literary scholarship on South African Indians. Work has been done from ethnographic (Hansen, Radhakrishnan), historical (Dhupelia-Mesthrie, Ginwala, and Ebr.-Vally) and political (Desai, Ebr.-Vally) stances. Work has also been done on South African Indian theater (Hansen, Naidoo). However, there is a paucity of scholarship on *fiction/literature*.

14. For books on Gordimer, some representative examples include Judie Newman's *Nadine Gordimer* (New York: Routledge, 1988), Stephen Clingman's *The Novels of Nadine Gordimer* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986, 1992), and Dominic Head's *Nadine Gordimer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). Representative examples of books on Coetzee include David Attwell's *J. M. Coetzee: South Africa and the Politics of Writing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), Sue Kossew's *Pen and Power: A Post-colonial Reading of J. M. Coetzee and André Brink* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), and Jane Poyner's edited collection *J. M. Coetzee and the Idea of the Public Intellectual* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006). Rosemary Jolly's *Colonization, Violence and Narration in White South African Writing: André Brink, Breyten Breytenbach, and J. M. Coetzee* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1996) studies the work of Coetzee along with two other white writers.

15. In addition to the scholarship cited in the body of this chapter, some examples of books on black South African writers include *A Vision of Order: A Study of Black South African Literature in English, 1914–1980*, by Ursula A. Barnett (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1983); *Still Beating the Drum: Critical Perspectives on Lewis Nkosi*, edited by Lindy Stiebel and Liz Gunner (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005); and *Rewriting Modernity: Studies in Black South African Literary History*, by David Attwell (Scottsville, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2005).

16. See *MFS [Modern Fiction Studies]* 46.1 (Spring 2000). The postcolonial journal *Kunapipi* published a special issue on South African writing that included an interview with Achmat Dangor and an article by Meg Samuelson on rape in the South African imagination, which mentions Farida Karodia's *Other Secrets*. See *Kunapipi* 24, no. 1 & 2 (2002).

17. South African Indian writers such as Farouk Asvat, Shabbir Banoobhai, Achmat Dangor, Ahmed Essop, Reshard Gool, Farida Karodia, Indres Naidoo, Deena Padayachee, Essop Patel, Shobna Poona, and Jayapraga Reddy are listed in the bibliography of South African literature provided at the end of this text.

18. I am summarizing published work only. Two unpublished dissertations have been written on South African Indian literature: Madhavi Jaiswal's "Writing the 'Ordinary': Indian South African Writing as Womanist Prose" (Ahmed Essop, Jayapraga Reddy, Farida Karodia) (MA thesis, University of Alberta, 1991) and Ronit Fainman-Frenkel's "'On the Fringe of Dreamtime': South African Indian Literature, Race and the Boundaries of Scholarship" (PhD diss., University of Arizona, 2004). While Fainman-Frenkel also analyzes writers such as Dangor, Sam, Reddy, Karodia, and Coovadia, and uses the Indian presence to think beyond racial binaries, my focus is much more on diaspora and citizenship. Additionally, *Afrindian Fictions* also attempts to chart the themes and generic shifts in South African Indian literature, providing the reader with a broad overview of this body of work.

19. The books on Rushdie are too numerous to cite. Prominent and recent examples include Timothy Brennan's *Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of the Nation* (London: Macmillan, 1989), Catherine Cundy's *Salman Rushdie: Contemporary World Writers* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), and Sabrina Hassumani's *Salman Rushdie: A Postmodern Reading of His Major Works* (Cranbury, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson Press, 2002). The critical work on V. S. Naipaul is perhaps equally extensive. Some examples include Rob Nixon's *London Calling: V. S. Naipaul, Postcolonial Mandarin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), Fawzia Mustafa's *V. S. Naipaul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), and Helen Hayward's *The Enigma of V. S. Naipaul: Sources and Contexts* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). For books on Bharati Mukherjee, see *Ways of Belonging: The Making of New Americans in the Fiction of Bharati Mukherjee* by Andrea Dlaska (Vienna: Braumuller, 1999) and *Bharati Mukherjee* by Fakrul Alam (New York: Twayne, 1996). John Hawley recently published *Amitav Ghosh: An Introduction* (New Delhi: Foundation Books, 2005). For books on Kureishi, see Kenneth C. Kaleta's *Hanif Kureishi: Postcolonial Storyteller* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), Bart Moore-Gilbert's *Hanif Kureishi* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), and Susie Thomas's *Hanif Kureishi* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). A search in July 2007 for Salman Rushdie in the MLA bibliography yielded 833 results, while a search for V. S. Naipaul yielded 573 results.

20. For example, see Susheila Nasta's *Home Truths: Fictions of the South Asian Diaspora in Britain* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2002), Sukhdev Sandhu's *London Calling: How Black and Asian Writers Imagined a City* (London: HarperCollins, 2003), Rajini Srikanth's *The World Next Door: South Asian American Literature and the Idea of America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), Yasmin Hussain's *Writing Diaspora: South Asian Women, Culture, and Ethnicity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), Jigna Desai's *Beyond Bollywood: The Cultural Politics of South Asian Diasporic Film* (New York/London: Routledge, 2004), and Ruvani Ranasinha's *South Asian Writers in Twentieth-Century Britain: Culture in Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

21. Emmanuel S. Nelson's *Reworlding* and Ralph Crane and Radhika Mohanram's *Shifting Continents, Colliding Cultures* are examples of this tendency. Some very recent scholarship has examined the Indian diaspora in non-Western areas in comprehensive ways. See, for example, Shanthini Pillai's *Colonial Visions, Postcolonial Revisions: Images of the Indian Diaspora in Malaysia* (Newcastle: Cambridge

Scholars Publishing, 2007), and Vijay Mishra's *Literature of the Indian Diaspora: Theorizing the Diasporic Imaginary* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007). Mishra only briefly touches upon Indians in South Africa. Due to the recentness of these books, I have not been able to incorporate them in *Afrindian Fictions*. Also see François Lionnet's essay, entitled "Transcolonial Translations: Shakespeare in Mauritius," *Minor Transnationalism*, ed. Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 201-221, and Sudesh Mishra's "From Sugar to Masala: Writing the Indian Diaspora," in *A History of Indian Literature in English*, ed. Arvind Krishna Mehrotra (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003) 276-294.

22. Also see Michael Chapman's thoughts on "South/South, South/North conversations" in his essay by that title (15) and Loren Kruger's *Post-Imperial Brecht*.

23. Much of the scholarship discussed above is necessarily circumscribed by the geographic or thematic range it sets for itself. In terms of literary study on South African Indians, I have found only a few essays that explore the cultural consequences of migration from the Indian subcontinent to South Africa. Some of these include Smith (1985); Munson, Page, and Johns (1987); Freed (1988); Van Niekerk (1992); Elder (1992); Ray (1994); Flockemann (1992, 1998); Hope and English (1998); Kruger (2001, 2003); Reddy (2001); Fainman-Frenkel (2004, 2008); Govinden (1995, 2000, 2004). These are mostly author-based studies—other than Reddy, who focuses on apartheid-era writing—and none undertakes a comprehensive analysis of South African Indian fiction as I do here. Rajendra Chetty's *South African Indian Writings in English* (2002) is a groundbreaking book, but it consists of anthologized extracts from South African Indian writing, even though it contains useful interviews with most of the South African Indian writers I study in this project.

24. See *Empire Writes Back* for more details; also see Jolly for a critique of this formulation.

25. This is not to claim that nonwhites do not interact with each other in complex ways in Western geographies. However, the interaction with whiteness often dominates race relations because whites are not only the most powerful group but also the most numerous. Moreover, this model of racial interaction (white/nonwhite) is very much the central paradigm in diaspora scholarship.

26. Thomas Hansen suggests that some of the additional concerns animating the South African Indian community are "imaginings of the motherland, the erosion of proper cultural practices, inter-generational conflicts, crime, worries about the westernization of youth and the corruption of sexual mores, internecine struggles between Tamils and Hindi speakers, and so on. Today, these debates revolve around how, and whether, a cultural 'we' can be maintained after the external imposition of a racial identity has disappeared" ("Melancholia" 302).

27. A poll conducted by Ebr.-Vally corroborates this assertion. Ebr.-Vally interviewed seventy South Africans of Indian origin for her research. One of the questions she asked was: "Which of the following would you use to describe yourself?" followed by a list of descriptive labels such as "Indian South African," "South African," "South African Indian," "South African of Indian origin," etc. Thirty-four percent of the interviewees identified themselves as "South African," 20 percent as "South African Indian," and 13 percent as "South African of Indian origin." Only 3 percent identified as Indian South African (176).

28. I am indebted to Surendra Bhana's work for the idea of a fluid Indianness in South Africa. For more on how Indianness adapted to changing social conditions in South Africa, see Bhana, "Indianness Reconfigured."

29. The "return to roots" narrative is an important diasporic urge. In his controversial essay detailing the "ideal type" of diaspora, William Safran argues that one of the important characteristics of diaspora is that diasporics "regard their ancestral homeland as their true ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendents would (or should) eventually return" (83–84). Examples of return, both permanent and temporary, include the "back to Africa" movement in African American history or the trips to Israel by many Jews. Literary exemplifications of this phenomenon include Richard Wright's *Black Power* (1954) and Pauline Hopkins's *Of One Blood* (1902–1903). In a South Asian context, some examples of return that come to mind include V. S. Naipaul's travelogues on India, Leila Dhingra's *Amritvela* (1988), Indi Rana's *Roller Birds of Rampur* (1993), and Jhumpa Lahiri's short story "The Interpreter of Maladies" (1999) in the collection by the same name.

30. Kruger's perceptive essay explains that the first Indians arrived in South Africa in the seventeenth century as slaves and that their Indianness was erased by centuries of intermingling as well as by the apartheid taxonomy that classified them as Coloured. Even though this is historically verifiable information (see Suleiman Dangor, "The Myth of the 1860 Settlers," for example), 1860 is generally considered to be the originary moment of Indian migration to South Africa. I discuss the expansion of the category of Indianness by highlighting the buried Indianness of many "Malays" in my chapter on Achmat Dangor, who is himself Cape Malay as well as has Indian ancestry, like many other Cape Malays.

31. Elder describes the various legislation enacted to disenfranchise the Indian community:

[T]he Indian Immigration Act of 1895 in Natal and even harsher regulations in Transvaal. Gregory reports that Indians were not attracted to the Orange Free State because of the extreme discrimination that had existed there all along against all non-Europeans: "The constitution of 1854 expressly conferred the benefits of citizenship only on 'white persons' and Indians were subsequently regarded as 'coloured.'" (128)" (117)

32. According to Bhana, "Given the NIC's emphasis on 'Indianness,' Africans did not fit the strategy. . . . The Indians considered themselves part of an advanced civilization deserving of equality. The NIC's best strategy, therefore, was to stress separation from other Blacks" ("Indianness Reconfigured" 101). For Gandhi's stay in South Africa and his vexed relationships with nonwhites and non-Indians, see the chapter entitled "Confronting Difference and Exclusion: Gandhi's Struggle for Recognition in South Africa," in Manfred Steger's *Gandhi's Dilemma* and Thiara (139–40).

33. Even though Gandhi spent some formative years in England, he isn't often appropriated by the South Asian–British diaspora. This could be because his stay in South Africa (twenty-one years) was much longer than his stay in England (three years). Additionally, even though England might have germinated Gandhi's political

consciousness, it was in South Africa that this activism really took root. This appropriation of Gandhi, of course, can often lead to an uncritical idealization of the South African Gandhi. See also Ebr.-Vally (95–96).

34. South African Indian fiction often speaks of the pain of relocation forced by the Group Areas Act. See also Chetty, *South African Indian Writings* (11).

35. For more on how Indians acquired wealth and social standing in the 1980s, see Hansen, “Plays” (261) and “Diasporic Dispositions.”

36. Kathrada was imprisoned with Nelson Mandela following the notorious Rivonia Trial in the early 1960s. Dadoo, as Muthal Naidoo points out, was the “leader of the South African Indian Congress during its most militant period of the Defiance Campaign in the 1950s, and Fatima Meer, also involved in the Defiance Campaign, [was] a founding member of the Federation of South African Women and author of a biography of Nelson Mandela” (29, n1).

37. For more information on the role of Indians during the apartheid period, see Ramamurthi’s *Apartheid and Indian South Africans*. For more historical detail, see Ginwala, Dhupelia-Mesthrie, Ebr.-Vally, and Desai.

38. Anne-Marie Van Niekerk, for example, states that “in their opposition to these [apartheid] laws Indians have joined hands with the black majority . . . in . . . fighting for democratic change” (36).

39. Similarly, Muthal Naidoo claims that “the relative affluence of some of their members and their social position caught between the haves (mostly whites) and the have-nots (mostly black) made them targets of African resentment” (29). Robin Cohen describes the position of Indians under apartheid as a “V, not of their own making. Turn right, towards the white regime, and they were rejecting their fellow victims of apartheid; turn left, in the direction of black solidarity, and they became frightened of losing what status, rights and property they had acquired. Perhaps, not surprisingly, many remained uneasily where they were, like rabbits, trapped before the headlights of an oncoming car” (66).

40. Radhakrishnan further argues that “even the all-encompassing identification of South African, which is to unify all racial groups under a banner of national unity, presumes a singular Black/white division” (“Time” 273).

41. See Hansen: “[T]he future of Indians in South Africa is too insecure . . . and ridden with anxieties and animosities” (“Melancholia” 314).

42. James extends the idea of the “mass participation” in civic life to modern-day West Indies; I apply his formulations to contemporary South Africa.

43. Diana Brydon argues that

[d]espite their significant differences and the complexity of their individual work, Bhabha, Spivak, and Said have come to be associated with a brand of postcolonialism that valorizes exilic, cosmopolitan, and diasporic perspectives. . . . Homi Bhabha’s focus on the “transnational and translational sense of the hybridity of imagined communities” seems typical (5) . . . what readers have taken from his work tends to be his interest in cultural difference, migrant sensibilities, performances of identity, and the “unhomely” as “a paradigmatic colonial and post-colonial condition” (9).

Gayatri Spivak describes *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* as a book that “forages in the crease between global postcoloniality and postcolonial migrancy” (373). With Edward Said, Bhabha and Spivak agree in assigning a privileged role to the intellectual’s position as exile. Paul Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* also helped to redirect analysis from nation-based study towards the consideration of multiple diasporic formations, travelling cultures and travelling theories, in the 1990s. Gilroy’s theorization of ‘the Black Atlantic as a counterculture of modernity’ based on diaspora resonates with a general shift within the postcolonial field towards privileging mobility and deterritorialization. (699–700)

Also see Padmini Mongia’s critique of hybridity in her introduction to *Contemporary Post-colonial Theory* as well as Kruger’s model of “the syncretic” as opposed to the hybrid (“Minor” 70).

44. This is particularly true of the Indian migrants in the United States who regularly send money “home” and are members of radical organizations such as the VHP, RSS, etc. See, for example, Sangita Gopal’s essay entitled “Hindu Buying/Hindu Being: Hindutva Online and the Commodity Logic of Cultural Nationalism” and Amit Rai’s essay entitled “India Online: Electronic Bulletin Boards and the Construction of a Diasporic Hindu Identity.”

45. I am in no way implying that Indians only used the short story during apartheid and novel in the postapartheid period. However, many, if not most, novels from the apartheid period tend more toward novellas for the same fiscal reasons that caused the short story to prevail.

46. A recent (2002) controversy sums up African hostility toward Indians. Zulu musician Mbongeni Ngema’s song “AmaNdiya” (meaning Indians) claims that things were “better with whites” than with Indians.

47. Lest the binary between apartheid and postapartheid fiction seem absolute, it must be asserted that the transition from past to present is not hermetic, especially given that the fiction I study here spans a relatively short period of time (1978–2004). Often we see the possibilities of an Indianized South Africa as well as the racial tension of later times anticipated in the apartheid period. However, these divergences are usually subsumed by the antiapartheid imperative that was intensely focused on identifying Indians as black. Correspondingly, the rhetoric of identification that characterized the apartheid period occasionally surfaces in the postapartheid period, often to counter the charges of Indian racism by Africans.

48. Bhabha’s work on mimicry may suggest that hybrid identities always fail at some level. His work on the “interstitial Third Space,” however, describes hybridity as empowering and dynamic. See chapter 2 for a critique of Bhabha’s celebration of hybridity.

49. While my survey of South African Indian fiction is comprehensive, it is certainly not complete. For example, I do not examine fiction such as Ansuyah Singh’s *Behold the Earth Mourns* (1960), Reshard Gool’s *Cape Town Coolie* (1990), Mewa Ramgobin’s *Waiting to Live* (1986), Fayiza Dawood Khan’s *The Sounds of Shadows*

(1995), Ronnie Govender's *At the Edge and Other Cato Manor Stories* (1996), Aziz Hassim's *The Lotus People* (2002), Pat Poovalingam's *Anand* (2003), Neela Govender's *Acacia Thorn in My Heart* (2000), Shamim Sarif's *The World Unseen* (2001), and Ishtiyaq Shakuri's *The Silent Minaret* (2005), among others. This is because I locate each text studied here not just as a text but also as exemplary of a certain literary moment in South African Indian fiction. My purpose, then, is to trace the evolution of the genre of South African Indian fiction, and how that enhances our understanding of diasporic cultures, rather than to provide a complete critical history of this body of work. That one single book cannot contain a critical genealogy of South African Indian fiction reveals the aesthetic density of this body of writing and how much work still needs to be done.

Chapter 1

1. See, for example, Wicomb, "South African Short Fiction"; Oliphant, "Fictions of Anticipation"; and Gray, "Introduction."

2. Indian issues were often reported in *Drum*, however. John Matshikiza recalls reading in *Drum* about "six Indian sisters, none of them more than teenagers, who had hanged themselves in a death pact in the back yard of their family home in Durban, rather than submit to arranged marriages" (ix-x).

3. "The mixture of gangsters, religious cranks, easy girls, roving males and the occasional white intellectual—all of whom are to be found in [Ahmed Essop's *Hajji*] stories—recall the mood of black short fiction of the fifties, originating in *Drum* magazine and set in Sophiatown" (Rowland Smith, quoted in Chetty, *South African Indian Writings* 20).

4. According to writer John Matshikiza, who grew up listening to *Drum* beats, "the startling thing is that there is no real dividing line between the two styles of writing: the journalistic and the fictional. Real life in the black townships has the monstrosly stifling yet banal quality of a B-Grade horror film while the fictionalized accounts cannot escape from the relentless quality of realism" (x-xi). Also see Michael Chapman's essay "More Than Telling a Story: *Drum* and Its Significance in Black South African Writing" in the same collection. Chapman argues that "the entire *Drum* writing exercise forces us to examine assumptions about story-telling forms and purposes" (195).

5. Publishing in serials does not necessarily preclude the writing of novels. Charles Dickens is an obvious example of a novelist who flourished in the serial form. In apartheid South Africa, the "seriality" of magazine publication was constantly under threat because of a lack of funds, official censorship, and so on. Magazine publication could be highly irregular and could not guarantee the continuity a novel would require.

6. Andries Oliphant claims that "the short story, when compared to the novel, apart from its length, does not require the same degree of stability in the order of things, or continuity between past and present, for its operations. This makes it extremely flexible and enables it to focus on the fragments and fractions of everyday life without forfeiting any of the efficacy of narrative" ("Fictions").

7. Similarly, M. J. Daymond observes “that it [the 80s] was a decade of such harsh State opposition and such determined resistance by ordinary people that the ‘history’ one might expect to find is that of the alignments and conditions of armed racial conflict” (“Gender and ‘History’” 192).

8. Examples from “black” South African literature touching directly or indirectly on these themes include: Bessie Head’s *The Cardinals* (written 1960–62, published 1993) and *Maru* (1971), Mtutuzeli Matshoba’s *Call Me Not A Man* (1979), Njabulo S. Ndebele’s *Fools and Other Stories* (1983), Farida Karodia’s *Coming Home and Other Stories* (1988), Richard Rive’s *Buckingham Palace, District Six* (1986), Zoe Wicomb’s *You Can’t Get Lost in Cape Town* (1987), and Achmat Dangor’s *Waiting for Leila* (1981) and *The Z Town Trilogy* (1990).

9. Progressive South African Jews, such as Joe Slovo, Ruth First, Albie Sachs, Rusty Goldberg, and Helen Suzman, also asserted solidarity with black Africans. While Jews were Other in many ways, their whiteness gave them a certain sense of place in apartheid South Africa that was denied to Indians. See the chapter on Achmat Dangor and *Kafka’s Curse* for an extension of this argument.

10. As Margaret Daymond points out: the “necessity of founding individual self-identity in a collectivity” is “particularly relevant to South Africans” (Bardolph 183).

11. Here I echo Indian writer Amitav Ghosh’s idea of the “shadow lines” as invisible lines of difference that make Other what was the Self-Same (228).

12. Amitava Kumar claims that “immigrants balance the conceit of a preserved heritage against the unanticipated and fairly uncanny elaboration of new identities that are liberating” (*Passport Photos* 229).

13. Born in 1948, the year apartheid was formalized as political praxis, Jayapraga Reddy suffered from spinal atrophy, a disease that bound her to a wheelchair. She died in 1996, before she completed her autobiography, *The Unbending Reed*. In addition to her collection of short stories, *On the Fringe of Dreamtime and Other Stories* (1987), she also wrote a play entitled *Web of Persuasion* (1984).

14. “The Love Beads,” for example, depicts African culture in detail, particularly focusing on the beads that African women give to men when they are separated by the vagaries of the apartheid system. “Snatch the Wind and Run” discusses a relationship between a young Coloured boy and his white social worker. “The Stolen Hours” is written in the voice of a black maid working for a privileged white family. “A Dream at Sunset” is about a black female nurse whose mother is dying. Also see Van Niekerk (36).

15. Here, I am indebted to Toni Morrison’s claim that language is always racialized. According to Morrison, “in a wholly racialized society, there is no escape from racially inflected language” (12–13).

16. For more on the relationship between immigrant and indigene, see Prashad.

17. Born in 1942, Sam, who is descended from indentured laborers, was raised in Port Elizabeth and educated at Roma, Lesotho, and Zimbabwe (Jaspal Singh 209). Like Farida Karodia, Sam lived in exile in England from 1973 onward. Sam’s stories have been published in various magazines and journals; two of her plays have aired on BBC Radio. According to her Web site, Sam has finished a novel entitled *I Am Not Myself*. www.agnessam.com (retrieved March 30, 2008).

18. The secret practice of one religion while outwardly maintaining another

brings to mind the crypto-Jews. Like indentured Indians, crypto-Jews were often coerced into converting from Judaism to Islam in Persia and Catholicism in Spain and Portugal, but continued to practice Judaism in private (“Crypto-Judaism,” <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crypto-Judaism>). I am grateful to Sharon Weltman for alerting me to their presence.

19. Indeed, Sam herself emphasizes the importance of the figure of Ruth in her collection: “It seems appropriate for the theme of this collection to be expressed in the following quotation from the Book of Ruth” (introduction to *Jesus Is Indian* 12). For “A South African Indian Womanist Reading of the Character of Ruth,” see Sarojini Nadar’s essay with the same title.

20. See Ray for more on Sam’s use of Gandhi.

21. As Ray claims, “Angelina’s narrativization of the present moment is constituted by simultaneously continuing and changing narratives emerging from incommensurable historical pasts and positing a future that is not naively rooted merely in future possibilities” (10).

22. Also see Flockemann on how Sam’s work “suggests the possibility for . . . pragmatic cultural creolisations . . . as we move away from discourses of identity based on apartheid oppositions and engage with the tricky discourses of an apparently ‘new’ nationhood” (“Asian Diasporas” 83).

23. Bharati Mukherjee uses this phrase in her novel *The Holder of the World* to describe her narrator’s desire to forge connections between two historically unconnected spaces: medieval India and Puritan New England (11).

24. See Ray for a detailed analysis of these stories and how they “function as oral history” (3–4).

25. Writing with reference to Sam and Jamaican writer Olive Senior, Flockemann argues that we can “detect a shift from representing Asian women as ‘in-between’ . . . to reclaiming their cultural ‘difference’” (“Asian Diasporas” 75).

26. Fainman-Frenkel also analyzes some of these stories by Reddy and Sam. See her dissertation, “On the Fringe of Dreamtime.”

27. Born in 1953, Padayachee was trained as a medical doctor and currently practices in Durban. His compendium of short stories, *What’s Love Got to Do with It?* is Padayachee’s only collected work of fiction, although his work has appeared in other venues such as the prestigious South African newspaper the *Sunday Times*. Padayachee is also an accomplished poet whose verse and fiction have been widely anthologized. His collection of poetry, *A Voice from the Cauldron*, was published in 1986. In addition to winning the Nadine Gordimer Prize, Padayachee was also awarded the Olive Schriener Prize in 1994.

28. In her analysis of the Sikh diaspora in Canada, Kamala Elizabeth Nayar states that “the models that have been used to understand the change that occurs when two cultures meet are as follows: assimilation, acculturation, integration, separation, marginalization, and fusion” (253). Yasmin Hussain argues that “being in the diaspora means living in a cross-cultural context, one in which change, fusion and expansion are inevitable” (preface).

29. David Attwell points out that “assertions about the overwhelming prevalence of documentary realism all too frequently involve generalisations based on other critical statements with little or no discussion of the literature’s actual qualities: its range, its idiosyncrasies, its very unfinishedness, and sadly, also its high points”

(172). Without minimizing the importance of “documentary realism,” I too attempt to locate a structural complexity in South African Indian writing.

30. Citing R. Peck, Chetty argues that “the invasion of the private realm by politics meant that even writers who might have ignored politics were forced to deal with it. The personal relationships that might otherwise have been their focus were moved into the political realm” (*South African Indian Writings* 11).

Chapter 2

1. In the interview Essop states:

Well, I felt that the human element had to be predominant in our writings. Apartheid formed one aspect of life. There are many other aspects of life. I was exposed to the different aspects of life in the community. There were humour, joy, marriages, funerals and so on. I felt that in my writings I should present a comprehensive whole. . . . (Chetty, *South African Indian Writings* 352)

2. Arlene Elder, for example, argues that the *Hajji Musa* tales “delight the reader in their sympathetic revelation of a variety of human foibles . . . but often frustrate by seeming to deflect intense engagement with the South African reality” (132). Elder concludes her study by stating that the “entire collection charms the reader with the author’s skill at humorous depiction but leaves her eager for more of the political/historical, not just individual, context by which to explain Essop’s characters” (137).

3. Vasu Reddy argues that Essop’s writing “shows close connections to apartheid as the informing context but it is by no means his only point of reference” (86).

4. Because Essop’s value system and aesthetic approach shifts so much, I think of him as two writers rather than one. Correspondingly, this chapter studies only Essop’s apartheid-era prose and focuses on his novella *The Emperor* and his two short story collections, *Hajji Musa and the Hindu Fire-walker* and *Noorjehan and Other Stories*, while chapter 6 examines Essop’s postapartheid writings.

5. Literary critics have traditionally celebrated the pluralism embodied in the East-West migratory exchange. For example, Yasmin Hussain credits Asian British filmmaker Gurinder Chadha for “re-defining British identities as culturally plural rather than fixed around some national, ethnic, racial or other absolute boundary and hence also explores ideas of diaspora, hybridity and cultural syncretism” (71).

6. South Asian American writer Bharati Mukherjee has been criticized for promoting an assimilationist credo in her work. Susan Koshy asserts that “Mukherjee’s celebration of assimilation is an insufficient confrontation to the historical circumstances of ethnicity and race in the United States and of the complexities of diasporic subject-formation” (in Ponzanesi 42). Significantly, the eponymous character Jasmine in Mukherjee’s novel *Jasmine* undergoes Americanization by often mingling with white characters and changing her name to Jane.

7. I am obviously echoing Gayatri Spivak’s phrase “strategic essentialism” here. See *The Post-colonial Critic* for Spivak’s sense of the term (11).

8. Timothy D. Taylor argues that “in most uses of the term ‘hybridity,’ the two cultures that hybridize are white and nonwhite Other, but the complex and multiple nature of the Other or Others is not always accounted for in the discourses of hybridity” (in Oren and Petro 234). Examples in literature of this white/nonwhite hybridity proliferate: Karim Amin in Hanif Kureishi’s celebrated novel *The Buddha of Suburbia* is the child of an English mother and a Pakistani father. The main character in G. V. Desani’s *All About H. Hatterr*, a novel said to have inspired Salman Rushdie himself, is “biologically . . . fifty-fifty of the species,” an Anglo-Indian with British and Indian blood (1).

9. Avtar Brah argues that diasporas do not “normatively refer to temporary sojourns. Paradoxically, diasporic journeys are essentially about settling down, about putting roots ‘elsewhere’” (182).

10. Rajendra Chetty states that South African Indian writers “like Farida Karodia, Ahmed Essop, Ronnie Govender, Indres Naidoo and Kesaveloo Goonam relocate the South African Indian as an integral part of the South African landscape. In demonstrating the unique position of the South African Indian as part of the oppressed and committed to the liberation of the country, these writers help to restore [credibility] to Indians” (*South African Indian Writings* 21).

11. For a detailed analysis of *The Emperor*, see Rowland Smith’s “Living on the Fringe.” Interestingly, far from criticizing Essop for not being political enough, Smith views the novella as “explicitly political,” arguing that “the overriding political motif” makes the writing very “thin” (66).

12. It should be noted that for most scholars, the term “Aryan” is a meaningless category of analysis. Discarded by the thinking world as an empty signifier, it is significant that both Ashoka and the apartheid state attempt to resurrect the original value of the term.

13. Interestingly, Ashoka’s features are described as “classically Dravidian” (2), associating him more with black people as well as the darker South Indians than with the supposedly light-skinned Aryans and North Indians. This is a classic tension in the novel: Ashoka wants to assume a normative whiteness but fails to realize his inner (and outer) blackness.

14. The kinship between Hindu social stricture and apartheid is reiterated at a public gathering of educators where the director of education makes a speech eulogizing the Indian community in South Africa: “Indians . . . have decided to jealously guard their racial and cultural identities that they have made such great strides in the educational world. We have one of the world’s greatest universities in Durban, the Indian University of Westville, where you can find the best professors and lecturers in the southern hemisphere” (*Emperor* 136–37).

The director uses Indian professional achievement to argue for the success of apartheid. He manipulates the Indian desire to maintain a distinctive identity in African spaces as a tool with which to drive a wedge between the various disenfranchised communities. If “the jealous guarding of their racial and cultural identities” has led to Indian empowerment and uplift, then that clearly demonstrates the importance of segregation, or so the thinking goes. Again, Indian social organization is used not only to justify apartheid but also as an analogy for apartheid as both discourses claimed that separation would benefit rather than harm the races.

15. See, for example, Patrick Manning's *Migration in World History*:

The social and cultural structure of a diaspora originates in the homeland from which people departed, either recently or long ago. Connections with the original culture across the diaspora can be retained through oral and written history, literature, and song. The linkages sustaining diaspora include family, religion, language, occupation, and traditions in dress, music, art and cuisine. (160)

16. The notion of carnival as a reordering of stratified social systems is most popularly associated with Russian formalist Mikhail Bakhtin. For more on the subversive prospects of carnival see Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World*.

17. See Vijay Prashad's excellent book, *Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity* for an analysis of Indian-black relationships in various parts of the world.

18. *Herrenvolk* means the master race. Its use is pejorative here.

19. I base my analysis of these texts partly on their publication dates. Although Essop mentioned to me that the *Hajji Musa* stories were set in the fifties and sixties (see my interview with Ahmed Essop in this book), it is not completely clear when they were composed. Since new material was added to this collection, the stories were probably edited before their publication in the seventies and eighties. It is likely, then, that they reveal the sensibilities of the time of setting, composition, and publication. Similarly the stories in the *Noojehan* collection are set in the seventies and eighties, but many reflect the beginning of the end of apartheid. See also Flockemann ("Asian Diasporas") on how Sam's stories that are set in the 1980s look forward to the new nation of the 1990s, and Jacobs (198).

20. Essop echoes Nadine Gordimer's thoughts in her early essay entitled "Where Do Whites Fit In?" (1959). Gordimer claims that "home is not necessarily where you belong ethnogenically, but rather the place you were born to, the faces you first saw around you, and the elements of the situation among your fellow men in which you found yourself and with which you have been struggling, politically, personally or artistically all your life" (*Essential Gesture* 34).

21. According to Jaspal Singh, "most so-called love stories about choice are represented in terms of sexual relationships between Indian women and white men . . . we have only recently started seeing the exploration of such racial intermixing in terms of black and Indian as spaces of empowerment or transcendence" (211).

22. Associated with activist Steve Biko, Black Consciousness urged the black community to free itself mentally and psychologically.

23. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha describes "the third space" as an "innovative energy" (315), transforming the binary narrative of the (Western) nation-state. Using the image of the stairwell, he further describes hybridity as an "interstitial passage between fixed identifications [that] opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (5).

24. Many stories simply evoke the fullness of Indian life—with its cycle of birth, death, marriage, divorce, love, loss, joy, and anger. (Also see Smith 71–72.) Other stories, however, are so politically charged that taken together they articulate an

unambiguous message of social radicalization. Since my project in this chapter is to examine the relationship between transitional Indianness and political occasion, my analysis of *Noorjehan* focuses on how Essop endows Indians with political agency by bringing whites into the national fold.

25. Coined by Bishop Desmond Tutu, the term “rainbow nation” evokes the idea of a diverse, democratic South Africa. According to Sibusisiwe Nombuso Dlamini, the rainbow is “also an image associated with the premise of safety that followed the Biblical flood and thus is a symbol of reconciliation following a difficult period . . . the image of a rainbow nation, then, can be read to include recognition of South Africa’s diverse population [and] the interconnectedness of people within this nation” (3). Essop’s project of incorporating white people into the folds of the nation thus highlights this national interconnectedness.

26. Chetty points out that “the personae of *Noorjehan and Other Stories* transcend the barriers of race and ethnicity—perhaps in an attempt at coming to terms with a rapidly changing landscape. Many of Essop’s narrators act as witnesses to historical events” (*South African Indian Writings* 20).

27. The title of the story (“Metamorphosis”) further foregrounds the idea of empowerment through transformation. Its obvious echo of Kafka shows us how South African Indian literature is shaped not only by the various subfields of postcolonial literature but also by other international literary paradigms. Yet Essop makes Kafka’s tale into his own. In Kafka’s “Metamorphosis,” Gregor Samsa wakes up to find himself transformed into a bug, something that is clearly subhuman. Naomi Rosenberg’s movement from indifference to empathy gives her greater claim to humanity.

28. According to historian Surendra Bhana:

The Tolstoy Farm was the second of its kind of experiments established by Gandhi. The first, the Phoenix settlement in Natal, was inspired in 1904 by a single reading of John Ruskin’s *Unto This Last*, a work that extolled the virtues of the simple life of love, labour, and the dignity of human beings. Gandhi was not as personally involved in the daily running of the Phoenix settlement as he was to become in his stay of interrupted duration at the Tolstoy Farm which lasted for about four years. In part this was because the political struggle had shifted to the Transvaal after 1906, and he controlled it from its Johannesburg headquarters.

To a large extent Gandhi’s more intimate involvement at the Tolstoy Farm coincided with the heightened tempo of the passive resistance campaign, and the development of the Gandhian philosophy of the perfect individual in a perfect new order.

The Tolstoy Farm was in part born out of practical necessity. Funds were running short, morale was sinking, and the movement missed the benefits that might accompany the establishment of a centre where its followers might assemble and coordinate their activities. The Transvaal settlement accommodated all three. Money was saved, morale was boosted, and the satyagrahis, according to Gandhi, received “training” that proved to be “of great use in the last fight.”

For more on the Tolstoy Farm, see Bhana's essay "The Tolstoy Farm: Gandhi's Experiment in Cooperative Commonwealth."

Chapter 3

1. See Sailaja Sastry for the nexus between "the stories of interracial relationships" with "the project of nation-building" (276).

2. While Jameson's formulation—"all third world literatures are necessarily . . . national allegories" (69)—is totalizing in its sweep, it is broadly true that postcolonial literature tends to often metaphorize the nation. For a critique of Jameson, see Aijaz Ahmad's chapter entitled "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the National Allegory," in *In Theory*. For a critique and simultaneous rehabilitation of the term, see Imre Szeman's "Who's Afraid of National Allegory? Jameson, Literary Criticism, Globalization."

3. A note on the term "transition" as pertaining to the South African context is necessary here. Apartheid weakened in 1990 with the release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of the ANC. Universal franchise, however, became a reality only in 1994 when all South Africans went to the polls to elect a democratic government for the first time. Mandela's party, the African National Congress (ANC), overwhelmingly won the election and Mandela became the first president of democratic multiracial South Africa.

4. While most of the existing criticism on *Kafka's Curse* interprets the text as a commentary on transition, no work, however, studies the compositional complexities of the narrative in order to examine how they allegorize the "terrible beauty" of an imminent nation or the coming of age of South African Indians. Elaine Young, the critic whose work comes close to my hypothesis here, argues that the "individual mutations and crossings-over reflect the increasingly hybridized nature of South African society itself . . . the narrative structure of the novella is analogous to the multivocality and complexity of South African society after apartheid" (17). Young primarily focuses on the trope of "rampant transgression" (17) and does not explicitly foreground the theme of national allegory through symbolic morphology; neither does she pay attention to the text's articulation of Indo-Islamic desires and anxieties and the fruition of South African Indian selfhood. Vilashini Cooppan's argument resonates even more closely with mine. Linking "metamorphosis . . . as a metaphor for national transition" (361), she uses the term "national allegory" to describe Dangor's novel, arguing that "the body politic imagined in *Kafka's Curse*, with its polymorphous sexual crossings, physical alterations, and multiple social and linguistic metamorphoses, well deserves the label of national allegory" (362). Yet Cooppan does not focus on the text's symbolic configuration in order to foreground national allegory, even though she is attentive to form and structure. In an extremely brief discussion of *Kafka's Curse*, Christopher Heywood lists "the museum of houses, Islam, body parts . . . cooking ingredients, furnishings, architectural projects, and the social atrocity represented by group areas" (232) as part of the novel's thematic roster. Few of these critics, additionally, see national allegory as a form of minority empowerment.

5. This list of tropes and motifs is by no means exhaustive. Rather, it is simply an articulation of metaphors that I find significant to the novel's structural intent.

6. As Vilashini Cooppan observes, "the transformations that the novella describes are both political . . . and textual" (356).

7. Many critics see Dangor and Omar/Malik as Malay. However, because *Kafka's Curse* deliberately obfuscates the racial identity of its characters, there is no consensus on the race of the characters, which seems to be Dangor's point. Taking my cue from Loren Kruger, I consider the characters to also be Indian not only to excavate the buried Indian roots of many Cape Malays, but also because the characters often identify themselves as Indian. Moreover, because racial, cultural, and religious identity in Muslim communities is usually asserted through the line of the father, Indianness has been passed down to the Khan family—rather than erased—through Omar's grandfather, who came to South Africa as a contracted trader.

Kruger also claims that Dangor's "person and texts inhabit . . . in-between spaces in exemplary ways" ("Black" 114). Dangor's own racial identity thus seems as uncodeable as that of his characters in *Kafka's Curse*. He writes with such an intimate insider knowledge of Indian culture and language in *Kafka's Curse* that it is impossible for him not to have Indian ancestry. I also base this assertion on an Internet interview with Dangor where he states that he "was a racially hybrid child (Indian/Javanese/Dutch ancestry)," a heritage shared by Omar and Malik, his two protagonists in *Kafka's Curse* ("Interviews with South African Writers (Mike Nicol—Achmat Dangor—Bridget Pitt—Pamela Jooste—Peter Horn)." Retrieved October 28, 2006, <http://www2.univ-reunion.fr/~ageof/text/74c21e88-337.html>).

This is not to say that *Kafka's Curse* is autobiographical. The book, and Dangor's own tangled racial history, show us the extent to which Indians have integrated into South African society. Yet *Kafka's Curse* needs to be studied as an *Afrindian* text because the novel is intensely preoccupied with the role of Indianness, particularly Islamic Indianness, in the time of transition in South Africa.

8. Phillip Roth's novel *The Human Stain* (2000) echoes a similar premise: Coleman Silk is a black American who passes as a Jew. Notice how the titles of both texts describe racial passing as a stain and a curse.

9. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) also began its work in 1996; its resurrection of the segregationist past can be seen as an excavation of the buried "truth" hidden by decades of white supremacy. I am grateful to Shane Graham for making this connection.

10. For more on how Jews enjoyed white privilege, as well as the fraught relationship between Muslims and Jews, see Ameen Akhalwaya's essay entitled "A Love-Hate Relationship: Jews and Muslims in South Africa." Akhalwaya claims that "Jews and Muslims have a strange love-hate relationship in which they are divided by two issues. First, Jews are classified white, while the majority of Muslims have been categorized 'Indian,' 'coloured,' 'black' or other sub-divisions under South Africa's now-scrapped race classification laws. And second, the question of Palestine" (17). Even though many progressive Jews, like Helen Suzman, rallied against apartheid, as "anti-white resentment began to build up . . . the perception grew that Jews were all too happy to take advantage of massive white privilege thus created by apartheid.

Jews were increasingly seen as silent partners in apartheid's oppression of Muslims and other South African blacks" (18).

Additionally, Milton Shain claims that in

the 1950s and 1960s . . . communist and progressive Jews had criticized the Jewish establishment for not speaking out formally against apartheid . . . the moral high road [was] not taken during the apartheid era, at least not by the formal leadership, represented in the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.

The question of Jewish behavior during the apartheid years remains a source of contention and moral questions will not disappear. (205)

11. Bharucha is referring to the Parsi diaspora in England, which is twice migrant: once from Persia and the second time from India.

12. In his discussion of black South African writing under apartheid, Attwell partly echoes this line of thought even though he doesn't use the term "diaspora":

When European modernism registers spatial dislocations, it frequently does so in terms of the expatriate or exile. . . . This pattern is not absent from black South African writing . . . black South African writing can reflect a sense of dislocation *at home* . . . [which becomes] a place of permanent unease or unsettlement, a place where one experiences one's *dislocation* from rural life, economic independence, political representation and citizenship. (176; emphasis in original)

13. Grey Street is increasingly becoming an important setting in South African Indian writing. Aziz Hassim's novel *The Lotus People* (2002), Mariam Akabor's collection of short stories entitled *Flat 9* (2006), and Ashwin Singh's unpublished play *Spice 'N Stuff* all use Grey Street as both location and as a symbol for Indian identity. For a pioneering study of place in the works of writers such as Gordimer, Fugard, Tlali, and Mda, see Rita Barnard's excellent book *Apartheid and Beyond*.

14. For Achmat Dangor's comments on architecture and apartheid see his short piece "Apartheid and the Death of South African cities" in Judin.

15. I am grateful to Sharon Weltman for this interpretation.

16. Cooppan argues that the postcolonial novel has rendered magical realism into a "generic model" but concedes that magical realism in *Kafka's Curse* is more complicated in its effort to "find the middle ground" (359).

17. Dangor is not the only one to demonstrate an interest in Kafka. A story in Ahmed Essop's *Noorjehan* collection is entitled "Metamorphosis." It is also impossible to miss the reference to Kafka in J. M. Coetzee's *The Life and Times of Michael K* (1983). The truncated last name of Coetzee's protagonist, reduced here to a single barren letter, brings to mind Joseph K in Kafka's *The Trial* (1925). For a study of Kafka's influence on Coetzee see P. Joffe's "The Naming of Michael K: J. M. Coetzee's *Life and Times of Michael K*." Interestingly, both Michael K and Majnoen are gardeners, showing the influence of Coetzee on Dangor. See Cooppan for a study of Coetzee and Dangor, and for an analysis of *Kafka's Curse* and transnational influences.

18. Woodward also argues that trees “figure repeatedly in the novel, but never as fertile natural symbols” (30). Like much of the novel, even the tree-turning is ambiguous. Oscar’s body may have “crumbled to dust,” (*Kafka’s Curse* 27) but rumor has it that the “shapeless form [Oscar’s body] . . . was really a shrivelled tree” (69). Also, “in what had once been the main bedroom, a tree had thrust up through the floor” (28). This is the room in which Oscar’s body is found:

He knew the case was unusual, Sergeant Johnson told Malik, but people said that they saw this *thing* happening to the dead man, like it was part of his nature. He indicated with a wave of his hand to the room, the mould on the walls, the flowers, the tree growing in the middle of the room. (66)

In my interpretation, Oscar becomes the tree in the middle of the room, while the word “growing” attaches an immediate and active fertility to the image of the tree. The unnatural circumstances in which the tree is growing further suggests Indian achievement and growth in the unnatural circumstances of apartheid.

19. See Malkki for metaphors of soil, rootedness, and trees.

20. “Our people don’t bury their dead as if they’re on the way to a party” (*Kafka’s Curse* 224).

21. This is also echoed by Cooppan, who argues that the novel “portrays metamorphosis as both curse and blessing” (358).

22. Amina’s beauty becomes “beaklike” and “thrust out” (*Kafka’s Curse* 125). Toward the end of his relationship with Amina and the end of his life, Malik begins to take on birdlike aspects: “[T]here is a lightness about him, the insubstantiality of wings, his skin as smooth as down . . . a beaked face” (145). Significantly, this metamorphosis occurs after Malik leaves the white part of town, where he has been living with Amina, and returns to the township, bringing to mind Omar’s mysterious illness that strikes him after he goes back to the township for his mother’s funeral.

23. Bird imagery also recurs in Dangor’s novella *The Z Town Trilogy*. One of the characters is described as “[a] dark and terrifying bird swooping down from the hot blue sky upon her frightened prey” (29). In another instance, migratory birds from the country amaze Hillbrow with their appearance (55). Another character has a “strange affinity for birds, the uncanny manner in which she seemed capable of communicating with them” (59). That same character, Jane, like Malik in *Kafka’s Curse*, feels that she is physically becoming a bird: “Jane saw a flutter of tiny wings, she felt a lightness in her body, as exquisite as death or flight” (86). Also see Kruger on bird imagery in *The Z Town Trilogy* (“Black” 125) and Woodward for “Malik’s identification from childhood with birds” (29).

24. See Fainman-Frenkel, “On the Fringe,” for apartheid creating a diaspora of exile (142–43).

25. See Cooppan: “[T]he becoming-other of Dangor’s characters describes that radical becoming-other which each South African citizen must allow if national culture is to emerge from the territorialized, classification-mad history of apartheid” (361). Also see Sastry (281).

26. See Woodward for an analysis of Kulsum/Katryn.

27. Naipaul uses the term “the neurosis of the converted” to describe the psychic anxiety felt by non-Arabic converts to Islam, particularly the populations of Iran, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Malaysia, who always feel that they have to outperform the original Muslims (those of Arabic stock) in demonstrating their religious piety (“Questions for V.S. Naipaul on His Contentious Relationship to Islam,” October 28, 2001, from <http://www.racematters.org/vsnaipaulonislam.htm>). Retrieved June 11, 2007. Also see *Among the Believers* and *Beyond Belief* for more of this hypothesis.

28. Similarly, Sastry argues that in South Africa “standard postcolonial nomenclature such as . . . hybridity may have to be adjusted or abandoned altogether” (277). See the rest of Sastry’s essay for a critique of theories of hybridity.

29. Many of the slaves in the Cape were brought from the Indian Ocean area under the auspices of the Dutch East India Company from the seventeenth century onward. According to the Web site of the Slave Lodge, a museum dedicated to commemorating South African slavery in Cape Town:

Although a few of the first slaves came from West Africa, most slaves came from societies around the Indian Ocean Basin. Slaves came from Madagascar, from Mozambique and the East African coast, from India and from the islands of the East Indies such as Sumatra, Java, the Celebes, Ternate and Timor. . . .

The Indian subcontinent was the main source of slaves during the early part of the 18th century. Approximately 80% of slaves came from India during this period. A slaving station was established in Delagoa Bay (present-day Maputo) in 1721, but was abandoned in 1731. Between 1731 and 1765 more and more slaves were bought from Madagascar. (“Slave Routes to Cape Town,” http://www.iziko.org.za/sh/resources/slavery/slavery_routes.html). Retrieved November 18, 2006

The Web site also describes the work performed by the slaves housed in the Slave Lodge:

The slaves that belonged to Dutch East India Company (VOC) made an important contribution to the establishment, management and protection of the Dutch settlement at the Cape. . . . They were the largest group of slaves and were used for a variety of duties, from manual labour to skilled artisan work. In contrast to slaves in private ownership at the Cape, no strong division of labour based on sex existed for the Lodge slaves. In the first few years of the Dutch settlement’s existence, the slaves worked as assistants to the VOC officials such as artisans, the gardener and the wood-cutters. Seventy-five slaves were listed in a letter dated 11 April 1658—a third worked in the Company’s Garden while 19 were employed on the Company’s farm. (“At Work,” http://www.iziko.org.za/sh/resources/slavery/slavelodge_work.html). Retrieved November 18, 2006

For more on the arrival of Indians as slaves in South Africa, see S. E. Dangor’s

essay entitled “The Myth of the 1860 Settlers.” Also see Loren Kruger’s essay entitled “Black Atlantics, White Indians and Jews.”

Chapter 4

1. See Govinden, “Against an African Sky” (82).

2. This is not to say that black women were not being published during the apartheid years. Bessie Head, Miriam Tlali, and Zoe Wicomb all come to mind as examples of nonwhite women writing during apartheid. Yet, as Govinden argues, “[b]lack women writers have been a marginalised group for the better part of this century, and only in recent years have they been given critical recognition” (“Against an African Sky” 84).

3. Examples Govinden cites include “*Let it be Told*, by Laurretta Ngcobo; *Breaking the Silence*, by Cecily Lockett; and *Raising the Blinds*, by Annemarie Van Niekerk” (“Against an African Sky” 84).

4. As with most other South African Indian writers, little biographical or literary information is available on Karodia. According to Anver Versi, Karodia’s father was a Gujarati Indian “who settled in South Africa in 1920. Her mother was coloured. . . . They lived in one of those small Afrikaaner-dominated towns, Aliwal, in the Eastern Cape. ‘We were the only Indians in the town’ she [Karodia] recalls. But of course they were not entirely Indian since her mother was not one” (39). Karodia taught school for two years after studying at a teachers training college in Johannesburg (Versi 40). Her South African passport was revoked while teaching in Zambia, after which she migrated to Canada, where she embarked on her writing career. While she began her literary career by writing dramas for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Karodia’s first novel, *Daughters of the Twilight*, was published in 1986 (Versi 40). Even though *Daughters of the Twilight* confined itself to tracing the impact of relocation on the psyche of an Indian girl, Karodia refused to subscribe to ethnic mandates in subsequent fiction. Her first collection of short fiction, *Coming Home and Other Stories* (1988), approaches race relations through the prism of the diverse constituencies that inhabit South Africa—white, black, Indian and Coloured. After visiting India, Karodia made a TV film entitled *Midnight in Embers* (1992) about “the relationship between a retired British actress living in India and her Indian male servant” (Versi 40). Her next novel, *A Shattering of Silence* (1993), focuses on the insurgency in Mozambique. Following her return “home,” Karodia wrote *Against an African Sky and Other Stories* (1995) where she explores the impact of the changing social milieu on everyday South African life. Her magnum opus, *Other Secrets*, was published in 2000. Karodia’s most recent work, the novel *Boundaries* (2003), is set amid the mayhem caused by the arrival of a television crew in a small South African town. As the chronological summary of Karodia’s work reveals, it was only with the publication of *Other Secrets* that Karodia returned to exploring issues of Afrindian identity.

5. See Loren Kruger’s essay entitled “In a Minor Key” for an analysis of Jacobs and Karodia.

6. According to Frene Ginwala, the act:

[V]aunted by former prime minister Dr Malan as embodying “the essence of apartheid policy” is the one piece of legislation whose application has had the greatest direct impact on the lives of Indian South Africans. Ostensibly non-racial, it makes provision for each group to be allocated to specific areas, thus segregating the country on rigid racial lines. The application of the Act, however, has been such as to complete the process of dispossession and the abrogation of almost all urban land to the white population, either individually, corporately or through state ownership.

Between 1966 and August 1984, 83,691 coloured, 40,067 Indian and 2418 white families had been moved under the provisions of the act. . . . Entire communities are uprooted and forced to leave behind not only long established homes and businesses but also schools, temples, mosques, clinics and community centres. . . . The people have been forced to settle outside the towns in areas with few amenities, without telephones, police, health or even postal services. (12)

7. Penguin South Africa is not an indigenous South African press like Kwela, Ravan, or David Philip. Yet, given how many South African Indian writers—including Karodia herself—were published abroad, it is significant that *Other Secrets* was published at home. The fact that the novel was published by the South African branch of a Western publishing house also, ironically, supports the point made later in this chapter: that Europe always manages to inveigle itself into the assertion of South African Indian identities.

8. The idea of a double diaspora is not just confined to Indians in South Africa. Ugandan Asians in Britain, Fijian Indians in Canada, and the growing number of Asian Africans in the United States are all examples of twice-migrants. It is, however, significantly different from the once-migrant Indian diasporas in the United States, the UK, and Canada. For more on “second banishment” (43) in the Fijian-Indian imagination, see Satendra Nandan’s essay in Crane and Mohanram, eds., *Shifting Continents/Colliding Cultures*.

9. Meg Samuelson very briefly explores some of these changes although her focus is on rape of Yasmin and “racial mixing” (96).

10. Effacement and revelation refer to the articulation of a common black/non-white identity and a tentative Indian selfhood that we have traced in all apartheid-era writing.

11. While Flockemann also sees “the community of older women, mothers, grandmothers, and aunts [as] significant touchstones” in *Daughters*, the novella, unlike *Other Secrets*, rarely abandons political context to describe emotional relationships (“Not-Quite” 43).

12. W. E. B. Du Bois’ famous term “double consciousness” refers to the split in identity that living as Other in a violently racialized society engenders. The portability of the term to a South African context suggests the similarities between American segregation and apartheid.

13. Achmat Dangor raises this question in *Kafka’s Curse*, while Ahmed Essop also explores how Muslims themselves contribute to their estrangement from the nation in *The Third Prophecy*.

14. This is generally true of all South Asian diasporas, where family often substitutes for the community left behind. As Robin Cohen points out, “the Indian family was gradually reconstituted [in the labor diaspora], often in an oppressive patriarchal form, but none the less in such a way as to provide a source of social cohesion and a site for reasserting communal life” (63).

15. For example, Abdul is skeptical of Yasmin’s dancing, saying that a good Muslim girl has no business dancing (*Other Secrets* 119).

16. Yasmin Hussain considers “inter-generational conflict” to be a “central theme” of the writings of South Asian diaspora in Britain (15). Similarly, Mark Stein argues with reference to black British writing that “in the diasporic novel of transformation generational conflict often signifies a concurrent cultural conflict between a parental generation who migrated and the generation born in Britain” (xvii). In an American context, this is echoed by Wannu W. Anderson and Robert G. Lee, who describe “the generational conflict between immigrant Asians who, until the late 1940s and 1950s, were ineligible for naturalization and their American-born citizen children” (9).

17. Abdul’s absolutism is further focalized when Meena contemplates going to Johannesburg to take up a teaching course. Her apprehension in approaching this matter with her father is justified. When she expresses her desire to leave McBain for the city, her father loses his temper:

“Shut up!” he shouted. “I will not have you speaking to me so disrespectfully! I will not have you disgracing me the way your sister did. What is wrong with you girls? Is it so hard to be honorable? Do you have to be cheap? Muslim girls don’t run around the country—they stay home with their families. They know what’s right and wrong!”

“So what are we? It’s not our fault that we’re not what you wanted us to be!” (*Other Secrets* 210)

Abdul holds autocratic beliefs about how Muslim girls should behave. His concept of honor—and of daughters as custodians of that honor—also reflects an orthodox Islamic perspective that seeks moral restitution in a profane world.

18. See Chetty, *South African Indian Writings* (21).

19. For more on the tragic resonances of Soraya’s name, see Meg Samuelson:

Once again, though, the child’s name foregrounds this mixing. Her namesake, Princess Soraya . . . was of mixed Iranian and German descent. Divorced and banished, [Princess] Soraya’s . . . story fits into the tragic mould, confirming the “tragedy of mixed blood” that has held sway over the South African imagination. . . . The children, so relentlessly inserted into the plot, are an insurmountable stumbling block as the substitution of mother for rape victim rearticulates the Apartheid discourses of blood purity enshrined in . . . the “pillars of apartheid.” . . . The South African literary imagination has shown itself unable to extricate itself from this web of legislation. (96–97)

Loren Kruger further echoes this claim by arguing that Soraya’s “inheritance as the child of a white rapist and the daughter and granddaughter of transgressing

women of colour somehow dooms her to a sudden and implausible death by accident" ("Minor" 72).

20. Fainman-Frenkel aptly summarizes the novel's commentary on inter-racial contact: "Karodia is, therefore, narrating the everyday 'mix' of many South Africans that Apartheid attempted to conceal and regulate, while highlighting the arbitrary and artificial nature of Apartheid racial classification itself" ("Ordinary Secrets" 62).

21. Discussing the idea of "middleman minorities," Ashwin Desai and Brij Maharaj argue that "the role of middleman easily becomes the role of 'economic villain' especially at a time of economic crisis. Middleman minorities or people in the status gap are scapegoats per excellence. Scapegoats often deflect hostility away from the superior status group. Hilda Kuper, a social anthropologist, argued that like Jews in other countries, Indians in South Africa were being used as 'scapegoats' by the dominant ethnic groups" ("Minorities in the Rainbow Nation").

22. Of course, I am using Bantustans metaphorically here. Rehana Ebr-Vally mentions a plan to create a Bantustan for Indians. Ironically titled "Hindustan," this homeland failed to materialize (99).

23. Karodia elaborates on the deracination of migration in a short story entitled "Crossmatch." The South African Indian protagonist, Sushila, lives in London, where her mother constantly worries that Sushila "might have abandoned her Hindu traditions" (*Against an African Sky* 90).

24. See Samuelson for a critique of the celebratory aspects of the child (96).

25. Timothy Brennan has described *The Satanic Verses* as "the most ambitious novel yet published to deal with the immigrant experience in Britain" (*Salman Rushdie* 149).

26. Here I echo the titles of two important texts of diasporic arrival: Meena Alexander's *The Shock of Arrival* (1996) and V. S. Naipaul's *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987).

27. The most important figure, as well as theorist, of exile is Edward Said. The title of Said's autobiography, *Out of Place*, suggests the sense of placelessness that the cosmopolitan wanderer invokes. See Aijaz Ahmad's *In Theory* for a critique of cosmopolitans such as Said and Rushdie in particular and literary migrancy in general. Further examples of cosmopolitan migrants include Saladin Chamcha in *The Satanic Verses*, Tara in Bharati Mukherjee's *The Tiger's Daughter*, and Karim Amin in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*. Sandhya Shukla also sees Ila in Amitav Ghosh's *Shadowlines* as a "cosmopolitan-migrant" (150).

28. Cosmopolitanism as multiple allegiances that disrupt homogenous categories of classification, such as nation, race, and citizenship, has been theorized by Bruce Robbins, Pheng Cheah, and James Clifford, among others. See Clifford's *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Twentieth Century* and Robbins and Cheah's *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation* for more on the pluralizing possibilities of cosmopolitanism. Sandhya Shukla further echoes the idea of migrant identities destabilizing hegemonic codes: "[B]y looking at how migrant discourses have created India abroad, we can challenge the assumed centrality of 'America' and 'England' in the lives of people who inhabit the spaces of the United States and Britain" (5). She further adds that "Indians' connections to each other and to

places that traverse the boundaries of countries of settlement are often formulated in languages that straddle conceptual categories of race, ethnicity and nation" (9). Paul Gilroy makes a similar argument in *The Black Atlantic*, a book that destabilizes territorial and spatial boundaries through the idea of diaspora.

29. Loren Kruger interprets the titles of the novels that Meena reads as "short-hand comparisons between Meena . . . and the heroines of romance novels with titles like *Cast Adrift* and *Storms of Passion* [that] register irony as well as empathy" ("Minor" 72). I am, of course, referring to the romance novels that Meena writes.

Chapter 5

1. Similarly Sten Moslund argues that "many South Africans have a history of being misrepresented or obliterated by institutionalized histories and, being denied the access to participate in the making of institutionalized histories, literature has often assumed the function of being an aperture for self-expression and self-assertion" (21).

2. John McLeod argues that "Negritude is nostalgic for a mythic African past. Negritude often posited a 'golden age' of pre-colonial Africa from which black peoples had been separated by colonialism and to which they must return. . . . [T]hese 'returns' depended upon the construction of a mythic African pre-colonial past before the time of colonialism which was free from the ills of the present. But did such a 'golden age' of perfection ever really exist?" (82).

3. Moslund points out that "counter-histories involve a conscious attempt to regain the command of one's own reality. . . . Accordingly the distribution of other myths of origin . . . or the expression of a marginalized perspective may comprise a complex 'vital human strategy for sustaining a sense of agency in the face of disempowering circumstances' (Jackson, 2002, 4). Counter-histories may rework and restructure the past psychologically, socially and metaphorically to change our experience and perception of truths and the limits of reality" (16).

4. Lukács's formulations on the historical novel are useful to foreground here. As Michael Green points out, "Lukács . . . shifted the basis for his identification of the 'historical novel' from the realm of empty formalism and ahistorical classification to the materiality of the moment from which the form emerged" (123).

5. Similarly, Ulrich Broich argues that the "historical writing could have been useful to create . . . a national identity" (421).

6. Indians came to the Caribbean, Mauritius, Guyana, Fiji, and South Africa as indentured labor in the mid- to late nineteenth century. Due to the recentness of migration to the United Kingdom and United States, there is no dearth of fiction commemorating the diasporic voyage to the West. Accounts of voyaging to the Caribbean are fewer: David Dabydeen's *The Counting House* (1996) is one of the few texts that reimagines the passage of indentured Indians to colonial Guyana. Dabydeen's collection of poems entitled *The Coolie Odyssey* (1988) revives the indentured past. Indo-Trinidadian writer Ramabai Espinet's novel *The Swinging Bridge* (2003) also narrates the indentured experience. The anthology *Coolitude*, edited by

Khal Torabully and Marina Carter, attempts to excavate a distinctive “coolie” consciousness, but confines itself to poetry, as does the Noor Kabir edited collection, *The Still Cry: Personal Accounts of East Indians in Trinidad and Tobago during Indentureship, 1845–1917*. However, literary accounts of Indian migration to Africa are exceedingly rare. Recently, Pat Poovalingam’s novel *Anand* (2003) partially recovered the indenture experience in South Africa. When I was in Durban in 2005, I had the opportunity to watch Rajesh Gopie’s new play, entitled *Coolie Odyssey*, which sought to fill precisely this gap in South African Indian literature. Additionally, Aziz Hassim, author of the novel *The Lotus People*, told me that his next novel was to be set in, and about a character who emerges from, the cane fields.

7. The singular presence of apartheid in the national psyche often erased other histories of oppression—such as the experience of indentured labor—and prevented an examination of their psychic ramifications. Since the British who brought indentured Indians to South Africa were inveterate record keepers, it is easy to garner primary documentation of indentured migration. However, literary narrations of indenture are much rarer, even though, as Frene Ginwala estimates, “more than 90 percent [of South African Indians] are the descendants of indentured labourers” (4).

8. Moodley is currently an admissions officer in the Faculty of Science at the University of KwaZulu Natal. *The Heart Knows No Colour* is Moodley’s first published work. Her second novel, *A Scent so Sweet*, was published in 2006.

9. Paul Gilroy’s notion of the slave ship as “chronotope” is instructive here (Brazziel and Mannur 49, 52–53, 64). The ship represents cultural interaction, albeit violent. Similarly, one can see the indentured ship, in keeping with the Middle Passage image, as a facilitator of cross-cultural movement. Indo-Caribbean scholar Ron Ramdin also uses the term “Other Middle Passage” to describe the movement of indentured laborers from India to various places in the British Empire. See also Mishra (“Diasporic Imaginary” 423, 429) on the importance of the ship in the indentured imagination.

10. According to Surendra Bhana and Joy Brain, the “first ship bringing indentured Indians from Madras was the *Truro*, which arrived in Durban on 16 November 1860. There were 340 men, women and children on board” (28). Brought by the British, who administered India in addition to the South African province of Natal, indentured Indians were to fill the labor shortage in “new and labour-intensive plantation crops like coffee, tea, or sugar along the coastal belt” (24). These immigrants were usually agrarian, illiterate, and destitute. Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie states that “Natal would receive a total of 152 184 indentured immigrants (62 % men, 25 % women and 13 % children). Of these, 101 468 came from Southern India . . . while others came from the northern and north-eastern areas of India. . . . The majority were Hindus, some 2 % Christians and less than 12% Muslims” (10).

11. Moodley here directly echoes historian Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie’s account of “the six to six” schedule of Indian laborers:

Being an indentured labourer meant that one was not quite a slave (a permanent piece of property) but neither was one a free soul. Indentured workers were bound by contract for five years and there was

incentive for a second contract for a further five years with the offer of a free return passage to India or the grant of some land; the land grant was eventually dropped in 1891. Food, clothing, and accommodation were provided. A minimum wage of ten shillings per month was provided for males, females received half this amount and children's wages were determined by their age. During the period of bondage there was little freedom. The contract stipulated a nine-hour working day but agricultural workers in Natal found that 'from sunrise to sunset' or 'six to six' was the norm. No worker could leave the estate without a pass. (11)

12. In another marking of the glossed-over physical trauma of indenture, Chum-pa (Sita's mother) says that "I have helped deliver babies in the field and their mothers are back at work in a day" (*Heart* 52). Another indentured laborer is "flogged . . . in front of his wife and children and the other people from his barracks" because he had been afflicted with "diarrhea after drinking the water from the drums" (53). Even pregnant women were not given a respite. "Her job, like most of the other women on the estate, was to put the cane into bundles, ready to be carted off to the mills for crushing . . . being pregnant did not make it any easier" (36–37).

13. In addition to exploring the horrors of indenture, the second phase of the indenture migratory arc also traces the aftereffects of indenture. By sending Gopi, Sita's brother, to the city, Moodley follows the life stories of many Indians who left for Durban after their indenture had ended:

The Indian labourers who were now free had many different plans for the future. Some, like Gopi, decided to go their own way. Some large and extended families, having saved very hard and pooled their resources, made tentative inquiries about purchasing land to start their own little farms. Then there were those who decided that they had had enough of this land, and used their money to purchase a passage back to India. Finally, the older generation, who were too tired and terrified to make any major changes in their lives, settled for a small increase in wages and succumbed to the call of the sugar-cane fields. (71)

The biographies of Indians after indenture diverged significantly from each other. In following Gopi as he makes his fortune in the city, Moodley charts one of the various trajectories across which the lives of the indentured laborers unfolded. The text shifts in tone once it moves to Durban. There we are exposed to the lives of Indians after the period of indenture has lapsed. The section in the city reflects the gritty reality of working-class urban Indian life. Moodley shows us that Indians have a long presence not only in the South African plantation economy but also in urban South Africa, where they contributed to the financial culture of the city in significant ways.

14. The economic uplift articulated above goes hand-in-hand with political commitment. Sita's eldest son, Mukesh, for example, "was forever talking about his political hero, Gandhi . . . he was not afraid to speak his mind about the oppression of the burgeoning Indian community" (*Heart* 192). Sita's other brother, Bharath, had

“died so tragically young after catching tuberculosis, helping the injured soldiers during the Anglo-Boer war. *Like so many young Indian men* he had served under the simple yet forthright politician, Gandhi, as a stretcher-bearer” (195; emphasis added). These moments in the narrative are elaborate strategies in fulfilling the text’s political destination. While sketching the economic progress of many Indians following the end of indenture, Moodley emphasizes their politicization and commitment to an egalitarian South Africa. The story of Bharath, while recuperating a history hidden in the margins, also reminds us of the sacrifices that South African Indians made for a nation that would grant them citizenship only in 1961, 101 years after the arrival of the first wave of indentured labor. Moodley’s meticulous reconstruction of the past enables us to understand the extent to which Indians have lived, suffered, and contributed to South Africa.

15. Hansen remarks that the “upwards snobbery in the racial hierarchy made relationships of Indians to whites more central and complex” (“Plays” 264).

16. The literal blackening of Indian identity here brings to mind the metaphorical blackening that Jayapraga Reddy evokes through the image of the “blackened ruin” in her short story “On the Fringe of Dreamtime.”

17. In that vein of parochial commitment, Sita’s daughter, Rani’s future husband, Balu Pillai, is sent abroad for his studies. “Master Sheldon had seen a need for an Indian doctor in the community, and Balu had jumped at the opportunity to go to medical school. Now he had returned to serve his people” (*Heart* 220).

18. Note that there are two Ranis in this novel: Gopi’s wife and Sita’s daughter. The latter is named after the former, who is the wife of her mother’s brother.

19. In his scathing critique of *Heart of Darkness*, Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe decries the representation of black Africans as inarticulate Others. Discussing Kurtz’s African mistress, Achebe argues that “it is clearly not part of Conrad’s purpose to confer language on the ‘rudimentary souls’ of Africa” (“Image of Africa”). Commenting on South African Indian dramatist Rajesh Gopie’s play *Out of Bounds*, Hansen says, “a deeply sedimented colonial conceptualization of the native world . . . still is . . . widespread among Indians in South Africa” (“Melancholia” 308).

20. Vilashini Cooppan points out with reference to Friday in J. M. Coetzee’s *Foe* that “faced with the South African white writer’s perennial problem of how to record the spoken discourse of black characters in such a way as to mark that speech’s difference without altogether exoticizing it as a species of, quite literally, local color, Coetzee in *Foe* chooses what Gayatri Spivak and others characterize as a Derridean aporia of silence” (353).

21. Moodley could also be simply echoing the fraught relationships between Indians and blacks in the aftermath of indenture. Robin Cohen claims that “indentured labourers and their offspring developed a troubled and often hostile relationship with the indigenous people and other migrant groups. The inter-ethnic tensions in countries like Guyana, Fiji, Uganda and South Africa provide cases in point” (64).

22. I am extrapolating here. Bryce and Dako’s subjects are black postcolonial writers such as Joan Riley and Ama Ata Aidoo.

23. Again, this is exactly the criticism that Achebe levels at *Heart of Darkness*:

Africa as setting and backdrop . . . eliminates the African as human factor. Africa as a metaphysical battlefield devoid of all recognizable humanity, into which the wandering European enters at his peril. Can nobody see the preposterous and perverse arrogance in thus reducing Africa to the role of props for the break-up of one petty European mind? But that is not even the point. The real question is the dehumanization of Africa and Africans which this age-long attitude has fostered and continues to foster in the world. ("Image of Africa")

See also Barnard (26–32).

24. Vijay Mishra aptly points out that "all that remained [in the indentured consciousness] was the memory of the passage and a loss that could only be sustained through the categories of myth" ("Diasporic Imaginary" 429) and that "in the old Indian diaspora this absence [of India] had become a true fantasy as India had no real, tangible existence in the socio-political consciousness of the people" (442).

25. The biographical information provided in this chapter is taken from the novel and the Internet. The only published scholarly study I have found is Govinden's essay "The Performance of Post-colonial Writing." Imraan Coovadia was born in Durban, South Africa, educated in the United States, and now teaches at the University of Cape Town. *The Wedding* is his first published novel. His second novel also deals with the South African Indian community: *Green-Eyed Thieves* was published in South Africa in 2006.

26. Coovadia spent a great deal of time shadowing his mother and his aunt so that he could accurately record the rhythms of South African Indian speech patterns in his text ("Green-Eyed Thieves: Imraan Coovadia." Retrieved July 13, 2007, <http://www.tonight.co.za/index.php?fArticleId=3306330&fSectionId=375&fSetId=204>).

27. According to Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie:

Of the Indian population of 41,142 in Natal in 1891 some 5500 were passenger Indians. News spread in the villages and towns of India and many immigrants to South Africa came from closely connected villages. . . . While the big merchants dominated the scene, many Hindus and Muslims from the west coast of India started small shops in Durban and also in the smaller rural towns of Natal. Others took to hawking in the hope of better things to come. The smaller traders, many of whom were inexperienced and lived in very humble and precarious economic circumstances, relied on the wholesale merchants with whom they ran up substantial debts. . . . Traders also cornered the African market, supplying clothing, blankets, trinkets and other goods. . . . Gandhi suggests that the white traders subjected African customers to poor treatment, while the Indian trader allowed the African into his shop and permitted him to handle his goods. (12)

Frene Ginwala states that "the majority were from peasant families who had been unable to maintain their traditional place in the Indian economy" (5). In a brief recapitulation of the history of passenger Indians, so called because they paid for their own passage to South Africa, sociologist Ravi K. Thiara explains:

Passenger Indians arrived mainly between 1875 and 1897, thereafter their entry was restricted and finally abolished in 1913. They came from the north-west of India and were predominantly Gujarati-speaking Muslims (Memons) and Hindus (Banias), a few Urdu-speaking Muslims, Marathis and Ismailis. . . . With the expansion of opportunities they moved to the Transvaal and the Cape but were legally excluded from the Orange Free State. By 1911, an estimated 30,000 in number, they were present in most of the major towns and cities in South Africa. (129)

28. *The Wedding's* structure is obviously influenced by Salman Rushdie's collection of short stories *East West* (1994), which is divided into three sections: East, West and East-West. Coovadia's novel consists of a similar tripartite arrangement around geographic coordinates: East, South, and North.

29. According to Betty Govinden, "apart from descriptions of indentured migration in the form of historical documentation, autobiographical writing of this history in South Africa follows a predictable pattern. For example, Neela Govender's story of her grand uncle *Acacia Thorn in My Heart* [2000] or Zuleikha Mayat's *A Treasure Trove of Memories* [1996] span a wide trajectory of events in the life of new immigrants from India" ("Performance" 158).

30. Appropriately, a diasporic character in Indo-American writer Sanjay Nigam's novel *The Transplanted Man* assesses the impact of India on its diaspora by claiming that "the shadow of India still hangs over us like hurricane clouds" (231).

31. See the section entitled "Images and Constructions of Africa" in Govinden's essay "Performance" for more.

32. Govinden ("Performance" 165) and Fainman-Frenkel ("On the Fringe" 152) make similar points about this passage.

33. Similarly, Vikram, Ismet's neighbor, tells Ismet to relinquish any nostalgia for region as the troubled situation in South Africa dictates that "in this country you must not come with stories if you are this Bombay-Indian or that one Tamil, one what-what Gujarati Indian . . . no, my friend, what is essential is we must stand together united as one, that is my point" (*Wedding* 150). Ismet, however, bristles at the forced referentiality of an imagined India: "What India did this Vikram imagine was there? The only India he had seen was a million squabbling fiefdoms and hostile tribes quarrelling over land. Where were these 'united as one man' Indians going to come from?" (189).

34. As P. Pratap Kumar remarks, "the Indians who came to South Africa came from various backgrounds: linguistic, religious, cultural and social . . . the nature of the ritual integration among Hindus, commercial co-operation between Hindus and Muslims—all demonstrate that the Indian is capable of negotiating the competing values in an effort to forge unity" (in Jacobsen and Kumar 389). Social scientist Goolam Vahed claims that "while a number of identities based on language, class, religion, and customs co-existed within the category 'Indian,' during critical periods of political and economic pressure, disparate community members were brought closer together and a common identity of 'Indian' emerged in relation to Africans and whites" (125).

35. For more on food in Coovadia, see Fainman-Frenkel ("On the Fringe" 151).

Chapter 6

1. Although Essop's fiction deals mostly with the Indian Muslim population, very often my analysis of the status of Indian Muslims in postapartheid South Africa reflects the disaffection felt by the Indian community as a whole. In those cases, I use the term "Indian" rather than "Indian Muslim." Yet this alienation perceived by the Indian population in general is aggravated greatly for Indian Muslims. While Hindu Indians may also suffer from the twin strikes of religious and ethnic difference, Hinduism is generally not collapsed with religious fundamentalism the way Islam is and can often be easily incorporated into the discourse of the rainbow nation.

2. Kruger points out with reference to *Kafka's Curse* that "the condition of diaspora, deterritorialization and uprootedness, attributed to the Jews, applies to other minorities as well, even in a possibly postapartheid moment of the 1990s" ("Black" 132).

3. Desai and Maharaj also note that "many Indians believed they would not benefit from the ANC's affirmative action policies. These perceptions appeared to gain currency as the elections approached and fear and vulnerability became pervasive. Indians began to retreat into their ethnic and cultural shell" ("Minorities in the Rainbow Nation").

4. Dr. King is obviously modeled on Christiaan Barnard (1922–2001), the South African doctor who conducted the pioneering heart transplant procedure in Cape Town in 1967.

5. The heart metaphor is not a trivial one. Essop underlines the need for "social surgery" (*King of Hearts* 13) in South Africa. He also suggests that the heart of humanity is the same despite outward differences, indicating that race is a constructed rather than real category. Dr. King asserts that "if one of the most vital organs in the body is that of a Sircon then they can no longer claim that they are pure Saturnians" (16). This implies an abjuration of purity and a synchronous desire to make Saturnians into Sircons by injecting them with blackness. It also forces the whites to recognize the futility of rejecting change. If a body rejects a transplanted heart, it dies. Similarly, in order to survive, whites must not reject the inevitable shift in social dynamics. Gradually the oppressive machinery of racial differentiation grinds to a halt. The country's name is even changed to Sircon-Saturnia (28), a necessary fusion of black and white for a viable political future.

6. Jameson is commenting on critic Robert C. Elliot's work on satire and utopia here.

7. Discussing Asian Indians in Britain, Avtar Brah argues that "a characteristic feature of [British] racism has been its focus on cultural difference as the primary signifier of a supposed immutable boundary" (168) and that "politicians such as Enoch Powell, being fully aware of the potency of cultural symbolism, made speeches which consistently used metaphors that evoked images of the Asian as the archetypal 'alien'" (27).

8. As early as 1959, Nadine Gordimer had presciently raised these questions vis-à-vis the white community: "[B]elonging to a society implies two factors, which are outside reason: the desire to belong, on the one part, and acceptance, on the other part. The new Africa, may with luck, grant us our legal rights, full citizenship,

and the vote, but I don't think it will accept us in the way we're hankering after" (*Essential Gesture* 32).

Azadeh Moaveni also raises the same concerns about belonging, but in different circumstances, in her return-to-roots memoir *Lipstick Jihad*. An Iranian American who has come back to Iran to seek a place there, Moaveni laments that even though she feels Iranian, the Iranians never validate her as such:

I thought of my family in California and superimposed the question onto them. What if they woke up one day, and decided they were really American? Even if they felt it with all the force of their being, did that mean Americans would suddenly stop considering them foreign? Maybe identity, to an extent, was an interior condition. But wasn't it also in the eye of the beholder? . . . What percentage of identity was exterior, what percentage self-defined? (115)

9. "Unlike the Assyrian kings his wealth did not consist of conquered territory but money—money conquered by his retail and wholesale shops in the city" (*King of Hearts* 104). The use of the word "conquered" suggests the nexus between Indian trade and the exploitative process of colonialism, a connection further enhanced by the description of Mr. Khamsin's business interests as "a commercial empire" (106).

10. According to Frene Ginwala, the South African Indian Council (SAIC) "was established as a nominated body in 1964 and became an elected institution in 1981. However with 80 percent of the [Indian] community boycotting the elections, even the Council's creators and participant members did not claim that it was representative" (10).

11. Mr. Khamsin spouts the rhetoric of racial absolutism at a gathering of wealthy business and political interests and launches into a discussion of separate development: "What would happen if the races began to mix indiscriminately? We would have chaos. Even the great Shakespeare stood for order in human affairs" (*King of Hearts* 107).

12. In 1970, Uganda housed 76,000 Indians. Following the expulsions in 1972, the number of Indians in Uganda had fallen to 430 by 1980 (Cohen 60).

13. My subtitle here echoes Nadine Gordimer's well-known essay "Where do Whites Fit In?" (1958). In keeping with the argument of this chapter, Gordimer appropriately answers her own question: "Nowhere [in Africa], I am inclined to say in my gloomier and least courageous moods" (*Essential Gesture* 31).

14. According to Daniel Herwitz, "the African renaissance [associated with Mbeki] explicitly eschews racial language while implicitly courting it. It explicitly opens South Africa to a multiplicity of citizens in the manner of the South African constitution while implicitly returning to images of a glorious black Africanist past—the past of the great decolonizing struggles and, earlier still, to that of a utopia before colonialism, which ultimately means before the white man" (70). For more on the African Renaissance, see the chapter entitled "Afro-Medici: Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance" in Herwitz's book *Race and Reconciliation*.

15. Unless otherwise indicated, my use of the term "Muslim" refers to "Indian Muslims." Having said that, it is important to remember that the Muslim constituency in South Africa is much larger than its Indo-Islamic adherents. While a study

of Islam in the Cape may lead to different conclusions about minority unbelonging, for reasons of focus, the subject of this chapter is Indian Muslims only. According to S. E. Dangor:

While official statistics put the number [of Muslims in South Africa] at 500,000 unofficial estimates range from 750,000 to one million. The overwhelming majority of South African Muslims have their origins in South East Asia, with about equal numbers from India and the East Indies. Muslims of Malay origin constitute about 45 per cent of this population and reside mainly in the Western Cape; a similar percentage is of Indian origin and resides mainly in KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and Mpumalanga. A small percentage has roots in Africa. ("Negotiating" 244–45)

16. Even though Essop clearly satirizes his protagonist, Salman Khan, and his overweening ambition, the novel also critiques the reasons for Salman's failure as much as it censures Salman himself. My analysis focuses more on why Salman fails to fulfill his ambitions than on Essop's critique of Salman, although the two are obviously related.

17. Only another Indian from parliament, Mr. Khamsin, previously encountered in *The King of Hearts* collection, is invited to the celebrations. "There were other Indians in Parliament, but he had not invited them as none of them, he felt, measured up to his academic eminence" (*Third Prophecy* 1). Later we are told that "there were eight other Indians, besides Mr. Khamsin, in parliament, but Salman had refrained from becoming friendly with them" (26). An intellectual elitist, Salman's distance from the Indian community is highlighted here, an estrangement that also takes on a physical quality, "his eyes blue and his face pale so that in appearance he looked more European than Eastern" (2).

18. According to Humayun Ansari, "the call for a ban on *The Satanic Verses* and a change in the blasphemy law failed because they were unable to convince the non-Muslim majority of the validity of their case in an idiom and in ways which that majority could understand. While actively seeking a more sympathetic hearing for these religious grievances, Muslims did not seem to be engaging constructively with British political, social and cultural institutions" (233).

19. The narrative thus transfers this imaginative failure—the willed refusal to offer belonging to those who should own it—to Salman. Essop criticizes Salman's strident secularism, a secularism he has acquired by living overseas. As Minister of Prisons, Salman refuses to allow a contingent of Muslims to preach religion to Muslim men in jails. One of the men from the group says to him, "You come from overseas and you make laws against us" (*Third Prophecy* 28). A reference, of course, to the white community legislating discriminatory laws against blacks and Indians, it also situates the group of Indian Muslims conversing with Salman as *not* coming from overseas, an unequivocal assertion of the Africanness of Indian identity, indeed of the Africanness of conservative Indian Muslim identity. Later Mr. Khamsin tells Salman that "in life one must make compromises . . . you know what happened to Salman Rushdie" (29). Like Rushdie, Salman too lives by a secularism that holds no sensitivity for those who believe differently from him. That is the problem not only with Salman, but also with the secular government he represents. Once again

this reveals important aspects of national identity in the postcolonial state. One is accepted as belonging only if one adheres to dominant patterns of religious, moral, sexual, and social affiliations. Alterity is not welcomed, even in the rainbow nation.

20. Just as the African Front is a thinly disguised manifestation of the ANC, the UMAC is a thinly disguised manifestation of PAGAD, or People Against Gangsterism and Drugs:

PAGAD was formed in 1996 as a community anticrime group fighting drugs and violence in the Cape Flats section of Cape Town but by early 1998 had also become antigovernment and anti-Western. PAGAD and its Islamic ally Qibla view the South African Government as a threat to Islamic values and consequently promote greater political voice for South African Muslims. The group is led by Abdus Salaam Ebrahim. PAGAD's G-Force (Gun Force) operates in small cells and is believed responsible for carrying out acts of terrorism. PAGAD uses several front names, including Muslims Against Global Oppression (MAGO) and Muslims Against Illegitimate Leaders (MAIL), when launching anti-Western protests and campaigns. ("People Against Gangsterism and Drugs [PAGAD]". Retrieved June 12, 2007, <http://www.nps.edu/Library/Research/SubjectGuides/SpecialTopics/TerroristProfile/Prior/PeopleAgainstGangsterismandDrugs.html>).

21. I am repeating, and diverging from, Homi Bhabha's description of the "Janus-faced discourse of the nation" (*Nation and Narration* 3).

22. For example, Ama Ata Aidoo's collection of short stories *No Sweetness Here* reflects on the failure of postcoloniality. The short story "For Whom Things Did Not Change" is about an old man who is still waiting for the benefits of independence and ends powerfully with the words: "what does Independence mean?" (29). Similarly Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* mourns postcolonial Nigeria's decline into dictatorship, and Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, written only nine years after Indian independence, forecasts the corruption of the Indian state and the meaninglessness of political freedom for impoverished agrarian communities.

Conclusion

1. Some of my findings here echo the excellent ethnographic work done by Thomas Hansen and Smitha Radhakrishnan. See particularly Hansen's "Diasporic Dispositions" and Radhakrishnan's "Time to Show Our True Colors."

2. One of the consequences of the gathering was the decision to establish a support group for South African Indian writers. According to Padayachee, the "Writer's Network," as it is now called, is flourishing.

3. See Radhakrishnan for an ethnographic analysis of these two strands of South African Indian identity ("Time" 268, 274). For more on the range of Indian political affiliation see Desai and Maharaj.

4. See Patrick Bond's *Elite Transition: From Apartheid to Neoliberalism in South Africa* for more on the failure of the ANC government to alleviate some of the most pressing economic concerns of South Africa, particularly those of racialized poverty. Also see Radhakrishnan, "Time" (277) and Irlam (697).

5. See also Dhupelia-Mesthrie (9).

6. Recently, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) even started showing Bollywood films on Saturday night.

7. See Hansen, "Melancholia" (302–303), on the prevalence of Bollywood among Indians in South Africa.

8. Sangeeta Ray asserts that the "majority of Indians in the United States have very close ties with the homeland to which they periodically return. . . . Most South African Indians . . . have almost no connection with their native land" (5).

9. This is not an unusual response even from Indians located in non-Western diasporas. The Indo-Trinidadian writer V. S. Naipaul wrote bitter, scathing narratives upon encountering an India radically different from the one encountered through the communal diasporic imagination. The titles of the texts speak for themselves: *An Area of Darkness* and *India: A Wounded Civilization*. Betty Govinden cites a similar incident in Dr. Goonam's autobiography, *Coolie Doctor*, when Goonam's family visits India: "My father and I were soon munching away in peasant-like abandonment, but not my mother and sister, the stuff was not hygienically handled, cellophane wrapped and hermetically sealed for them" (quoted in "Against an African Sky" 91).

10. *Filmi* is an Indian neologism and refers disparagingly to Bollywood films. Also see Jaspal Singh's essay for the role of Hindi film in constructing diasporic Indian identity and how "Indians abroad . . . become . . . more 'Indian' than Indians in India" (203).

11. An interesting contrast to the Durban Centre was the Jewish Museum in Cape Town. Jews in South Africa number approximately seventy-five thousand, compared to the 1.1 million Indians there. The museum was impeccably maintained and filled with visitors from all over the world. Clearly there was a pride in the Jewish presence in South Africa and its contribution to South African life, as well as in its rich history of resistance to apartheid that seemed to be missing among Indians.

12. See Ray on how "postcolonial writings are . . . on the side of memory, their oppositionality a function of anamnesia" (7).

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