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Caught Between Omissions: Exploring "Culture Conflict" Among Second Generation South Asian Women in Canada

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Department of Sociology in Education
University of Toronto

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Dedications

For my Father:

looking for my souls/soles...Tracing your footprints from (village/pind) Kundar to Toronto, Canada...miss your gentle eyes and hands...your telling of life's little secrets in the stories of masiji, Baba and Lal Basha...your pondering in shadows of white shawls and kurtas from Karl Marx to Sri Aurobindo...and your many acts of love...looking for ways to live without my soulmate.

And Also:

To the generation of people before me who had the courage to migrate either due to necessity or choice, who attempted to construct a sense of home in the cold winterlands of Canada. It is because of them that I have been able to keep a connection to the past, to memory, to a notion of roots. This work is also a tribute to the generation younger than me who have had the courage to begin to claim a cultural/racial space that is rightfully theirs in Canada. It is to them I owe my finding a little piece of myself.
Caught Between Omissions: Exploring "Culture Conflict" Among Second Generation South Asian Women In Canada
Doctor of Philosophy, 1997
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Abstract

In Canada, popular and commonsense understandings of tensions within immigrant families and between the white mainstream population and non-white immigrant communities have defined the conflict as between "cultures." I investigate how discourses of "culture conflict" are historically produced, and have come to have strategic, political and ideological significances. I argue that "culture conflict," far from being a descriptive metaphor of tension, is encoded in modern (normative) discourses of East and West and positions women in specific ways.

In this thesis I draw from interviews with young South Asian women and South Asian community workers in Toronto and an analysis of Canadian mainstream representations of South Asian culture to explore the production and negotiation of the meanings of race, multiculturalism and identity.

Second generation diasporic South Asian women struggle to construct an identity that speaks to their experience of being South Asian in Canada. In so doing they often unsettle, contest and resist normative constructions of both "South Asian" and "Canadian" identities. I explore how young women negotiate their identities across various cultural/community/ethnic boundaries and historical domains. I argue that it is in the moments of crossing and resisting norms that the boundaries around
community/cultural/ethnic/racial identity become apparent. Their articulations, challenges and resistances to prevailing narratives of "South Asian-ness" and "Canadian-ness" set them apart and/or exclude them from dominant readings of what it means to be young South Asian women in Canada.

While the struggle for young South Asian women is seemingly about the contradiction between "restriction" ("South Asian-ness") and "freedom" ("Canadian-ness"), underlying this tension is an East-West battle that is rooted in a colonial discourse of cultural domination and difference. This contestation is about what constitutes South Asian cultural practice and tradition on the one hand, and what is permissible as Canadian cultural practice and tradition on the other. This thesis explores the ways in which gender, race and sexuality work together in constructing and imagining the narratives of community and nation. I also argue that notions of nation, ethnicity, cultural authenticity and retention, and specific usages of youth and womanhood, are characteristically modern phenomena.

I maintain that as a mode of understanding tensions for immigrant youth, discourses of "culture conflict" are also a way of managing and containing the "threat" to white centrality within the Canadian social political and economic power hierarchy. It obscures the workings of race and racism and the normative construction of whiteness as well as the ways in which nation and community are gendered and raced.
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Chapter One: Introduction, Arguments and Chapter Outline

Opening Notes

Consistent with one of the "generic" South Asian migratory routes, I am a "twice" immigrant, my parents having passed through and lived in the Empire's headquarters, England, on their incidental, now thirty-year visit to Canada. My first memories, at age four in 1968, include driving in a car by my mother's side. Excited, I point to a passerby, another South Asian. There was always the ritualistic exchange of glances and nodding in acknowledgement of each other. And if the passerby was a woman, a sure invitation for chai. Even at that age, I understood that part of what made this such an important event was its scarcity. I also remember the arduous task of food shopping in the late 1960s. Our special monthly visit to the only Indian grocery store, from a place that was then considered the outskirts of Toronto. There, in a dark warehouse, full of cats and the smell of spices, I would watch my mother pick out the dry goods, dahis and attahs. And if I was lucky, a jar of mango pickle would accompany the shopping cart.

With this in mind, I am reminded that the landscape of this community has altered enormously in thirty years. Large South Asian populations now inhabit the regions of Scarborough, Peel and Metropolitan Toronto. The history of migration has fluctuated according to the labour needs of this country. My parents' "opportunity" to settle in Canada was not accidental. Their migration to Canada took place at a time when there was a need
for skilled professional labour in this country (Bolaria and Li, 1985). A hitherto racially restrictive policy was loosened in order to "tap pools of 'appropriate' overseas labour" (Buchignani, 1985, p.110).

This process of migration, the physical movement of large numbers of people and the consequent change in the composition of goods, services, consumer needs and international economic and geographical ties, has profoundly affected the landscape of Toronto. In this sense, it has potentially significant implications for a "re-definition" of "Canadian." The process of migration is also consequential for the ways in which it affects a sense of community identity and the meaning of "South Asian." Here community identity must be constructed outside the boundaries of a nation state and is in constant negotiation through the relationship between Canada/"Canadian" and "backhome." Arjun Apparadai identifies the changes associated with migration as a process of deterritorialization where "we as an ethnic group increasingly operate in ways that transcend specific territorial boundaries and identities" (Apparadai, 1991, p. 192).

Twenty-five years later, I now witness and participate in this deterritorialization: a South Asian community of young people, whose sheer numbers has, in some ways, played a part in the formation and overt celebration of cultural identity. At dances and weddings I watch voyeuristically arms-in-the-air movements that simulate a mix-and-match of Hindi-film, hip-hop
and disco. Wondering why people younger than myself have not "lost" more than me, at these gatherings I observe that the speak of "back-home" languages comes with an ease that is more pronounced than my own.

In the past couple of years I have participated in various debates within the South Asian community. Central to these discussions have been the issues of cultural retention, the diasporic experience, hybridization and cultural authenticity. To put it simply, there has been much angst around what it means to be South Asian in a place far away from "home." This quest, the longing and re-invention of "home," takes place within a hostile context, that of Canadian racism and assimilationism. Immigrant parents anxiously watch the younger generation in an effort to gauge what aspects of "Canadian" culture will be adopted. As South Asians struggle to form communities in the face of white anglo conformity, the underlying concern is around the dilution of values and traditions that are associated with "South Asian-ness." It is thought that if not guided properly, young people, the inheritors and future transmitters of cultural practices and artifacts, could forfeit their authentic "ethnic" identity (at best), or fall prey to the ills of a modern western society (at worst). The discourse of South Asian cultural retention, most often, is a protectionist one. It suggests that all traditions associated with back home should be retained. Any change is viewed as a possible foreshadowing of cultural annihilation.

These debates have not only affected the South Asian
community. The process of cultural diaspora-ization (Hall, 1992, p.258) has unsettled the meaning of what it is to be "Canadian." In the post-war era, Canada has been increasingly forced to deal with the reality of its diverse national population. The racial and ethnic composition within its borders has meant that there has been much angst, controversy and debate over the definition and meaning of "Canadian," as well as concern over the possible weakening of its boundaries. This discourse of nationalism equates Canadian with "whiteness," and it, too, is a protectionist one. If migrant populations alter the fabric of a Canadian identity based on white anglo norms then they threaten the definition of Canadian national identity. Any change is viewed as a possible indicator of cultural dilution. While the discourse of protectionism is similar to that of South Asian cultural retention, cultural preservation in the dominant white context has the (relative) social, economic, and political power and representational resources to enforce itself.

In the western world, popular and commonsense understandings of tension between the white mainstream population and non-white immigrant communities have defined the conflict as between "cultures." Here, the challenge confronting modern, culturally diverse societies is understood as arising from value conflicts (Colalillo, 1981; Feather, 1979; Wolfgang and Josefowitz, 1978). According to this "culture conflict" approach, South Asian adolescents are "torn" or "caught" between the values of a "traditional" (South Asian) "culture" and a modern (Canadian)
one. "Culture" here is understood as values, attitudes, habits and customs. Drawing from conversations with young South Asian women, interviews with South Asian community workers and an analysis of "mainstream" representations of South Asian "culture" and community, in this thesis I argue that the discourse of "culture conflict," far from being a descriptive metaphor of tension, is encoded in modern (normative) discourses of East and West and in relations of power, marginalization and exclusion. I argue that history and context are important to the study of race, difference and identity because commonsense notions of youth, "South Asian-ness" and women are characteristically a modern phenomena. Modern discourses of race, identity and difference obscure the inequality of difference, presenting the various trajectories of social difference, such as race, class, gender and sexuality, as seemingly neutral categories. I argue that the meaning and representation of these categories are constructed in relation to political, social and historical processes. They are historically produced in relation to the (continuing) dynamics of modernity and colonialism.

In this thesis I unsettle the seemingly natural categories - woman, South Asian and young -- in an effort to understand how young South Asian women have become enmeshed in a series of protective discourses. I argue that the anxieties about the "adaptability" of second generation South Asian youth are primarily projected onto women. I show that women have become the focus of this concern, as well as the site of contested meanings.
On the one hand, they must be contained from the threat of modernity, as represented by the new surroundings of "Canadian" culture. Here, women become the terrain of messages of protection, protection from the "threat" posed to cultural authenticity by living in diaspora, away from the "original" homeland. On the other hand, to the mainstream Canadian population, the South Asian woman is the repository of backwardness, the primitive and "tradition." She must be assimilated in order to become "enlightened" and modern. From this perspective the South Asian woman is in danger. She must be rescued -- "from parents," "from backwardness," "from her culture" -- and guided properly.

Second generation South Asian women in Canada are particularly "troubling" because their presence points to the ruptures and contradictions between "modern" and "tradition." Young South Asian women struggle to fashion an identity that speaks to their experience of being South Asian in Canada. In so doing, they often unsettle, contest and resist certain normative constructions of both "South Asian" and "Canadian." Not to place the entire credit for destabilizing the notion of identity in the experience of diaspora, I am reminded of another childhood story, one that speaks to shifting notions of culture and tradition.

Living in a small town of (Indian) Punjab, in Ferozepur near the border of Pakistan, where women practised wearing the veil, especially in front of older male company, my grandmother had worn the veil since her marriage. Shortly after marriage my
mother arrived at her in-laws to find that she, too, was to observe this aspect of purdah. After one day of veil-wearing my mother approached my grandmother with some trepidation to announce she was no longer going to cover her head. To my mother's surprise, my grandmother, described as an unyielding matriarchal figure, sighed with relief "thank god!" She, too, shed her veil that very day.

There are several interesting points in this story. The most obvious is that, contrary to the belief in an authentic "back-at-home" culture, practices of culture do not remain static, even "back there." The second point is a less obvious one. Both my mother and grandmother are Punjabi Hindu women. Popular notions of the veil have associated it with a practice of Islam only. But the geographical location of Ferozepur, a region of Punjab located near the Pakistani border, has meant that the cultural practices of that region reflect a mix and match of Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism. I, like my grandmother, grew up in both Hindu temples as well as gurdwarahs (Sikh temples). And, of course, even this religious fusion is subject to political mobilizations around certain rights, territories, symbols and identities. For example, in the last decade the movement for an independent Khalistan spearheaded by members of the Sikh community, and the resulting Hindu reaction and backlash, have made ties between these two communities tenuous. While the tension between the Hindu and Muslim communities within India dates well back to before partition (1947), post-colonial
manifestations have taken a particular form. In India, its most recent re-presentation has been in the mould of right-wing Hindu fundamentalist political platforms that have succeeded in gaining access to the official state apparatus.  

In this thesis, I explore how narratives of "ethnic" identity are constructed in relation to discourses of gender and sexuality. These narratives, I maintain, are political mobilizations that use notions of womanhood to mark and constitute the boundaries of "ethnicity." In opting for a reading of "ethnicity,"/"culture"/race as constructed and imagined, political and strategic, I seek to dislodge fixed notions of "culture." "Culture," as I have suggested in this reflection of my grandmother and mother, is not static. It is constantly being re-constructed and imagined in relation to and in combination with "other" "cultural" sensibilities, narratives and practices. I say this always keeping in mind that some discourses of "cultural/ethnic" identity occupy a dominant position over "others." Using an anti-racism perspective I argue that various aspects of social difference are racialized. Ethnic and cultural differences and their respective markers, such as dress, accent, language, and religion, are enmeshed in discourses of race, difference and inequality. Discourses of cultural difference are also about relationships of power, domination and inferiorization. The young women I interviewed reveal quite powerfully how the racialization of difference is a salient feature in how they are positioned in relation to "white" and
"brown" and how they negotiate their own self-identifications.

Perspectives on Understanding Immigrant Youth Conflict

Debates around cultural identity, retention and the boundaries between dominant and minority communities are not specific to the context of Canada. Western sociologists have long been interested in the impact of migration and industrial technological change on the notion of "ethnic" identity (Weber, 1978; Park: 1967; 1928). Among the most prevalent theories offered for understanding the change and/or maintenance of "ethnic" identity have been "assimilation" and "amalgamation."

These theories assume that a loss in ethnic identity is the inevitable outcome of industrialization. Also referred to as the melting pot theory of ethnic change, this approach presumes that immigrants would no longer wish to continue the traditions and practices of the "restricted old world, but would opt for the opportunities of the new" (Driedger, 1989, p. 36). Accordingly, it is thought that if children of immigrant parents acculturate and/or assimilate to western "ways of life" they will be better able to take part in and contribute to the country’s economic, social and political life. Assimilation, as defined by Robert Park and Ernest Burgess, is understood as "a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in common cultural life" (as cited in Gordon, 1964, p.62). Robert Park, a sociologist from the Chicago
School, was best known for arguing that immigrants coming into contact with a new society would, in the end, lose their distinctive "ethnic" identity (Park, 1967). He argued that most immigrants in the context of a new society would willingly join or amalgamate to the dominant group.

Leo Driedger (1989) claims, however, that while early sociologists were busy documenting the process of ethnic assimilation, they overlooked significant instances where groups retained a distinct ethnic identity. While the United States is most well known as a "melting pot," several scholars have demonstrated that this model of ethnic change does not apply equally to all ethnic groups or geographical contexts (Kallen, 1924; Herberg 1955; Newman, 1973; Nagel 1984). Moreover, other scholars have shown that seemingly alternative models of change based on notions of tolerance are no different than the "melting pot." For example, the Canadian model for "managing" race relations -- multiculturalism -- has revealed itself to be no different (Driedger, 1989; Berry, Kalin and Taylor, 1977; Walcott, 1993). Multiculturalism, predicated on the notion of tolerance, obscures the dynamics of race and racism and has done little to alter the white Canadian status quo (Fleras and Elliot, 1992; Ng, 1990; Stasiulis, 1990; Walcott, 1993).

Several scholars have shown that assimilation, far from being voluntary, is a coercive process and that racial strife is not just attributable to cultural difference and misunderstanding but a matter of power relationships between dominant and
"minority" groups and related to issues of economic exploitation (Bolaria and Li, 1985). The "common cultural life" immigrants are to assimilate to is based on white anglo conformity (Driedger, 1989; Berry, Kalin and Taylor, 1977). Far from being a matter of voluntary assimilation, assimilation/amalgamation/acculturation are accomplished through the racialized exclusion of those immigrants who continue to hold on to cultural markers that are visibly distinct from dominant political, economic and cultural processes and systems. Assimilation increases one's chances for equally participating in these dominant social processes.

The degree of adaptability to "Canadian" norms and values of second generation immigrant youth are, from an acculturalist perspective, seen to be indicative of the flexibility of their "parents'" culture. The conflicts of second generation youth are said to be a result of being caught between two cultures -- one of home and family, the other of the larger mainstream society. According to this perspective, youth whose parents are more open to embracing "Canadian" economic, political and cultural norms are portrayed as having less conflict in their adolescent years than those whose parents are more reluctant to let go of the "outdated" traditions of "backhome."

I argue that the "culture clash" or "caught between two cultures" model often used by the mainstream media and social analysts to account for the experience of second generation South Asians is inadequate and retains some of the assumptions inherent to assimilationist and acculturalist perspectives. Studies on
second generation South Asian youth in the West focus mainly on the process of acculturation and assimilation. This approach tends to measure the "success" of immigrants by the degree to which they assimilate into "Canadian" culture. The focus often becomes the "immigrant's degree of cooperation" and her/his "culture," rather than the hegemonic (white) culture. It tends to ignore assimilation as a prerequisite to acquiring access to social, economic and political "opportunity." Most important, the "culture clash" model tends to overlook race as an important determinant of identity. I will now detail this argument.

Recent media curiosity about South Asian subculture in Canada emerging around Bhangra: day dances is illustrative of the omission around "race." The "day dance" controversy has been described in the following way by an article in Toronto Life magazine:

Daytime dances, which mainly attract teenagers, have become the focus of an ongoing conflict between generations within the city's 120,000-strong South Asian community. At its core the conflict involves the usual parent-child issues -- clothing, choice of friends, dating, parties, curfews -- and dances serve as a powerful symbol representing them all....Complicating matters are several features peculiar to the culture....Indian children are expected to be passive and obedient....(Hayes, 1992, p. 40, 41).

The article goes on to describe the life of a young girl who is expected to come directly home after school; no hanging around the streets or at the local malls, mixing with boys, getting in trouble...Is this what it means to be 16?....It's certainly not what it means to most of the girls and boys her age at school who enjoy so many freedoms that are apparently unquestioned in Canadian culture (Hayes, 1992, p.40).
In David Hayes' article, the sixteen-year-old South Asian girl is juxtaposed with an unstated norm of freedom and autonomy. She is measured against the standard of a "Canadian girl" of the same age (read: white girl because the South Asian girl is not described as being "Canadian" or affiliated to Canadian cultural values) and is portrayed as leading a comparatively repressed life. In fact, the idea of freedom itself is characterized as part of the very fabric of "Canadian culture." This type of analysis leads one to identify South Asian family and "culture" as the only source of constraint and conflict for South Asian girls. Such comparisons between "Canadian" and "South Asian" tend to homogenize the experiences of "white" youth and reduce questions of freedom and equality to matters of female presence in certain public spaces, heterosexual affiliations and going to dances. How violence, date rape and harassment affect and constrain the lives of young "Canadian" (read: white) women in both the public and private spheres are not addressed at all.

The "culture clash/identity crisis" models are problematic for several reasons. First, they treat the cultures in question as equal competitors, a clash "between cultures" that compete with each other on an equal footing. This, of course, ignores the existence of a dominant culture (which minority cultures are expected to assimilate to), and the presence of systemic racism. In a (Canadian) nation-wide survey, 80.5% of respondents of British origin identified themselves as "Canadian" (Berry, Kalin and Taylor, 1977, pp.36-38). It was found, however, that for the
respondents "Canadian" was actually another word for "British." The Canadian culture they were loyal to was actually structured by (white) British values and sensibilities (Driedger, 1989, p.42). And in 1992, in an historical (national) comparison, research findings indicated that "Canadians" were the most antagonist in years towards immigrants (Globe & Mail, Sep. 14, 1992, A4). As recently as 1995, a public opinion poll reported that most "Canadians" preferred an English-speaking Canada over a multicultural one (Calgary Herald, May 18, 1995, A13). Despite Canadian governments' commitment to multiculturalism, (anglo) British values and sensibilities continue to form the core of "Canadian" cultural identity.

Secondly, the "culture clash" model tends to view conflict as beneficial to identity formation. For example, Peter Weinreich (1979) considers

an individual's conflicts in identification with others as being an important psychological impetus for personal change. In this view 'identity' conflict is regarded as being more frequently a resource than a liability (Weinreich, 1979, p.89).

This approach assumes that "identity conflict" is a resource for minority groups. He argues that the ultimate resolution to identity conflict lies in an individual's process of reconciliation. Weinreich interprets the idea of "resolve" as an individual project, arguing that the individual will eventually come to terms with and accept her/his identity. If one of the primary sources of conflict for "minority" youth is racism, as Weinreich himself points out, how then can conflict in regard to
this socially entrenched form of inequality be beneficial, so long as the source, namely, racism persists?

Both Peter Weinreich (1974) and Catherine Ballard (1979) question the validity of the terms identity and culture conflict, acknowledging that these terms inaccurately portray cultures of "minority" communities as the source of conflict. Weinreich argues that the generational conflict within minority communities should be kept in perspective because such tensions tend to exist in all communities, since they are in part the result of changing values accompanying the normal processes of adolescent self-concept development. There is no evidence that they are greater in minority communities, only that they are based in different issues, ethnicity being a salient one...Perhaps too often these problems are perceived as coming from within minority groups rather than from deficiencies in societal institutions (Weinreich, 1979, p.107).

While I agree that problems and conflicts within minority communities are sensationalized in mainstream institutions and media, Weinreich's attempt to "neutralize" identity conflicts, by presenting them as a universal adolescent experience does not take into account the importance of race in the formation of identities in multi-racial and racist contexts and societies.

Several South Asian researchers have attempted to explore the so-called "clash of cultures." In an effort to alleviate concerns about this "discord," their studies have mostly focused on ascertaining the degree of difference between cultures and/or adopting an approach of "cultural sensitivity" as a solution to tensions between dominant and minority communities. This kind of research also overlooks the importance of race and racism as a
contributing factor to the generation of identities in the Canadian context and often works within a "culture conflict" framework. I will now review some of the research generated by South Asian social analysts.

In his study of 277 adolescents of East Indian, East Indian Canadian and European Canadian backgrounds Naresh Issar (1988) sets out to compare the values held by these three groups. In his literature review he shows that concerns of educators and administrators over language problems and academic achievement have been replaced by anxieties over "cultural adjustment" for certain minority groups, such as East Indians. Conflicts between home life and Canadian culture are considered to be contributing to the problems of adjustment (Ashworth, 1975 in Issar). Furthermore, the conflicts between immigrant parents and their children are seen to be arising from the degree of difference between the sets of values held by immigrants and Canadian mainstream society on one hand, and immigrant parents and their children, on the other (Colalillo, 1981).

Basing his claim on "A Minority Report" (Toronto Star, 1985), Issar states that "Anglo-Saxon Torontonians believe prejudice exists because minorities refuse to integrate with the rest of the Canadian populations" and should be assimilating more rapidly (Issar, 1988, p.3). Against this background Issar aspires to compare the values of East Indians, East Indian Canadians and European Canadians to ascertain whether East Indian Canadian adolescents
are too slow to adopt the Canadian way of life and hang on too much to their traditional values as members of the European Canadian community believe, or their assimilation is happening too fast as their parents believe (Issar, 1988, pp.4-5).

Issar is critical of what he refers to as a "culture specific" approach. In its representation of "East Indian Canadian immigrant adolescents" as "torn between the values of the traditional culture (of their immigrant parents) and the mainstream Canadian culture." Issar argues that it takes for granted several assumptions about the correlation between "culture" and values (Issar, 1988, p.2). First, this approach assumes that culture is a "closed value system" (Issar, 1988, p.3). Secondly, he questions whether the conflict of values can be reduced solely to differences attributed to "culture."

In an alternative to the "culture specific" approach Issar argues that value-conflicts, rather than arising from cultural differences, can also be attributed to individual differences, such as "personal characteristics, family background, and unrealistic expectations" around adjustment (Issar, 1988, p. 2). He seeks to diminish universalistic (and comparative) claims about culture by appealing to individualistic notions of difference. He also suggests that contrary to popular opinion and research, the values of East Indian adolescents in Canada are not so unusual or distinct from their European Canadian counterparts.

Issar concludes that "overall what emerges from this study is a positive and optimistic picture of the East Indian Canadian youth....European Canadian adolescents seem to be quite similar
to the East Indian Canadian adolescents in their value systems" (Issar, 1988, p.86). At the same time he adds a reassuring note to parents claiming that his study demonstrates that young East Indian Canadians are not acculturating too fast or entirely relinquishing their traditional values. Issar’s analysis has little to say about the role of race and/or racism in this conflict between "white" and "non-white" communities. His approach of value comparison, therefore, does not account for systems of social domination and power and their relationship to identities and "values." While he is critical of the "culture conflict" approach he does not move beyond it. Rather than questioning its validity he accepts acculturation/assimilation as a shared cultural aspiration.

Arguing that most studies emphasize the historical aspects of immigration, while neglecting the psycho-social dimensions of South Asian families in Canada, Canadian social worker Wahida Valiante (1992) offers a critique of conventional social work practices. In an indictment of mainstream approaches, she argues that traditional social work models do not adequately address the needs and concerns of South Asian youths and families and are "ethnocentric" in their approach. Valiante argues that of specific concern to "ethno-racial" families in Canada are fears around the destruction of cultural identity and "traditional" family structure, clash of values and traditions, a shift in the roles of women and conflict between the generations. In her article, "Social Work Practice and South Asian Women," she
identifies the gaps in the research focusing on South Asian women and "their psychosocial problems" as "they go through the process of adaptation and acculturation" (Valiante, 1992, p.81).

Based on her extensive work with families, Valiante argues that

[y]ouths born in Canada or who came as infants
acculturate at a faster rate than their parents....Some of these children begin to discard the ethno-cultural
traditional family values (Valiante, 1992, p.94).

Parents, she explains, have "never faced opposition to their
traditional value system which had served them and their earlier
generations effectively for decades" (Valiante, 1992, p.95).
While perhaps generally parents within the South Asian sub-continent have never confronted the kinds of challenges that are pervasive to communities who migrate to geographical contexts in which they occupy a marginal position viz-a-viz a dominant
culture, Valiente presents a rather static notion of generational
conflict "backhome." She obscures some of the dynamics between
dominant and subordinate communities within the sub-continent
itself. Whose "traditional" value system is she referring to?

Valiante suggests that problems arising from "culture clash"
can be resolved by increasing communication and negotiating
skills between parents and adolescents on the one hand, and by
social workers acknowledgement of "cultural" variables on the
other. She cites the case of a young South Asian woman (Chandni),
who on the advice of a social worker decides to leave home in
order to escape some of the conflicts within the family. These
conflicts escalated when she began to challenge the "traditional"
attitudes of her parents. Her father reacted to her "defiance" through emotional and physical admonishment. In a critique of this kind of intervention, Valiante argues that her own approach, instead, worked within the South Asian cultural context by acknowledging the father's hierarchical role within the family.

In another example, Valiante discusses "intervention" in relation to a South Asian woman (Kiran) confronting the physical and emotional abuse of her husband. She argues that mainstream feminist approaches advocating separation as the solution to marital violence do not affirm the cultural values of the South Asian context. In relation to Kiran, Valiante writes that this woman was "determined to retain her cultural self by refusing to go to a shelter, seek legal separation, to alienate her in-laws, or to let down her family of origin" (Valiante, 1992, p.90).

Valiante offers a powerful indictment of mainstream feminist models that focus on issues of violence against women. She also provides a valuable critique of accepted practices of intervention. Mainstream social work models, she argues, ignore the distinctive characteristics of South Asian families by imposing western concepts, theories and explanations. In her analysis, however, Valiante tends to mistake ideological discourses around women for South Asian "cultural" values. This approach treats culture as a fixed entity and views certain choices and practices as inherent to "South Asian-ness." For example, if Kiran had chosen to approach a shelter or had opted for separation over reconciliation, should her actions be
interpreted as relinquishing a desire to retain her cultural self? Valiante's analysis of Chandni and means of interpretation falls into accepting the dominance of men as a defining feature of South Asian families and culture. While her critique of mainstream feminist models for treating western forms of patriarchy as universal is a much needed one, she suggests an essentialist notion of South Asian culture. She does not explore the ways in which discourses about women and their role within the family arise from intersecting social, historical and political dynamics. Or how, for example, certain notions about women are used to mark the boundaries of "ethnic," "community" and "cultural" identities."

Valiante acknowledges that there is intergenerational conflict but suggests that this can be resolved by cultural sensitivity on the part of social services and greater communication on the part of family members. She does not discuss the role of racism in young people's rejection of their "culture." She therefore ends up treating the "disowning" of culture as outcomes of peer pressure, resistance to parental authority, or a conflict of values between parents and children. Her analysis, like Issar's, does not account for the role of racism in producing certain desirable and undesirable subject positions.

In one of the most comprehensive and well-known studies, Paul Ghuman (1994), a British researcher, focuses on "attitude" and "values" as the variables most important to South Asian
youths' adaptability to dominant culture. Ghuman's sample includes young people, community leaders, parents, teachers and counsellors in Birmingham, England and Vancouver, Canada. He uses an acculturation scale to ascertain youths' attitudes to "acculturation," which he defines as the extent to which the youth "are taking up the norms and values of the British or Anglo-celtics" (Ghuman, 1994, p.137). Ghuman measures the degree of acculturation through an assessment of "positive" attitudes held by young South Asians on the following issues: gender equality between boys and girls; inter-racial (white) friends; the consumption of English/Canadian meals at home; the consumption of "English" popular culture; selection of clothes; and "celebrating Christmas as our own festival" (Ghuman, 1994, p.45). He concludes that his results are "optimistic" because second generation South Asian adolescents "favour a degree of acculturation" (Ghuman, 1994, p.137).

Ghuman explains that contrary to the majority of respondents from his Birmingham sample, who identified along national and religious lines (as "I am British-Sikh"), the Canadian-based sample of young people saw themselves as Indo-Canadian. He quotes a young woman as representative of Canadian responses to substantiate his claim:

...I try to go to church, I try to fit. I do my best - I still believe in my religion (ie. Hindu), but I can fit in both religions (pause) you have to - I do...They (parents) have accepted my biculturalism (Ghuman, 1994, p.69).
From this type of response, Ghuman concludes that it is "encouraging to note that the official Canadian policy of multiculturalism is having an effect on our Indo-Canadian youngsters..." (Ghuman, 1994, p.69). In his comparison of Canadian and British youth, the former emerge as more adaptable in their attitudes towards incorporating "Canadian-ness" into their bicultural identity. When some of his Indo-Canadian respondents question practices such as arranged marriage, he concludes that this is evidence of their "degree of adjustment to the Canadian way of life" (Ghuman, 1994, p.59).

While Ghuman's comparative study of diasporic South Asian youth in two different cities is ambitious and thorough, both in its attempt to integrate various community members and historical material on South Asian community development in Canada and Britain, his analysis remains cursory. In his attempt to provide information on the South Asian context (presumably for the benefit of non-Asian readers), he reproduces stereotypes about South Asian families and values without locating and connecting them to larger socio-economic and political contexts. He assumes, for example, that "equality among girls and boys" is a "Canadian thing" and reduces complex issues and tensions of adjustment to matters of food and dress. He does not look at how attitudes toward acculturation measure up to the realities of immigrant success rates in employment, politics or the arena of dominant culture. Rather, acculturation is seen as dependent on South Asian "willingness" to adapt to Canadian (or British) norms.
Although Ghuman suggests that racism may impede the process of acculturation, if not halt it altogether (Ghuman, 1994, p.136), he does not look at how racism may work to accelerate the process of assimilation. In his analysis, Ghuman does not consider the ways in which race positions, in a so-called "pluralist" Canadian context, young people's options of "identification." What price would they pay if they did not embrace a "bicultural" or altogether "Canadian" identity? Are such identities equally available to everyone?

Issar, Valiante and Ghuman take the concept of assimilation/acculturation as a given. In fact, Issar and Ghuman attribute positive value to it. "Acculturation" structures their entire research problematic, and they suggest that it is precisely because of the significant lack of difference between the values of second generation South Asians and mainstream Canadian society that the former should be accepted within the community of Canadians. "Canadians" need not worry, therefore, about the threat of non-white populations to "Canadian" values and cultural aesthetics. While "Canadians" may have to compromise a little, there is no threat of change to the fundamental characteristics of a national identity that ultimately equates the core of "Canadian" values with "white" European or British sensibilities. Valiante, on the other hand, does incorporate and not neutralize the significance of "difference." In a call for "cultural" sensitivity, however, she ends up reproducing fixed notions of South Asian culture and attributes certain discourses
around womanhood as characteristics of South Asian-ness without locating them within social relations of cultural difference and domination.

Much of the research on "ethnic" identity and migration accepts "assimilation" and "acculturation" as unproblematic categories (Weinreich, 1979; Issar, 1988; Ghuman, 1994). It tends to overlook the impact racism has on the formation of identity or sense of "self" (Valiante, 1992; Weinreich, 1979; Issar, 1988; Ghuman, 1994). The culture clash and identity conflict perspectives rarely address questions of social and systemic change or the discursive processes by which certain subject positions are made available (or not) or come to be desirable (or not), and are taken up (or not) and thereby, falls into a kind of cultural reductionism. While the culture of home and peers may indeed involve conflictual practices and messages regarding the "transition into adulthood" for second generation South Asian girls, as David Hayes suggests, "culture clash" models hide the reality of racism by naming the "immigrant family" as the only site and origin of conflict. It thereby constructs "white Canadian" family and "culture" as homogenous and devoid of conflict (Brah, 1982). In this way "Canadian-ness" is taken to be normative and unproblematic.

The analyses I have outlined do not examine the relationship between white Canadian identity and the "other." An alternative approach might explore how the achievement of assimilation depends entirely on the acquiescence of the "other" to the
cultural values, systems and aesthetics of the hegemonic (white) culture. With respect to my own research I am left wondering about the consequences of race and racism and the impact they might have in negotiating identities. Does "making it" within Canadian society depend on relinquishing certain cultural practices? What are the limits to assimilation? What about the differences between political and economic assimilation on the one hand, and social assimilation, on the other? Are these kinds of assimilation accessible equally to everyone? What are the emotional costs of assimilation for young South Asians who are caught between competing discourses of "acceptable" identities and cultural practices? What is the cost, both emotionally and socially, of choosing between "home" and the public spheres of school and peers, if both these are important sites of "self"?

Addressing these questions is important to an understanding of how identities are negotiated in relation to, and informed by, race and racism and other systems of power. I take up some of these questions in this thesis.

In the last fifteen years, South Asian feminist writers in Britain have provided a substantive critique of culture conflict approaches. Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar (1981) challenge the eurocentric assumptions underlying culture conflict theories, arguing that they are culturally reductionist because they single out certain cultural practices and thereby help to create a stereotypical image of Asian'ness'. According to this kind of theoretical framework:
The overall stereotypical image is that of Asian girls caught between two cultures, her [sic] parents' culture and the culture of her white English peers. Asian girls are said to see their white friends at school or work going out to discos and films and "choosing" their own boyfriends and potential husbands, while they (the poor Asian girls) are forced into marriage with someone who is usually twice their age...(Amos and Parmar, 1981, pp.140-141).

They conclude that:

The generalizations made about Asian parents forcing their daughters into arranged marriages gives a distorted picture of Asian cultural practices and ignores the positive and constructive relationship most girls have with their parents (Amos and Parmar, 1981, p.143).

Similarly, Avtar Brah and Minhas argue that contrary to popular stereotypes "the majority of Asian girls have strong, positive and mutually supportive relationships with their parents" (Brah and Minhas, 1985, p.17). She claims that the incidence of intergenerational conflict among Asian families is no higher than that of white families (Brah, 1979). Correspondingly, Leela MadhavaRau (1992) critiques the "between two cultures" model, asserting that it portrays South Asian girls as having no agency. She concludes from her study on South Asian women living in Leicester, England, that "[T]hese young women's identities, far from being in crisis, are focused on their lives as British Asians" (MadhavaRau, 1992, p.5). She challenges the stereotypical portrayal of South Asian girls and parents by focusing on the "strength and independence shown in their choices and identification of self" (MadhavaRau, 1992, p.i).

The analyses of Parmar and Amos, Brah, and MadhavaRau greatly add to the body of work on youth studies and brings
attention to biases in both feminist and mainstream non-feminist research. Parmar and Amos, Brah, and MadhavaRau address the eurocentrism underlying many "minority youth studies" by showing how "South Asian" cultural practices are often taken out of historical and social contexts. Instead they offer an anti-racist perspective which uncovers and demythologizes some of the stereotypes around South Asian women and their parents that "culture conflict" theories perpetuate. They emphasize that conflicts faced by South Asian girls are similar to those faced by young women in the dominant white context.

While the anti-racist critique of the "caught between cultures" model offers important insights about race, it does not adequately account for the experiences of young South Asian women. In their indictment of eurocentric and race-blind perspectives, Brah, Parmar and Amos and MadhavaRau tend to confine themselves to a discussion of eurocentrism, thus leaving out some important considerations affecting the experiences of young women. Parmar, for example, emphasizes the positive aspects of relationships between Asian parents and children. In doing so, however, she does not address some of the challenges, difficulties and contradictions facing second generation Asian girls, nor the process by which their identities are negotiated. While they critique approaches that single out "ethnic" adolescent conflict, Brah and MadhavaRau, by emphasizing that South Asian adolescent conflict is no different than that faced by "white" youth, reproduce shortcomings similar to the model
they wish to critique. All of these authors cast aside the conflicts, crises and complexities that young girls sometimes do face in an effort to dispel some of the mythologies created by the identity crisis approach. They unwittingly diminish the importance of race on the formation and negotiation of identities by arguing that the conflicts of adolescent Asians are no different that their white counterparts.

South Asian scholar Enakshi Dua argues that

Both socialist feminist theory and South Asian feminism fail to identify the historical specificity of the gender oppression of South Asian women. These analyses have reduced the gender relations to culture and tradition. While South Asian feminism offers a more sophisticated analysis, it also fails to adequately explain gender oppression of South Asian women. By emphasizing racism over gender oppression, it fails to identify the relationship between race, gender, and class in the lives of South Asian women in Canada (Dua, 1992, p.9).

According to Dua, feminist theory conceptualizes the gender oppression of South Asian women living in advanced capitalist countries through the concepts of capitalist patriarchy and culture. This perspective depicts the oppression of South Asian women as a universal condition for all women under capitalist relations of production and argues that the particularities or inconsistencies in the manifestations of oppression for South Asian women are due to inflexibility of culture, or tradition. Similarly, in a more recent work, Brah argues for the necessity of exploring the dynamic process of power and identification and how they manifest themselves in complex ways in the lives of young Muslim women in Britain (Brah, 1994).
Rey Chow (1993) brings attention to some of the theoretical flaws underlying what she calls the representation of the "native." She argues that in an attempt to put race into an analysis of women's subjectivities, women of colour have often remained within a reactive framework. The "native" subject remains within a framework that defines her almost exclusively in relation to the "white" object. This approach, she argues, not only has profound implications for the way we conceptualize subjectivity but also for its interpretation of agency. While women of colour have attempted to restore agency to the "raced" subject, they too have sometimes unintentionally reproduced an "object." She concludes that:

the result is a certain inevitable subjectivizing, and here the anti-imperialist project runs a parallel course with the type of feminist project that seeks to restore the truth to women's distorted and violated identities by theorizing female subjectivity (Chow, 1993, p.31).

The project she is referring to is that of the white middle-class mainstream feminists who have either tended to ignore the experiences of women of colour altogether or assumed that they are no different than the experiences of "white" women. Chow's analysis can serve as a cautionary note to the discussion on women's agency. By portraying her as an empowered subject only and thereby unwittingly re-objectifying her, Chow shows that even "post-colonial" research that attempts to restore the "female subject" to agency can remain within a reactive framework. This certainly applies to the works of the South Asian feminists cited above. While this kind of research addresses race in a more
substantive way than the works of Hayes (1992), Weinreich (1979),
lies in its failure to conceptualize the intersection of race
with other sites of power, such as gender, class and sexuality.
This kind of anti-racist approach is unilinear in its
consideration of the social dynamics of power relations.

In this study I explore the ways in which gender and race
work together in constructing and imagining
community/national/ethnic and/or cultural identities. These
identities, far from being conceptualized as natural or fixed,
are interpreted as political articulations. Particular notions of
race and gender are mobilized at particular historical moments in
relation to political contests over power. The concept of
"culture conflict," I argue, is a mode of understanding the
tensions between dominant and minority communities in the West.
This discourse is prevalent in both mainstream representations of
the South Asian community and in the discussions of South Asian
researchers, analysts, service providers and "community" members.
I argue that in the contest of power between "minority" and
dominant cultures of Canada, this mode of understanding
"tensions" is also a way of managing threats to the centrality of
"white" ethnicity on the one hand, and the threat of modernity
and "westernism", on the other. Young women are central in this
East-West contestation, both in its representation and in the
ways in which this discourse of East and West produce, construct,
position and imagine its respective identities.
Caught between Omissions

After reading the article in Toronto Life magazine I became interested in exploring what was being named as "culture conflict" among second generation South Asian youth. Hayes’ reading of conflict within the South Asian community did not, to my mind, capture the complexity of my own experience of "growing up" second generation in Toronto. Neither did the anti-racist paradigms developed by Brah, Amos and Parmar. While tensions between cultural retention and the demands of the mainstream society are experienced by all South Asian youth, I became specifically interested in how they were affecting young women. From a survey of mainstream articles, interviews with young women and discussions within the South Asian "community," I concluded that the notion of "culture clash" was having very real effects, both in the way conflicts and tensions were being named and represented and in the way they were being experienced.

For this thesis, I interviewed fourteen young South Asian women between the ages of fifteen and nineteen of varying religious and migrant backgrounds. With them I discussed their experiences primarily within the family and school and explored their notions of "culture," race and gender. I observed that most of the women followed a parallel trajectory of concerns. They all named conflict with their parents as the most significant issue affecting them and the tension almost invariably centered on issues of freedom and autonomy. They emphasized the severity of family and community restrictions in
relation to dating, choice of partner, vocation, and freedom of movement. I became aware of the significance they placed on what they perceived as a lack of freedom and control over their own lives. Feeling they had few people to turn to for guidance, many of the women I spoke to were attempting to sort out extremely critical issues on their own. They did not communicate with their parents about most of their experiences in the world of "school and peers." They all emphasized the need for secrecy, explaining that community and family approval of their behaviour was extremely consequential and without it they risked social ostracism. In one of the interviews, a young woman reflects on her experience:

My whole life is based on a lie and my parents probably know that...I don't think a lot of Indian girls have anybody to talk to. They really don't. I know so many Indian girls who are having so many problems. It is problems with their parents...They can't handle it. Sometimes they get so frustrated and so upset. I know so many Indian girls who all they used to do is cry. I find they all have the same problems. All they ever say is "I have no freedom, I have no life."

In some instances, young women were in abusive relationships. Young men seemed to be taking full advantage of the fact that these girls' parents would highly disapprove of their dating in the first place. They used this fear and secrecy as a means to maintain power in the relationship by threatening to disclose the relationship to the parents if the woman wanted to discontinue. While most young women feared judgement and exclusion from family and community, they also felt misunderstood by support services offered by school and other social agencies.
In one situation a young woman was being sexually abused by a family member. When the school and family services found out and decided to intervene on her behalf, against the advice of the girl, this girl's life changed for the worse. Her parents now viewed her as sexually suspect and blamed her for the abuse. As a result of the experience she has learned not to reach out for help either within or outside the family and deals with the effects of the abuse on her own.

In another situation, a young woman approached her school guidance counsellor in an effort to discuss the conflicts she was facing at home. The counsellor, she felt, was unable to understand her family context and attempted to resolve the situation by advising that she leave home. For most of the young women I interviewed allegiance to home and family was a central component of their identities as "acceptable" daughters and community members. Rather than solving her problem, leaving home as a coping strategy for this young woman made her realize the ineffectiveness of adult systems of support.

The women in my study seemed to be caught between the ineffectiveness of "white" peer support, mainstream social service agencies, and school assistance on the one hand, and the ineffectiveness of parental guidance. I found that depression, feelings of suicide and isolation were common to many women that I interviewed. I corroborated these findings in interviews with South Asian social and community workers. They emphasized that the conflict between parents and their daughters was of paramount
concern within the community and among the most significant stressors for South Asian parents and youth. In interviews, two South Asian community health nurses who have frequent contact with young women disclosed that there was a disturbing increase of depression, eating disorders, alcoholism and suicide attempts among young South Asian women in Toronto.

My research focus emerged, in part, from an interest in acquiring a greater understanding my own experiences of "growing up" in Canada. I began to reflect on the role that race and racism played in relation to my experiences in a predominantly white high school. I also continue to analyze the conflicts at home during these years. In my own self-reflection and an analysis of interviews with young South Asian women I have been struck by one re-emerging theme; the continuous negotiation of identities, changing of roles, wearing of masks, safeguarding of secrets. It became clear to me that the characterization of conflicts facing young women as described in the Toronto Life article are not fabricated, but describe in very real ways some of the struggles that South Asian teenage girls confront. While Hayes' portrayal of young women emits a particular message about "South Asian values" and family as the source of conflict for young women, the anti-racist paradigm, developed by some of the earlier works of Parmar and Amos, Brah, and more recently by MadhavaRau, with an emphasis on women's resistance to racism, falls into another kind of representational dilemma: one that overlooks the conflicts and contradictions that the young girls I
was interviewing were describing.

I became interested in uncovering the various discourses involved in the representation of young South Asian women and how young women position themselves in and make sense of these discourses. I realize that some of the issues identified as important by the young women I was speaking to are also experienced by "white" Canadian parents and teenagers, such as concerns around freedom, curfews and dating. However, questions of "cultural/racial" identity seemed to be strongly interconnected to whatever the young women in my study did or said. The "clash between generations" in the South Asian context is presented in particular ways and has particular consequences for young South Asian women.

**Thesis Arguments and Chapter Outline**

South Asian youth have been the focus of much attention from the South Asian community and "mainstream" society in Canada. For the former, the focus is on cultural retention -- the degree to which South Asian youth will "hold" on to the norms, values and practices of South Asian "culture." For the latter, the focus is on the adaptability of a "new" ethnic population to dominant Canadian cultural norms and practices by measuring the success of immigrants in terms of the degree to which they assimilate into "Canadian" culture. In the context of colonial India, historian Jenny Sharpe (1993) argues that a nineteenth century crisis in British colonial authority was managed by the British through mobilizing certain ideas about race and "women." She contends
that the figure of woman was pivotal in "shifting a colonial system of meaning from self-interest and moral superiority to self sacrifice and racial superiority" (Sharpe, 1993, p.7). I would argue that the moral superiority of white Canadians is restored by a narrative that portrays "other" cultures (in this case, South Asian culture) as backward. Youth, and especially young women, are instrumental to this narrative. Young South Asian women are constructed as in need of rescue from "traditional" overbearing, unyielding parents, cultural practices and/or families. This message is especially important in a climate and at a time when Canadian identity, its boundaries and meaning, are uncertain and contested.

My research comes out of the need to integrate dynamics of race, class, gender and sexuality and is partly a response to the lack of research on South Asian women in Canada. This thesis attempts to understand some of the "pressure points" in what is being described as a clash of values between South Asian immigrants and their offspring and between South Asian peoples and mainstream "Canadians." So far I have argued that in accentuating "culture" as the main source of tension for, and difference of, second generation South Asian youth, mainstream research has produced stereotypic notions of "South Asian." This notion of difference is treated as independent of the social relations of race and class while reducing dimensions of gender and sexuality to the realm of "culture." Analyses that have attempted to incorporate race in studies of South Asian women in
diaspora have tended to diminish the complexities and intersections among gender, sexuality, class and race. Rather than reducing the problematic of conflict between immigrant parents and their children as stemming from "autonomous" factors of patriarchy or racism, I look at how discourses of race and gender operate so as to position young South Asian women in the diasporic context of Canada.

I argue that certain notions of gender and race have been central to the construction, imagination and maintenance of the boundaries around an ethnic identity for both South Asian and "white" Canadians. The contestation between "East" and "West," and the continuing struggle for political hegemony, with its particular dimensions in the diaspora, positions women in specific ways. While concerns about young South Asian women and the tension between confinement and freedom are seemingly about women, this focus, I argue, is about an East-West battle that is rooted in a colonial discourse of cultural difference and inequality. This contestation is about what constitutes South Asian cultural practice and tradition, on the one hand, and what is permissible as "Canadian" cultural practice and tradition, on the other.

In Chapter Two, picking up on the critique of unilinear analyses, I look at some of the debates within feminist politics which focus on the consequences of inclusion and exclusion in the construction of an identity around the category woman. The tensions between race and gender, and approaches that focus on
one to the exclusion of the other, are representative of a brand of identity politics that was, until recently, common to most theoretical interrogations of identity. I opt for an approach that emphasizes historicity and the notion of discourse. This perspective, I argue, is able to unsettle the apparent "naturalness" of the categories of race, class, gender and sexuality and brings us closer to breaking out of the representational and theoretical impasses that unilinear analyses have generated. The theoretical impasse between the culture clash and the anti-racist paradigms, I maintain, can be diminished by attempting to unsettle the categories around identity that we have come to understand as natural and given. It is a means by which to dislodge the "determinism" of these categories and expose their ideological base. I look at some of the difficulties of discussing gender and sexuality in the context of modern discourses of difference. These discourses, I argue, obscure the inequality of cultural difference and racism.

In Chapter Three I discuss some of the methodological questions I confronted while conducting this research. I look specifically at issues of objectivity and interpretation with particular reference to my research project.

In a breaking down of concepts, in Chapter Four I start with the category of age to show that "youth" itself is a modern concept that has been employed in various ways to register the ambivalence and concerns around modern social change. I argue that far from being an "immigrant" phenomenon, anxieties about
change and adaptability in relation to youth, or what in the immigrant context is referred to as a clash between cultures, existed in the western world at the turn of the century. Changes brought about by the process of capitalist expansion and modernization mobilized fears around social change that youth either had to be protected from, responsible for or adaptable to. White, middle-class families worried about how young people were going to adjust to a new modern society and whether they would be able to assimilate to change in a responsible way. Here I explore the panic around juvenile delinquency, sexual behaviour and immigration at the turn of the century. This chapter makes a departure from the existing literature by arguing that "caught between cultures" is not an ethnic phenomenon as much as it is a modern one -- caught between the cultures of modernity and pre-modernity.

In Chapter Four I also provide an historical account of South Asian peoples in Canada and the formation of South Asian communities. I look at discourses of race as they present themselves in North America at the turn of the century. In addition to age, I argue that ambivalence toward modernity also took the form of concerns about the shifts that non-white immigration brought to the western world. The panic over race in Canada manifested itself in debates about immigration and "cultural" identity. I argue that moral panics around white youth and non-white immigration were/are central to the making of a "white" nation.
The tension between inclusion and exclusion is a theme that runs through much of this thesis, which at one level is about constructed identities. In order to understand young women’s experiences of isolation, depression and the reasons by which their lives have become so intensely regulated by parents and community, I explore narratives of South Asian community identity in the West. Narratives of identity, I argue, are produced out of intersecting historical relationships between “East” and “West.” An exploration of Indian colonial discourse is thus central to my discussion of South Asian women in Canada. In Chapter Five I maintain that the discursive elements of the struggle over “tradition” and “culture” that operated in colonial India parallel components of the “culture conflict debate” in Canada in the 1990’s. The notion of tradition as static and fixed, is a colonial one that both the British administration and Indian nationalists relied on (Mani, 1990b).

In Chapter Six I build on this theme of coloniality, arguing that the South Asian diaspora relies on similar narratives of community, woman and identity. In keeping with colonial nationalist constructions, South Asian women continue to be treated as the repositories of tradition in the Canadian context. I explore issues of nation and belonging, as they pertain to diasporic communities, in what I argue is a neo-colonial Canadian context. This chapter provides the “West” part of the intersection. Drawing on my interviews with young South Asian women I look at relationships among the concepts of race,
multiculturalism, and Canadian identity. Here it becomes clear that contemporary discourses of the uncertainty around the boundaries of white Canadian identity are present in the debates on immigration and reactions to cultural pluralism.

In this thesis I show that anxiety around non-white immigration, cultural difference and Canadian identity is a persistent theme in the history of nation building in Canada. Drawing on the notion of "moral panic" that I introduced in Chapter Four, I examine the focus on conflict between South Asian youth and their parents in the context of a more general backdrop of changes posed by an increasingly diverse society. The narratives of the "backward ethnic" and "immigrant conflict," I argue, are best understood in relation to the "real" or "imagined" threat that a non-white population has brought to the boundaries and centrality of a white Canadian identity and the maintenance of "white" power and privilege.

In Chapter Six I argue that South Asians are excluded from the imagination of Canadian national identity and in Chapter Seven I show that it is partly in response to this "oversight" that particular narratives about South Asian community, identity and authenticity have been mobilized. Building on the concepts of coloniality, race and multiculturalism, I show how narratives of gender, race and community intersect in positioning young South Asian women. I draw on interviews with young women to show how notions of womanhood are used to construct, mark and maintain the boundaries of "ethnic" identity for the South Asian community in
In Chapter Eight I examine recent popular cultural expressions of second generation South Asian youth. Looking at fusion music and style I explore whether young people are articulating a new ethnicity which breaks out of colonial notions of tradition, culture and community. I argue that while fusion and hybridity unsettle some notions of cultural authenticity, second generation youth, like their predecessors, are reproducing aspects of community identity that mirror colonial/national narratives of exclusion. And finally in Chapter Nine, I conclude by tying together some of the themes presented throughout this thesis. I also explore some questions warranting further inquiry.
1. I am defining "South Asian" in the diasporic sense. It therefore refers to people who have a historical and cultural connection to the South Asian sub-continent (India, Pakistan, Republic of Mayanmar (formerly Burma), Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh) and those who migrated from the South Asian subcontinent to East Africa, Malaysia, Singapore, the Caribbean, Fiji and other parts of the world before coming to Canada.

2. "Chai" is the Hindi word for tea.

3. "Dahl" is the Hindi/Punjabi/Urdu word for lentil. "Attah" is the word for whole wheat flour in the same family of languages.

4. While I use the term South Asian here, I do so realizing that its construction as an identity (as opposed to geographical description) is in some ways only relevant in the western context. One is not South Asian in Trinidad, Guyana or India, for example. For more on how the construction of South Asian as an identity is relevant in the western context, see: Chandra Mohanty (1993) "Defining Genealogies: Feminist Reflections on Being South Asian in North America" and; Avtar Brah (1992) "Difference, Diversity and Differentiation." I also take up this issue in Chapter 8.

5. Stuart Hall (1992) in "New Ethnicities" uses the term diaspora-ization to describe the process of constructing and negotiating "culture" in the diasporic context.

6. In Chapter Two I delineate the reasons for adopting, for the most part, the commonsensical notion of the term "culture" in this thesis. I situate this within a larger discussion of the terminology of race and ethnicity.

7. Nalini Natarajan speaks about the message of containment in the contemporary context of India. She argues that women have become the terrain of a nationalist message of "containment of the threat to national culture from diasporic Indian populations" living outside the Indian subcontinent (Natarajan, 1994, p.87). I have applied her notion of "modernity" and "threat" to the Canadian context.

8. According to Maria Mies "purdah" is defined as the "most radical form of sex segregation and seclusion of women. The seclusion can be achieved through walls, railing, curtains, veils, separate compartments in trains for men and women. Separate seats in buses, through gestures like turning away of the head or looking down and also through silence. Purdah means above all that a woman should never appear in public, and if that cannot be avoided, must protect herself from being looked at by men" (Mies, 1980, p.65).
9. I am referring here to the recent victory of the hindu-nationalist party BJP (Bhartya Janata Party) in the Indian national elections of Spring 1996. While they no longer officially "rule" the country they still hold seats in parliament. Their vision of the nation is that of a "Hindu India."

10. While this thesis explores in detail how narratives of ethnic identity are constructed in relation to gender and sexuality, I would like to point out that narratives of ethnic identity are also constructed in relation to discourses of race and class.

11. I had some difficulty in defining first and second generation South Asian. I, for example, am among the first to "grow up" here in Canada. However, I realize that after thirty years of residence in Canada, my parents are not unaffected by Canadian society. It is for this reason I refer to those who have migrated to Canada as the first generation, and their offspring as the second. First generation South Asians undergo more directly the experience of immigration itself, and the process of "integration," such as possible language barriers and the issue of "Canadian" work experience as systemic obstacles preventing them from joining the workforce at par with their qualifications. Second generation South Asians face more directly the issue of "identity." My parents, for example, never questioned their identity as "Indian," even though one of them holds Canadian citizenship. While some of their cohorts may have opted for a Canadian identity, most of their peers prefer a South Asian identification. In general, the Indo-Canadian dilemma has remained a more powerful one for second generation South Asians. Both generations, of course, experience racism in the Canadian context, although maybe in somewhat different forms.

12. Bhangra which is "traditional" Punjabi folk music, in the last decade has been mixed in with other styles of music, such as, reggae, house, disco, hip-hop and r&b, to create a whole new fusion of music. This fusion is particularly celebrated among second generation South Asian youth.

13. Many of the terms used to describe the "cultural/racial" identities of groups of people are problematic. I discuss the issues arising around the concepts of race, ethnicity and culture later on in this thesis. While I use the term "white" and South Asian here, I do so with caution, recognizing that I am homogenizing the experiences of a vast range of people. Far from being an essentialist descriptor, I use "white" in the place of European Canadians in order to point to the hierarchy of colour that continues to operate in Canada. Canadian values in many instances, I argue, are still associated with (white) European values. I use "South Asian" (as opposed to brown) for two reasons. First, to point to the diversity and diasporic nature of the South Asian community in Canada and secondly to point to the
ongoing struggle on the part of minority groups in Canada to be acknowledged and included in the full citizenship, definition and entitlements associated with "Canadian." Throughout this thesis I have also used "indian" with lower case "i" and quotation marks to point to the internal contestation of "indian." I argue in later chapters that the Indian nation state was constructed through a hegemonic discourse universalizing "indian" as Hindu, middle class, and mostly northern Indian. This leaves out a number of "others" who comprise the population of India, such as Muslims, tribal groups as well as varying other regional, linguistic and class differences. I also argue that in diaspora "indian" continues to stand in for South Asian, leaving out various "other" South Asians who are from other parts of the sub-continent, such as Bangladesh, Pakistan or Sri Lanka and non-western South Asian diasporic communities, such as in the Caribbean, Fiji, or Africa. I use "indian" lower case "i" also as a way of pointing to its diasporic condition. In the West, "indians" occupy a subordinate position in contexts that privilege "white" and "Western" over "non-white" and "Eastern".

14. Although this edited collection (Peter Weinreich, "Ethnicity and Adolescent Identity Conflicts" appears in Verity Saifullah (1979) Khan, ed., Minority Families in Britain: Support and Stress. was written over a decade ago, this piece is illustrative of a trend in the literature which continues to exist.


16. East Indian was originally coined by the British and was associated with the British East Indian Company. Because of its colonial roots, East Indian has now been replaced with terms such as, South Asian and Asian. While I have touched on some of the problems associated with the term "South Asian," I have nonetheless chosen to adopt this term because of the lack of alternatives (presently). While in practice it is used in hegemonic ways, referring most often to India and "indian," it theoretically at least allows for the possibility of inclusion -- moreso than terms such as, East Indian and "indian."

17. I take up this point about gender as a defining feature of ethnicity, nation and community in Chapters Five and Seven.

18. I will elaborate on an approach that focuses on discursive processes as a way of uncovering the intersections and complexities of the dynamics of race, class, gender and sexuality in Chapter Two.

19. While the focus of this thesis is on young second generation South Asian women, one may also ask about the emotional costs for parents. Parents are also in the position of having to negotiate
what may be considered the traditions of "backhome," and the context of mainstream Canadian society. Moreover, they are also caught between competing discourses of "childrearing" and "parenting." These discourses of course are raced.


21. I am drawing from the early works of Parmar, Amos and Brah (1980s). I am not, however, treating their text as a fixed representation of their reflections on young South Asian women and "culture conflict." While their thinking may have changed since then, these were significant pieces of the time. Brah (1994), for instance, in a more recent text -- "'Race' and 'Culture' in the Gendering of Labour Markets" -- points to the complexities and contradictions that Muslim women, for example, must negotiate. She offers a very useful framework for discussing young women's lives without falling into some of the reductionist traps I am outlining here. I use the early works of Parmar, Amos and Brah here because they were among the first to point out, from a feminist perspective, some of the inadequacies of the "culture conflict" approach. These early critiques have greatly informed my own thinking on the subject.

22. I will return to a more elaborate discussion of agency in Chapters Two and Three.

23. While the experiences of young South Asian women vary in terms of "conflict," for this study I was specifically interested in interviewing women who felt they were experiencing a significant degree of conflict, particularly with parents. Details of research protocol and the sample of young women used for this study is presented in the Methodology Chapter.

24. While I can be said to be a knowledgeable informant -- sharing similarities in my experience of "growing up" second generation South Asian in Canada -- I have also observed some significant changes in the last fifteen years that make my experience different than South Asian youth in the contemporary Toronto context. As I have mentioned a growing population and concentration of South Asians in certain parts of Toronto have had a profound influence on the experiences of South Asian youth, who now have a number of cultural symbols to draw on, in their search and articulation of identities. It is for this reason that I sought to explore substantively the contemporary experiences of young South Asian women both within the family and public sphere.

25. While I use the term community throughout this thesis, I do so within an understanding that "community" is not an a priori fixed homogeneous entity. "Community" continually narrates and
imagines itself into existence, is multi-layered, and heterogeneous. In Chapter Seven and Eight, for example, I examine codes of conduct for young South Asian women and how they challenge rules around sexuality and or/dress. I argue that in these moments of crossing and resisting norms, the boundaries around "community," "cultural" or "ethnic" identity become apparent. While young women are not separate from the community, their articulations, challenges and resistances to certain narratives of "South Asian-ness" set them apart and/or exclude them from dominant readings of what it means to be a South Asian girl in Canada. I will explore this point of course in Chapters Seven and Eight.
Chapter Two: Theoretical Journeys

Reflection Revisited:
The Conflict of "Culture"/How to Represent "It"

Let me tell you about secrets.
My first memory of being part of a community, is at age four, in 1968 driving in a car by my mother's side. Excited, I point to another passerby, a South Asian. Even at that age, I understood, that part of what made this such an important event was its scarcity.

At an older age within the walls of home. I paraded the latest in salwaar kaameez fashion sent through many hands and across borders to reach me. In the mirror I reflected the walk and talk of bollywood, mimicking the images of female beauty of the Indian movie screen.

I DO NOT remember when the marvel of being part of something larger...began to fade. I don't remember when it began, me getting smaller than my body, the darkness of my steps, the shallowness of my voice or the fear. The fear of discovery at the neighbourhood mall. (My mother and grandmother in sarees as I dart and hide amongst the clothes in the nearby shops where nobody could see me with them.)

My parents did not see our front porch steps as a mark of crossing. My crossing into a world they thought they protected me from, the world of exploring my femininity and sexuality. The world of self-bleached jean jackets...faded, in all the wrong places. I don't recall the first time I looked at bleach in a new way. A discovery that took it BEYOND clothes, to my arms,
face, and legs. Anything to keep the secret...

The teenage years, that I still carry with me, are about NOT being Canadian enough, NOT being Indian enough, NOT being white enough, NOT being. Not the right kind of daughter, NOT the right clothes or hair or skin.

I come across one of the many articles that ponder over this "condition." Here I am caught, half-breed, half-way. I am told that what complicates me is "several features peculiar to [my] culture" (Hayes, 1992, p.41). That it is my "culture" that expects me to be "passive" and "obedient" that if only I had "Canadian" parents would I be able to "enjoy the freedoms" that those "other" girls have (Hayes, 1992, p.41).

I want to run and hide amongst the clothes again. I want to protect the secret. I want to tell you that there are no problems, no tensions, no conflicts. Talking about these experiences makes me part of something backward, less than, repressed, warped, outdated, in the wrong place.

Why is it that every time I begin to speak about the tensions of home, I become part of a backward, repressed, outdated culture? Why is it that every time I turn my attention to the issue of racism, I have to close the doors of "home" behind me?

This is where I am caught -- not between two cultures, but between omissions, between fragments of myself.
In my introductory chapter I explored how most studies on South Asian youth have tended to focus on one dimension of their experience to the exclusion of others. Thus, they either produce eurocentric stereotypical portrayals of South Asian culture or they render invisible the contradictions and complexities of their everyday experiences which are connected to issues of cultural practice. In the process of this research I began to ponder how I would represent the experiences of women, which include contestation over parental authority and expected "feminine" behaviour within the South Asian community, without rendering them passive victims to a seemingly foreordained set of racist social relations around "South Asian" culture.

While I could identify the shortcomings in both mainstream representations and academic scholarship on South Asian Canadian youth, I was left with several troubling questions. Is it possible to take up the specificities of South Asian cultural practices without falling into stereotypical representations of South Asian culture and families? Are the experiences of South Asian girls fundamentally different from "other" adolescent girls? When does "culture" determine their experience and can experience ever be constructed and conceived of outside of "culture?" (What is "culture?") When is it important to note cultural specificities and how do you acknowledge them even when such acknowledgement might feed into existing stereotypes? Is there a way to acknowledge "cultural" difference while simultaneously dislodging and subverting stereotypical
representations? Once we acknowledge the systems of inequality that shape our experiences, such as race, class and gender, how do we understand them without overdetermining or underdetermining their importance?

Returning to Rey Chow (1993), how do we represent the "native subject" without rendering her a complete victim to systems of oppression, or completely exterior to or unaffected by the social world? In relation to young South Asian women, acknowledging "cultural" aspects to their experiences as women (in a racist context) unwittingly constructs them as passive victims to oppressive "traditions." On the other hand, arguing that their experiences of conflict in Canadian society stem from race alone, while restoring their agency and dislodging the stereotype about "their oppressive culture," does not account for the ways in which aspects of their experience engage with and are constructed by notions of "culture."

These dilemmas, I argue, have to do with the difficulties of theorizing around "culture" and difference, and are related to issues of representation and agency. In this chapter I will discuss some of these issues in relation to my own research process. I encountered two kinds of difficulties in making the connection between gender and race. First, I was struck by a confusion in anti-racist literature around the usage of the terms culture, race and ethnicity. Adding to this confusion are post-war discourses of difference in which notions of "racial" inferiority have been replaced by ideologies of "cultural"
in inferiority. This substitution renders the subtext of race and racism less visible.

Secondly, I found feminist theorizing around gender could not explain the experiences of South Asian women. Many feminist theories analyze "difference" according to a unilinear framework which is unreflective of the varying social dynamics affecting women's lives. These dynamics intersect in contradictory and uneven ways to construct the conditions in which women live, and the discourses they have available for sense-making and political strategies. In my discussions with young South Asian women about self-identification I found that the tension between "difference" and "sameness" dominated as a theme. They often struggle to negotiate an identity that is not too "South Asian" or too "Canadian" (See Chapters Six and Eight). I look at the feminist debates around equality and difference because they have dominated much of the theoretical interrogations of identity.

And finally, in this chapter I will outline some of the ways I have chosen to diminish the representational and theoretical problems arising from the kinds of unidimensional analyses that have dominated much of the research on South Asian women in the West.

**Culture, Race, Ethnicity**

There are several reasons why discussions about notions of "culture" are both confusing and complicated. Literature that uses race, ethnicity and culture as interchangeable terms contributes to this difficulty. To complicate matters further,
the usage of the term "culture" itself is often confusing and contradictory and is a notoriously difficult term, which sociologists of all persuasions have had a great deal of difficulty with. Part of the problem has to do with the confusion between culture as a descriptive category and culture as an analytic category; another has to do with commonsense usages and; finally there are tensions between treating culture as static and fixed or seeing it as historically constituted and contested, always dynamic and changing. I will detail the different usages of the term culture and some of the debates around the usage of race and "ethnicity" before I elaborate on my own interpretation and application of these concepts.

In both sociological and anthropological literature the use of the term culture remains varied and undefinable. "Culture," for example, has been used as an adjective marking the difference between "high" and "low" culture and, in this sense, has class, gender and colonial connotations. High culture is associated with the pursuit of classical art and music by white, European men, while "low" culture refers to the interests of the "common" masses, such as pop music and mass media (Bullivant, 1993; Willis, 1990). The persons involved in the former are thought to be "civilized" and (precisely) "cultured," while the latter are seen to be lacking in this sophistication. Ironically, in other ways, many defined as "other" are designated this latter status because they are seen as saturated with culture (of static, backward, traditional kinds), analogous to how "women" are
thought to be saturated with sex.

"Culture" has also been used as a term describing the activities of a particular group of people -- as in "school culture," "the culture of skin-heads," "the culture of teenage girls" (Bullivant, 1993). This descriptive usage of "culture" assumes that particular groupings of people possess similar characteristics, interests and outlooks, which are referred to in some instances as "subcultures."

Sociologist Brian Bullivant argues for an interpretation of culture that is based in "knowledge, ideas and skills that enable a group to survive" (Bullivant, 1993, p.30). Here "culture" suggests something more strategic and political.

The most useful and relevant insights into the term culture for my own research I have found in the works of Tony Bennett and Edward Said. Bennett (1981) explores the changing meanings of the concept culture. He traces "culture" in its reference to the perfection of human development to the sixteenth century. Later in the eighteenth century, human development became co-terminous with the Enlightenment notion of civilization. In the context of Enlightenment thinking, Bennett argues:

the development of culture and civilization - a hybrid concept referring to the development of economic, social and political institutions as well as the arts - was regarded as leading towards the creation of more rational, more enlightened patterns of thought and organization (Bennett, 1981, p.77).

The idea of culture became interconnected with modern western notions of civilization, advancement and development. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries "culture" and civilization,
arguments in this thesis. I argue that women and youth have
political cartography because both these notions are relevant to the
Salat’s interpretation of “culture” as an ideologically and
intricately defined, “historically” of “culture”, and
I have introduced both Benet’s “historical” and Salat’s “interpretation of "culture" as an ideologically and
and tradition (Salat, 1993, p. xxi).
sense is a source of identity and a rather comprehensive
always with some degree of xenophobia. Culture in this
sense, this differentiation, "us", from "them", almost
associated often aggressively, with the nation or
know of thought... In time, culture comes to be
each society's reservoir of the best that has been
development of culture as the perception and development of
explains that this latter definition of culture is engaged with
second is tied to notions of nation and ethnicity. Edward Said
which one is tied to ideas about "cultural" art and music, the
would argue that there are two common sense notions of culture.
meanings. It is enmeshed with notions of nation and belonging. I
human society has also come to have ideologically and politically
the idea of culture as the perception and development of
costs of civilization,
preservation and protection from what is seen as the ruthless
associated with the sense of values that are in need of
système. Bennett argues that culture has come to be
seen to be independent and autonomous from society, economic and
technological growth (Bennett, 1983). Culture, in this sense, is
closely tied to and dependent on the processes of industrial and
representation" (Salat, 1993, p.xxi). While the latter is more
involved in the areas of description, communication, and
separate meanings. The former refers to all the practices
once thought to be synonymous, have developed increasingly
become symbols, if you will, of "the sets of values" that are seen to be in need of protection from the process of modern social progress. And secondly, I argue that certain discourses of women and youth are mobilized in order to maintain and assert specific notions of identity and belonging. South Asian "cultural" identity relies on particular definitions of "womanhood" in order to assert a distinct "Eastern" identity viza-viz the "West." A lot of this analysis on identity and representation has come out of cultural and post-colonial studies.

I would now like to turn to the second point in my argument about the difficulties of theorizing around "culture," namely the confusion and interchangeable use of the terms race, ethnicity and culture in some of the anti-racism literature. Because "culture" is associated with the notions of identity and belonging, it has often been used synonymously with race and ethnicity. Race and "ethnicity," while used interchangeably, have in themselves been the source of considerable debate. Part of the contention centers on whether these terms are descriptive of an "objective," naturally occurring reality or of a socially constructed one. In other words, do racial "difference" and division exist as a natural blueprints or are their significance merely social and epistemological. In defence of the latter, Kwame Anthony Appiah has argued that a common culture based on race for black Americans, for example, has more to do with the shared experience of oppression (Appiah, 1992; see also, Gilroy,
1987). According to this perspective it is because of historical and geographical relationships and conditions that black Americans have generated a "common" culture. At the root of this debate is not only the social significance of the term race, but in what an identity based on race is grounded. This raises questions about whether different theorizations of race/racism/racialization work equally well for different groups and contexts. While it is beyond the scope of this research, one may explore some of the effects of South Asians in the U.K being named and naming themselves as black, in the United States as Asian and in Canada as South Asian. And further still are South Asian diasporic communities in the non-West. For example, in Trinidad the naming/being named comes in the form of "Indian."

Canadian scholar Peter Li emphasizes that it is the social significance bestowed on racial differences that gives race its meaning (Li, 1990). Racial difference in itself need not give way to a system of racial inequality. Li argues that:

biological and genetic features that are believed to have produced racial and ethnic groups are also held to determine people's mental, social, and cultural capacities. Accordingly, racial and ethnic groups are seen as forming a hierarchy, based on alleged abilities and potentials, in which some groups are supposedly superior to others. This ranking of racial and ethnic groups along a scale of superiority and inferiority is the essence of racism (Li, 1990, p.3).

Pointing to the state's regulation of immigration and the legal system, Li argues that the definition and relative status of racial and ethnic groups are constantly shifting. This constant flux is indicative of the constructedness of race and
"ethnicity." As examples, he refers to black peoples of South Africa and the First Nation peoples of Canada. The former, he argues, have been assigned a legal status based on their colour as opposed to their own subjective affiliation and association to the term "black." In the case of the latter, he contends that the Canadian Indian Act has placed both entitlements and restrictions on those defined as status Indians and that the difference between status and non-status Indians has less to do with their "ethnic"/"racial"/"cultural" attributes and more to do with legal and bureaucratic considerations (Li, 1990, p.6). These are examples of "identity" being differently constructed, regulated and/or legislated by the state in different contexts.

Because "ethnicity" is seen to be tied to liberal notions of "multicultural" celebrations of difference in multi-ethnic/racial societies, some have argued that "it" obscures the power relations of race (Coombs, 1996). Arguing that in a racist society ethnicity has come to refer to non-white people only, thereby concealing the salience and variations of white ethnicity, some scholars advocate against the usage of "ethnicity" in the place of race (Walcott, 1993). According to Floya Anthias (1990), however, even "ethnicity" can be used as a basis of marginalization and subordination. Anthias argues that "the markers and signifiers that racism uses need not be those of biology or physiognomy but can be those of language, territorial rights or culture" (Anthias, 1990, p.24). She makes a distinction between race and ethnicity. The former relies on biological
markers of difference while the latter she defines as "the identification of particular cultures as ways of life or identity which are based on a historical notion of origin or fate, whether mythical or 'real'" (Anthias, 1990, p.20)."

Others opt instead for the use of "ethnicity" rather than race, arguing that because the latter refers to a socially constructed system of inequality, using it reifies the idea that race is an immutable fact, thereby increasing its social significance. Ethnicity, on the other hand, reduces the significance of race because it points to the social constructedness of the term (Hall, 1992).

**Race, Culture and Discourses of Difference**

It is precisely because, as Li argues well, biological differences have become enmeshed in discourses of difference that are not only descriptive but also evaluative, that race has become such a contentious and potentially dangerous term, in much the same way as "sex," age and a number of other biological categories have. "Culture" is also a term that is not only descriptive of the various ways in which groups of people make meaning, generate a blueprint of survival or "common" identity, but has also come to have evaluative connotations. "Culture" has become part of racial discourses of difference.

The interchangeable uses of the terms culture, race and ethnicity can be understood if we examine the shifting notions of "difference" in the twentieth century. Tracing the origin of the modern meaning of the concept "culture" to the twentieth century,
Abu-Lughod (1991) argues that "it" has come to replace race as a means of explaining and understanding difference. Similarly, Philomena Essed maintains that nineteenth century arguments about racial inferiority (based on biological and genetic differences) are no longer seen as credible and have been replaced with apparently more "tolerant" notions of cultural inferiority. Cultural difference has thus become the new marker of socially constructed racial difference (Razack, 1994). Differences in "culture" (and not racism) are seen to be responsible for discrepancies in economic and political development, governmental structure, lifestyle and personal attributes and achievements.

Writing about western Europe, Philomena Essed (1990; 1991) argues that late twentieth century racism operates through a discourse of apparent tolerance. She asserts that tolerance in a culturally pluralistic society presumes that people of colour and other immigrants "accept and internalize the norms and values of the dominant group," while they at the same time are "permitted" to retain their cultural identity (so long as it does not conflict with the dominant social, legal order) (Essed, 1991, p.17). Sherene Razack argues that according to this paradigm people of colour are seen as "not having made it owing to their cultural incompatibility with the dominant culture" (Razack, 1995, p.67).

Because the concept of culture has become interwoven and conflated with notions of race it has opened discussions of "culture" to eurocentric and racist conclusions. While it is no
longer acceptable, for example, to speak about racial differences or incompatibilities as reasons for segregation, exclusion or intolerance, cultural incompatibility and difference remain as justifications for partial treatment toward "non-white" populations in the western world. In my interviews with young South Asian women, I found that a discourse of "cultural" difference and conflict obscured the working of race and racism and the normative construction of "whiteness."

It is in part due to this conflation of race and culture that "anti-racist" scholarship has tended to eschew questions of gender oppression within a "non-white" cultural context. Philomena Essed argues that the principle of tolerance, which has been adopted in some countries as a way of managing cultural diversity in the post-war era, creates new forms of racism while at the same time rendering race and racism invisible. The Canadian model of multiculturalism is based on notions of tolerance and is a paradigmatic case, in Essed's sense. Discussing "culture" and "cultural differences," therefore, becomes perilous in racist contexts, because it may reinforce the invisibility of the racist subtext (Razack, 1994). Razack maintains that most discussions of "culture" are

formulated on the basis of a reductionist notion of culture whereby culture is taken to mean values, beliefs, knowledge and customs, all of which exist in a timeless vacuum outside of patriarchy, racism, imperialism and colonialism (Razack, 1994, p.4).

Culture in this context claims "a superautonomy that reduces all facets of social experience to issues of culture" (Calmore, 1992,
p. 2185, as cited in Razack, 1994, pp.4-5). In this kind of climate, any discussion of gender relations within a non-white context, raises the danger of reinforcing stereotypical and fixed notions of culture, where gender oppression is seen as an "effect" of culture.

The Conflict of Talking "Culture"

Sherene Razack (1994) takes up some of the challenges and contradictions facing scholars who attempt to look at notions of cultural difference and race. She provides the example of feminist service providers for immigrant women dealing with violence. She argues that on the one hand women have criticized an analysis of violence that reduces it to the effects of culture (as in "South Asian men are violent and repressive by nature and South Asian women are passive and oppressed"). On the other hand, however, immigrant women have advocated for government funding on the basis of the need for "culturally" sensitive services.

During the process of my own research I found myself arguing that the difficulties that young South Asian teenagers face are no different than the issues that young women from the dominant culture confront -- dating, curfew, degree of autonomy. I was reacting to literature that portrayed South Asian culture as backward, repressive and the source of conflict for women. Yet, on the other hand, I, along with others, have been fighting for the recognition of the need for social services that would acknowledge and be inclusive of South Asian "cultural" contexts and specificities.
The tension between sameness and difference has been central in most theoretical interrogations of "identity." Ann Snitow describes this tension in relation to feminist theories:

...a common divide keeps forming in both feminist thought and action between the need to build the identity "woman" and give it a solid political meaning and the need to tear down the very category "woman" and dismantle its all-too-solid history (Snitow, 1990, p.9).

The "common divide" that Ann Snitow speaks of is a consistent theme in feminist history. Often referred to as the difference/equality debate, it oscillates between those who believe that feminist efforts should be directed toward addressing the conditions which currently circumscribe women's social position so that they may enjoy the same rights and privileges as men (the equality position) and those who argue that feminist politics should focus on eradicating the very nature of these differences and conditions (the difference position) (Barrett, 1987). Since the late 1970's, the debate has shifted from concentrating on differences between women and men to examining differences among women themselves, primarily in terms of race, class and sexuality (Smith and Smith, 1981; Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1981).

Until the late 1970s, much of western feminist politics and theorizing was directed toward revealing what was seen as a common, universal oppression of women. Many of the feminist writings of the time advocated a sisterhood, women's community, and notions of female bonding on the basis of a shared common enemy (either men, masculinity or patriarchy) (Daly, 1978; Rich,
1977; Firestone, 1970; Morgan, 1970; Friedan, 1963). Other feminists have critiqued these positions. Some argue that an essentialist notion of woman does not account for differences arising from other systems of inequality, such as class and race, and that this kind of gender analysis identifies sexism as the principal inequality (Bannerji, 1991; Mohanty, 1988; Lazreg, 1988; Ong, 1988; Amos and Parmar, 1984; Hartman, 1981; Sargent, 1981). Black, Asian, African, and Latin American women have continued to resist and critique white, middle-class, western feminist scholarship and activism for rendering their experiences invisible. Scholars such as Chandra Mohanty point out that a universal notion of sisterhood/womanhood neglects to account for the varying social contexts from which gender identities and relations emerge (Mohanty, 1988). Western feminist theory has ignored the diversity of women's experiences as social and political subjects, whose consciousness cannot be reduced to some single identity arising solely from their gender.

In their attempt to start from "women's experience," mainstream western feminist theory has universalized the experience of some women (white, middle-class), while occluding that of others. This has rendered feminist knowledge claims just as ideological as their masculinist antecedents for the non-white, non-western subject. Although white, middle-class, western feminists have re-visioned male-stream thought (Daly, 1978; Rich, 1977; Morgan, 1970; Firestone, 1970; Friedan, 1963), their conceptual categories have remained within the terms of their
male predecessors and continue to be embedded in the social and intellectual fabric of the West, as white, male, Euro-American knowledge is replaced by a white, female, Euro-American one (Ong, 1988; Lazreg, 1988; Amos and Parmar, 1984). Aihwa Ong argues that:

With common roots in the Enlightenment, masculinist and feminist perspectives share in the common notion that enlightened reason has been a critical force in social emancipation. Western standards and goals -- rationality and individualism -- are thereby used to evaluate the cultures and histories of non-western societies (Ong, 1988, p.20).

Evidence of this "evaluation" is present in most western feminist scholarship "on" "third world women." Ong argues that this work contains serious epistemological and political gaps because it treats the women "under study" as occupying fixed sexualities and "natural" capacities. This is how stereotypes about who "Third world women" are and what they do get reproduced.

Much of the criticism by women of colour has revolved around how white western feminist theory has dominated feminist discourse in such a way that it has come to identify itself as the only legitimate feminism (Amos and Parmar, 1984). Implicit in this feminist eurocentrism, they argue, is an underlying notion of racial or cultural superiority in which western culture is used as the yardstick to judge all other cultural, ideological, social and economic realities. This kind of feminism inadequately theorizes multiple dimensions of power and oppression, and the interconnectedness of other systems of domination. In a similar
way, feminist class analysis in the 1960's and 1970's failed to account for systems of inequality organized around race and "sexuality." In much conventional socialist/marxist feminist analysis, class was taken up as the primary form of inequality intersecting with gender (Hartman, 1981; Sargent, 1981). With this kind of approach, the project for social change was conceived as one which focused on eradicating class and gender divisions. It was assumed that any divisions based on race and sexuality would automatically disappear whenever economic/class and gender relations had been re-organized and transformed.

**Representation: Victim versus Agency**

I have provided a brief outline of some of the tensions in western feminist theory because these tensions, I feel, are part of a larger representational dilemma. Acknowledging the differences among women has, in some ways, destabilized the very notion of "woman" itself. Who, what and how does the category "woman" signify? Once we acknowledge that there are vast differences between women and that no woman's experiences are identical to anyone else's, then what commonality, meaning and purpose does the term woman have? There is no end to differences, for example, even among "women of colour," who are also divided along the lines of class, sexuality, ethnicity, race and colour.

Given the inadequacies of western feminist scholarship with respect to race, and the stereotypical representations of "other" women from "other cultures," in addition to the implications of discussing culture in a post-war climate where discourses of
racial difference and inferiority have been replaced by cultural ones, during the process of this research I began to wonder how I was going to represent the lives of young South Asian women without falling into some of the traps that Razack and others have alluded to. I began to speculate about the merits and dangers of arguing that young South Asian women confront conflicts, challenges and issues that are no different from their white counterparts.

The tension between "sameness" and "difference" is not exclusive to feminist analyses alone. It has been a consistent theme in most explorations and understandings of identity. Alcoff (1996) and Goldberg (1993) make an important contribution to the debates around sameness and difference. They argue that this tension is inherent to modern liberal discourses of difference. Drawing on Goldberg's analysis Alcoff writes that the paradox of sameness and difference in modern liberalism is that:

the universal sameness that was so important for the liberal self required a careful containment and taxonomy of difference. Where rights require sameness, difference must be either trivialized or contained in the Other across a firm and visible border (Alcoff, 1996, p.5).

The paradox becomes one in which race is classified as irrelevant while simultaneously holding an omnipotent position. Goldberg captures this dichotomy most succinctly in his phrase, "[r]ace is irrelevant, but all is race" (Goldberg, 1993, p.6). The young South Asian women I interviewed provided many examples of this dichotomy. On the one hand they are constantly positioned in relation to race and racial difference, on the other hand liberal
discourses of multiculturalism reinforce the notion of racial equality. The difficulty for them involved naming the experiences of racism within a context that was constantly telling them that race and racial difference do not matter. The tension between sameness and difference is connected to discourses of difference and the retention of binary categories which obscure the dynamics of inequality.

Jasbir Puar argues that polarized identities, such as the binaries in "culture conflict" -- East/West, traditional/modern, South Asian/Canadian, backward/advanced -- are perceived as contrasting and oppositional categories. These oppositions are seen to be "mutually exclusive so that the only logical conclusion to anyone struggling with culture conflict is to choose either one side or the other, primarily for the sake of mental emotional well-being" (Puar, 1994a, p.25). Puar explains that notions of identity that categorize human experience within these dichotomies consistently reinscribe 'identity' as a fixed, static, and boundaried state. Such an understanding of identity continues to define qualifiable 'difference' in terms of 'sameness' as in 'not the same as' (Puar, 1994a, p.23).

In my own research I found that young South Asian women pulled on a discourse of identity that defined South Asian in "fixed" terms. Accordingly, South Asian was seen as rooted in biological markers, such as skin colour, or common "ethnic" markers, such as language, dress and religion. This discourse relies on certain fixed notions of "culture/race/ethnicity." Part of the tension
for young South Asian women arises out of discursive frames that use fixed notions of identity to construct, define and circumscribe the parameters of identity. This kind of framework dominates as a discourse for making sense and interpreting categories of identity. The very day-to-day behaviour, experiences and location of most of these women, however, often stand at odds with the parameters of dominant narratives of "South Asian-ness." For example, some women defined "Indian" as dependent on language retention and going to religious institutions. While these young women themselves did not observe these aspects of "cultural" practice, they still considered themselves "Indian." For them the conflict and points of tension emerge from a definition of "Indian" that is dependent on fixed, "authentic" notions of cultural practice, while simultaneously recognizing that this definition of identity excludes them from the membership of "Indian." Most often the definition of South Asian depended on maintaining a distinction from "Canadian" or western. How to be South Asian in Canada, when these two categories of identity are seemingly oppositional and mutually exclusive was at the forefront of young women's struggles in negotiating and constructing a sense of "identity."

The notion of identity as a fixed totality has been the "object" of much post-modernist critique. And yet there is a seeming impasse on how to theorize around identity in ways that break out of a conception of fixed boundaries without falling into a kind of nominalism or complete erasure of subject. Once
there is an acknowledgement of the vast regional, linguistic
geographical, caste, class and religious differences within the
category South Asian or that South Asian is not rooted in any
"commonness" as such, then who and what does the term South Asian
actually refer to and whose and which cultural practices? How is
the term useful in any way if it does not really describe
anything? Linda Alcoff speaks to this post-modernist pitfall:

For the liberal, race, class, and gender are ultimately
irrelevant to questions of justice and truth because
underneath we are all the same. For post-
structuralists, race, class, and gender are all
constructs, and therefore incapable of decisively
validating conceptions of justice and truth because
underneath there lies no natural core to build on or
liberate or maximize (Alcoff, 1988, pp.420-421).

The debate about "culture" and belonging and whether
"culture" is rooted in some original historical source or shared
characteristic based on some immutable tradition has far-reaching
implications for whether we are determined by a fixed and
unchanging fact of identity -- as in to be South Asian means you
have to act, behave and believe in certain fixed things -- or
whether the way we experience being South Asian has to do with
the way in which the category South Asian is defined and
constructed. Stuart Hall argues that accepting a position that
racial/ethnic or cultural identity is rooted in some essential
core would imply that there is a

collective or true self hiding inside the many other,
more superficial or artificially imposed "selves" which
people with a shared common history and ancestry hold
in common and which can stabilize, fix or guarantee an
unchanging 'oneness' or cultural belongingness
underlying all other superficial differences (Hall,
1996, pp.3-4).
This notion of identity denies any self-articulation or negotiation of self. For example, in relation to South Asian Canadian youth the production of fusion music, which destabilizes simultaneously a notion of "South Asian" and "Canadian" by fusing elements of both, directly challenges the notion of a fixed and unchanging definition of "South Asian." Claiming that this fusion music is also South Asian destabilizes the boundaries of both Canadian and "South Asian" identities.

Stuart Hall argues for a position on identity politics that does not throw out the notion of identity all together, but seeks to resituate, decenter and displace the subject. He opts for a theory of discursive practice that understands identities as "constructed within, not outside, discourse" and therefore as "produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies" (Hall, 1996, p.4).

The debate around whether "race," "ethnicity" and "culture" are essential categories or socially constructed ones has deflected attention away from some important questions around how these categories work. A more significant question for me became: why is there a continued investment in notions of identity that appeal to "common," shared or "universal" characteristics, experiences or ideals? I began to understand the questions about "cultural difference" as part of the problem. Rather than seeking to diminish "cultural" difference by treating "culture" as a measurable phenomenon, the question became: how does the notion
of cultural difference relate to issues of cultural identity? How do notions of cultural difference operate? How do discourses of cultural difference intersect and depend on discourses of gender, for example? How do young South Asian women make sense of them, use them, subvert them? And, most importantly, how do discourses of cultural difference obscure relations of power and inequality? I began to understand discourses of cultural difference as very closely related to how we frame, interpret and conceptualize notions of "cultural" identity.

**Feminist Post-structuralism and Issues of Agency**

I have discussed how theoretical weaknesses have shown women to be overdetermined either by race, "culture" or gender. These approaches make the connections between systems of oppression invisible and therefore obscure the complexities and tensions that young South Asian women experience. This representational dilemma stems in part from western feminist theory which has continued to remain grounded in Enlightenment epistemology. The Enlightenment tradition, Nancy Hartsock argues, is predicated on the assumption that "disembodied reason can produce accurate and 'objective' accounts of the world" (Hartsock, 1989, p.17). Secondly, it is rooted in the belief that reasoned judgement and scientific objectivity are infallible producers of truth and knowledge. Thirdly, Enlightenment thought promotes the idea of human universality "based on the common capacity to reason" (Hartsock, 1989, p. 17). And fourthly, this tradition denies that there is any connection between power and knowledge.
Feminist post-structuralist theory attempts to disassemble some of the central tenets of modern Enlightenment epistemology. Although the contributions of post-structuralism are many, the merits that are most relevant to this research lie in its deconstruction of the humanist notion of "subjectivity." Humanist understandings of identity come out of eighteenth century Enlightenment discourses on the "individual" and have continued to frame much of our contemporary thinking on "identity." Feminist post-structuralism shifts the focus away from a humanist understanding of identity, where the individual is conceptualized as a rational, cohesive, fixed and unitary actor separate from the social world, to a focus on subjectivity; how we participate in creating our sense of self(ves).

While socialization theory, often used to explain why we come to be who we are, has had much to offer in showing us that we learn and are shaped by norms and values around us, post-structuralism presents a more complex account of how our identities are shaped. Feminist post-structuralists, in particular, bring attention to how we actively participate in, negotiate, maintain and resist the different "ways to be" that are presented to us in discursive practices. Post-structuralist feminist theories suggest, for example, that we do not passively accept our identifications as children, girls, or minorities, but that we draw on "cultural/discursive resources through which the world can be seen and felt and understood in particular ways, and through which we are positioned and come to feel and desire in
particular ways." Bronwyn Davies provides the following insights into a post-structuralist feminist understanding of subjectivity:

An individual's subjectivity is made possible through the discourses s/he has access to... Once we have understood the constitutive force of discourse, however,... then the detailed ways in which any one person experiences being a person can be examined, not just to see what the specificity of that person is, but to see the common threads through which being a person, or being male, or being female - or white or black - is accomplished. Examining any individual's subjectivity is thus a way of gaining access to the constitutive effects of the discursive practices through which we are all constituted as subjects and through which the world we live in is made real (Davies, 1994, p.3).

Subjectivity then, our way of understanding the world and our location within it, is not something we are born with or that somehow comes naturally to us. It is something we work at, negotiate and accomplish through the various discursive systems available to us. Being male or female, Davies argues, is accomplished through various discourses of femininity and masculinity that give "maleness" and "femaleness" particular meanings relevant to specific social and cultural contexts. Accordingly, I would argue that being a "South Asian female in Canada" is negotiated through various discourses of nationhood, culture, community, race, gender and sexuality.

While Bronwyn Davies offers some powerful insights into gender dynamics and relations, she does not extend her analysis to an exploration into the intersections of race and class. Alison Jones points out that, although we actively take up subject positions, for some of us certain positions are
unavailable (Jones, 1993). The intersections of race, class, gender and sexuality, then, shape how these positions come to be available and for whom.

Before continuing, I would like to clarify how I use the term discourse in this thesis. Discourse is frequently used in academic scholarship in ways that allude to Michel Foucault’s work. I find the notion of discourse useful because it emphasizes both the historical dynamics and social specificity of ideas and/or phenomena. Rather than seeing concepts, ideas or terms as fixed, natural or given, “discourse” points to the ways in which systems of knowledge are organized and how they are connected to language and power. Knowledge, which in post-structuralist terms is always partial and situated and is always embodying a particular perspective, becomes nameable through, and therefore constituted in, categories of language. That a certain perspective becomes dominant (or not) is due to the systems of power that support it and the degree of accessibility to systems of domination and power.

Bronwyn Davies argues that the analysis of discursive practices -- "the ways we speak ourselves and each other into existence through our every day talk" -- is a useful starting point from which to discover the threads of categories we use to organize our lives (Davies, 1994, p.1). Deconstruction, as a method of analysis, allows for the possibility of seeing the intersections between these threads -- between for example race, class, gender and sexuality. It is a tool that makes visible the
constructedness of binary oppositions by examining the ways "in which they take their meaning through the exclusion of the other" (Davies, 1994, p.3). For example, Marilyn Strathern (1987) argues that patriarchy, the non-feminist other, is the reference point used to construct "our" subjectivities as feminists. Aihwa Ong extends this argument by adding that western feminists build their subjective positions in relation to the non-western (and I would add non-white) feminist other (Ong, 1988). The notion of "difference," then, takes on particular connotations for "non-western, non-white" women because it has also been implicated in constructing them as "others" in relation to, and by white, western feminists.

Ong provides a crucial modification of Davies' exploration into subjectivity. Davies does not theorize the racialization of gendered discourses, while Ong provides us with an important contribution to theories about subjectivity. Using this contribution, deconstruction allows the possibility of seeing how the subjectivities of "white women" and "women of colour" are constituted in relation to each other. "Whiteness" as a definition and meaning depends on the "other."

Given this relationship between dominant and "other," we can begin to see how the "same" versus "difference" tension and the "agency" versus "victim" dichotomy in much of feminist theory are in themselves binary constructions. I argue that a focus on the inequalities of gender within the South Asian diasporic context, or an examination of the systems of racial inequality and how
they impact, limit and circumscribe women’s experiences, need not diminish an understanding of women as active agents. Similarly, constructing women as active agents need not be at the expense of examining the social relations which affect, contextualize and sometimes undermine women’s sense of agency. If we begin to see relationships between victim and agent not as an either/or oppositional or externalized one, but as implicated in, intermeshed and overlapping, then we can see that women are never only victims or agents. Lata Mani attempts to resolve the dilemma of agency by utilizing a dynamic notion of women’s oppression. She examines how women experience oppressive social relations, while simultaneously exploring how they "negotiate [these] oppressive, even determining, social conditions" (Mani, 1990a, p.37). I incorporate these strategies into my own research.

In addition to post-structuralist feminist understandings of "subjectivity," in this thesis I also draw on the notion of "everyday" as employed by Philomena Essed, Dorothy Smith and others. The concept of "everyday" is associated with notions of the "ordinary" and "commonsense" (Antaki, 1988; Furnham, 1990). The everyday world of which we are a part involves knowledge about a certain protocol of how to manage and organize ourselves. We take much of this knowledge for granted, such as knowledge about "language, norms, customs and rules, and knowledge to use the means and resources that make living possible (or successful) in a given environment..." (Essed, 1991, p.48). The "everyday" world, the world of routine and daily tasks, is an important
focus of inquiry precisely for what it can tell us about networks of social organization and power. Using the concept of everyday for this study, the everyday words and lives of young South Asian women are bestowed with a significance worthy of study for what they can tell us about the discourses in which they are constituted as (particular kinds of) subjects; about how they use discourses as a resource to construct and negotiate their sense of self; and how they interpret and produce knowledge about their world from their location in it.

Errol Lawrence (1982), drawing from Gramsci (1971), argues that the idea of "commonsense" can be traced back to the seventeenth and eighteenth century philosophers, who, in a bid to argue against dominant theological discourses of the time, drew on the notion of accepted common opinion. Commonsense also operates, however, as a means to "naturalize" the existing social order. Lawrence uses the notion of gender to demonstrate how this naturalization process takes place so as to hide the social constructedness of masculinity and femininity:

the social construction of...gender roles is collapsed into the biological differences between the sexes. In common-sense terms, historically and culturally specific images of femininity and masculinity are presented as the "natural" attributes of females and males. While we should not forget that these dominant definitions are contested, we must also remember that they are embodied within the dominant institutional order and are inscribed within the social relations of everyday life (Lawrence, 1982, p.50).

I interpret my interviews with young women as a source of information and knowledge about their social world, and their words and experiences as threads to existing discourses that they
simultaneously articulate, appropriate and refute. I use the transcripts to uncover the social relations that organize the every day lives of young South Asian girls. In this way they are informants about both "South Asian-ness" and "Canadian-ness." Their contestation and negotiation of both categories, their experience of ruptures and exclusions, has much to tell us about how both "white" social spaces and South Asian ones are organized. Their "everyday" talk can reveal "norms" and dominant discourses about race, "tradition," "culture" and femininity. These categories become so taken for granted as part of "commonsense" knowledge that it is difficult to discern them, even when they are oppressive for us. I analyzed the interviews for what they can tell me about femininity and how it is mediated through race, class, gender, sexuality and notions of "culture" for South Asian girls.

Rather than working with a predetermined definition of "woman," "South Asian" or "culture," I analyze how definitions and meanings change over time and the social and historical contexts that give rise to particular discursive practices at particular moments. This exposes the mythology of "natural" orders and helps to avoid stereotypical, archetypical or fixed constructions of South Asian women. Also, I use notions of "subjectivity" that allow for the possibility of agency while avoiding the traps of the Enlightenment subject as autonomous and self-generating. Rather than seeing the "individual" as a coherent, rational, unitary actor, the notion of "subjectivity"
allows for multiplicities, inconsistencies and contradictions -- that we can be both victims and resistors to oppression, that we can simultaneously participate in and resist the discourses that position us.

In this thesis I argue that both ethnicity and race are socially constructed concepts which are mobilized in different ways in moments of political contest and are relevant to the ways in which young South Asian women make sense of their lives. Both these concepts have become intermeshed with notions of nation, belonging and nation-state. However, in favour of Alcoff's distinction between race and "culture/""ethnicity," I argue that ethnic identities are racialized, in that some occupy a dominant position vis a viz others. She argues that what remains unique to racialized identities in contrast to ethnic and cultural identities is that "[t]he processes by which racial identities are produced work through the shapes and shades of human morphology, and subordinate other markers such as dress, customs and practices" (Alcoff, 1996, p.7). In this sense, cultural and ethnic difference, although coded and marked in various ways, can be seen to be racialized because they ultimately categorize human difference on the basis of race, regardless of whether race is conceptualized as biologically marked -- as in skin colour or hair type -- or through other characteristics -- as in accent, dress or customs.

I use the commonsense notion of culture which often refers to "ethnic" or "community" identity. I opt for this usage because
Particular notions of womanhood and sexuality are paramount to political reading of these concepts. I argue in this thesis that national uses of these terms, while strategic and powerful, are often superficial and do not allow for an idiosyncratic, cultural and transmission of the cultural artifacts, as also as markers of the reproduction of the members of the group, or central in the national reproduction and transformation of the ethno- and language, gender, and markers of the group, or central in the national reproduction and transformation, are often not acknowledged. Women, who argue, are often paramount in ethnic and cultural resources, according to them, is one ethnic resources for the pursuit of political projects (Anuradha, 1992, p. 8). "Culture, according to them, is one

In this sense, marking a sense of belonging to a particular distinction between ethnic identity, culture and national, ethno-cultural, place Anuradha and Nita Yaval-Davis (1992) draw a

employed for political purposes.

Cultural identities are constantly shifting and are often in various intersecting political, social and historical processes. I will show that markers of ethnic identity are essential, but not inherent to a group of people, but are constructed through language, food, dress, and symbols of ethno-culture. In this way, keeping in "culture" in their talk, I use "culture" in this way, keeping in this sense the young women I interviewed used and understood
the managing of a particular narrative of South Asian "ethnic" identity.

In this thesis I use ethnicity in Anthias' and Yuval-Davis' sense of the term, in the sense of belonging to a particular collective. I use race to constantly point to the "other" with respect to ethnic identity, arguing that ethnic/cultural identities are constantly negotiated within a social context that bestows meaning and significance to the categorization of racial difference in evaluative terms. The question of ethnic/cultural identity within this context is ideological and political. It is in relation to difference and "other" that discourses of cultural and ethnic identity are mobilized. The aim of this thesis, is, in part, to uncover the particular narratives around South Asian ethnic/cultural identity in relation to notions of "difference" in Canada. In an effort to avoid reproducing unilinear and power-neutral analyses, throughout this thesis I attempt to engage with the inequality of difference. In the words of Sherene Razack, the point of the focus on difference is not for the sake of inclusion alone but "for the sake of anti-subordination" (Razack, 1996a, p.355). She argues for an interlocking analysis of gender, race, class and sexuality in order to explore "how systems of domination, interlock and sustain each other" (Razack, 1996b, p.4). Using this approach, I explore the ways in which ethnic narratives are not only embedded in discourses of gender and sexuality but in the dynamics of racial exclusion and subordination.
1. For a discussion of some of the various usages of "culture," see Raymond Williams (1983), *Keywords*.

2. While I borrow and like Bullivant's (1993) idea of culture as a group's survival program, I do not support the assimilationist conclusions he draws in his paper, "Culture: It's Nature and Meaning for Educators." He argues that because a cultural survival program from elsewhere is not suited to the conditions/environment of a new country, that immigrants need to adapt/assimilate to the "survival" program of their host country.

3. This conception of culture as autonomous from social, economic and political spheres, is, of course, problematic.

4. While there is no unifying body of work which represents "the anti-racism literature" as such, I am referring here to the various scholarly works and research that have attempted to analyze notions of race and racism, and their connections to social political and economic dynamics and/or to other trajectories of difference, such as gender, class and sexuality. While it is impossible to discuss all the works that have contributed to this body of thought, in this chapter I have chosen to discuss the works which are most relevant to my study.

5. I would like to note that social constructions are real, too, in that they have real conditions of existence and effects. The difference between constructionists and essentialists in this instance is that (for the former) race, ethnicity and/or culture are not perceived as natural or inevitable.

6. Anthias argues that racial difference need not depend on biological markers but can rely on the markers of ethnicity, such as language or custom. Her distinction between race and ethnicity depends on the former having to do with biological markers of difference while the latter she defines as the "sense of belonging" to a particular collective. Later on in this chapter I discuss Alcoff's distinction between race and ethnicity. Alcoff argues that the process of racial identification depends on human morphology. I am arguing that whether racial difference is conceptualized as a sense of belonging based on biological or "ethnic" markers, these distinctions are part of a system of meaning around difference that bestows power differentially. In other words, difference, whether biological or cultural is encoded and enmeshed in racial discourses that appoint inferior and superior subject positions. Having contextualized my position on race, in the following chapters I use "race" in quotations, however, to point to the continuing debates and contestation around this term. I use "culture" and "ethnicity" in quotations for the same reason.

8. I would like to make a distinction here between Foucault and Davies' interpretation of discourse and subjectivity. While Davies explores the "availability" of discourses, Foucault argues not so much that discourses are available to us as much as that discourses produce our subjectivities as an effect.

9. In Chapters Five and Seven I will elaborate on the gender component of the issues pertaining to nation, culture and belonging.
Chapter Three: Method

Data

The empirical data for this research primarily comes out of interviews with fourteen young South Asian women, five South Asian social and community workers and textual analysis of mainstream media between 1993-1995. While I have used the conversations with young South Asian women as threads to discourses and a source of information about their social world, my textual analysis of mainstream and South Asian media sources looked for dominant representations of second generation "immigrant" populations, as well as those of the South Asian community, and young women in particular. The media sources include Toronto Life Magazine, Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, Winnipeg Free Press, Calgary Herald, Montreal Gazette and the Halifax Chronicle Herald. I use an analysis of the representation of the South Asian community and "culture conflict" by mainstream media sources to juxtapose and contextualize how dominant discourses position young South Asian women with the ways in which the women position themselves.

And finally, I have used the interviews with five social and community workers as a means of corroborating some of my research findings. The five are prominent members of the South Asian community: two are health professionals; one is a community development worker; one is a social worker and; one is a coordinator of a youth project. The first three people, Jasminder Singh, Rupinder Roshan and Baldev Mutta all work in the region of
Peel, the first two as community health nurses and the latter as a community development worker at the Peel Department of Health. The other two are Gurpreet Malhotra, coordinator of the Dixie-Bloor Neighbourhood Centre at the time of the interview, and Harjeet Badwall, coordinator of the youth project at the South Asian Women’s Centre in downtown Toronto (at the time of the interview). All of the people interviewed were working with youth in some capacity, either as counsellors or service providers. It is for their extensive experience with issues confronting South Asian youth, their commitment to addressing these concerns and their long-time work within the communities of which they are a part that I consider their knowledge and insights as a useful source of information. Interviews with them helped me to corroborate trends in the South Asian community as well as the issues confronting the young women in my study. I saw these interviews with "experts" in the community as essential to my study because of the lack of information and research available on South Asian youth. I also felt that it was a way of holding my research accountable by "cross-checking" my findings with other community workers and members.

**Interviews and Sample**

For this research I interviewed fourteen young women for a duration of about 1 1/2-2 hours each during the winter of 1993 and the summer of 1994. I had the opportunity to re-interview three of the women one year after the initial interviews. At the time of the interviews, the girls ranged between the ages of 15
and 19. I draw mostly on the material from twelve of these interviews, because they seem to capture most articulately the issues that were common to the other girls. However, all of the interviews have played a role in shaping this work.

Feminists have challenged conventional research methods and have sought to change the realm of knowledge production and particularly qualitative research in several fundamental ways. First, they have actually shifted the focus of study from an exclusive focus on the male subject to the female one, arguing that the world of women is significantly different from men's and that traditional research methods have failed to capture this difference (Oakley, 1981; Smith, 1987). Feminists have worked to expose, for example, the importance of women's work in the so-called private sphere and its connection to the public world occupied by men. Secondly, they have asked some very important questions about the research process itself, contributing to debates about objective versus subjectivist, or partial, knowledge. Most conventional research methods adhere to an uncritical assumption that the researcher can somehow stand outside of the social relations s/he is attempting to document and explain. Feminists disagree with this and have waged a critique of conventional research methods which treat the subject as a mere object of inquiry and which pretends to place the researcher on an artificial plane of neutrality. In a discussion of interviews Ann Oakley argues that conventional research protocol is constructed according to a masculine paradigm. The
model of the "proper" interview, for example:

appeals to such values as objectivity, detachment, hierarchy and 'science' as an importance cultural activity which takes priority over people's more individualized concerns (Oakley, 1981, p.38).

She takes the position that conventional interviewing practices are in opposition to feminist principles because they treat the subject as a mechanical source of data and encourage a hierarchical relationship between interviewer (expert) and interviewee (passive respondent).

Oakley argues that, according to conventional interview protocol, the interviewer/researcher is cast in one of two roles: data collector or psychoanalyst. In both roles the interviewee is treated as a passive respondent and object of inquiry with no control over the research project. The interviewer assumes a "neutral" role where he/she has no opinions about the account being provided. Oakley critiques the male paradigm of interviewing which advises against comradery between interviewer and interviewee" in favour of interactive research models which incorporate the subject's emotive responses into the interview process itself.

When I began the process of interviewing I was rather confused about my role as the research/interviewer. I found that the young women were revealing highly personal accounts of their lives and that of their families. Some of the young women I interviewed described incidents of family violence, isolation and emotional despair. Listening to these accounts, I suddenly found myself acutely aware of my ambiguous role as the "interviewer."
To my surprise, despite my theoretical critique of "objectivity," I realize (in hindsight) that during my preliminary interviews, I was working according to a notion of "appropriate" and detached interview protocol. There was something telling me that I had to distance myself from these personal accounts, and accordingly, I began to constitute myself as an unemotional and "objective" observer. Although I am aware of the discourse on "interference" and how it serves to perpetuate oppression in the private sphere, I nevertheless began to operate within conventional notions of the "personal" and "private." These notions told me that I should not interfere, show any emotion, opinions or support even at the times when I felt highly emotional or saddened by these women's life stories.

Knowing that most of the women I talked with constantly struggle to negotiate a personal space for themselves (one that is not regulated by parents, school or peers), I was really surprised at the response that I received from the participants, all of whom talked with great candour and openness about their lives.

Most of the women seemed amazed that I would actually be interested in talking to them. While I covered the same questions in each interview, I also allowed the flexibility of wandering from my own questions to issues they wanted to focus on. In this sense, the interview format was kept open. My own questions explored the racial composition of their schools; the existence of gangs or cliques within the schools; their opinion of Bhangra
dances; the experiences of racism; and conflict with peers and parents.

I think the openness of the participants arose from, as Jane Finch describes, the need and lack of opportunity for women to actually talk about their experiences and their lives (Finch, 1993). For young South Asian women in Canada, the invisibility of their experiences and lack of opportunity to talk are even more pronounced. Taking an interest in their lives suggested that their experiences and views are valuable. Finch, concurring with Oakley's position, goes so far as saying that the very act of a woman interviewing another woman facilitates the process of intimate conversation because they (presumably) share a common structural and gender position. Oakley argues that ethical dilemmas are greatest where there is least social distance between the interviewer and interviewee. Where both share the same gender socialization and critical life experiences, social distance can be minimal. Where both interviewer and interviewee share membership of the same minority group, the basis for equality may impress itself even more urgently on the interviewer's consciousness (Oakley, 1981, p.55).

I often wondered why they trusted me enough to tell me the things that they hide from their parents, teachers or friends. Part of this trust, I think, was established by the process by which interviews were set up, as well as by my being able to relate to their reasons for confidentiality, being second generation South Asian myself.

I began my interviews with three young girls, all of whom I met independently and did not know prior to these conversations.
Each of the women were of differing religious and class backgrounds and lived in different parts of Toronto (Scarborough, Don Mills, and Mississauga). I chose the Metropolitan Toronto area largely because of the existence of a vibrant and diverse South Asian community there and because I am most familiar with, and have access to it. The class background of the participants ranged from lower to upper-middle class and their religious backgrounds included Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu. Diasporically, the young women had roots in the Middle East, Pakistan, East Africa and India. All the parents of the young girls I interviewed arrived in Canada between 1970-1985. They had migrated directly from East Africa, Pakistan, India, or the Middle-East. All but two of the girls worked part-time as cashiers, receptionists or in other kinds of "office" work. They worked in order to have more control over their lives and/or to supplement family income, depending on their class backgrounds.

Using a snowball sampling method, I collected names of the friends the initial three girls/women thought would be interested in talking to me. In almost all cases, I asked the young women to contact their friends first to explain the general nature of my study, the scope of the interview questions and to obtain their permission for me to phone them. Once I received the consent to contact them, I provided more details about the project and made arrangements to meet them. Confidentiality was extremely important to the participants and they therefore preferred being interviewed outside their homes, in coffee shops.
or in some cases at the school they attended. Knowing that I had learned about them through a friend who had already agreed to an interview made the young women feel more comfortable. Peer approval and "go ahead" seemed to facilitate the process of setting up trust between them and me.

While I feel that my experience of interviewing parallels much of Finch and Oakley's process in that most of the young women I spoke with expressed feelings of isolation and loneliness, the process of two women conversing in a research context, I would argue, is not as simplistic as Oakley's model appears to suggest. Although I share race, class and gender position with some of the women in my study, as well as many common life experiences, these similarities do not necessarily preclude power dynamics from operating or conflicts from taking place. Factors such as age and authorial control of text and interpretation also affect the basis for equality between researcher and subject. Because this research involves teenage girls, I became aware of the power relations between me and the participants. I began to wonder about my responsibilities as an interviewer and as an adult member of the community and about the extent to which I should involve myself in their lives. What if they appeared as if they were in crisis, or in need of some kind of counselling? Does part of my responsibility as a researcher involve a provision of this support? Given the fact that there are almost no social services for South Asian girls in Metropolitan Toronto I found that there were few places I could
direct them to for support or counselling. Within this limitation, how could my research process be supportive of these women's lives without my position as the "older" South Asian woman taking away their sense of agency? The following excerpts from interviews with two young women describe the lack of appropriate social services:

One time things got really messed up for me. It was really hard times at home and I started talking to a counsellor at school...they hooked me up with a social worker at school...I chose the white one. She got my parents involved which caused hell in my house...It was nothing it was simple, it was just talking. I have a lot against what the counsellor did.

Another girl says:

I wouldn't feel comfortable talking to an Indian person about my problems; like someone whose older who is a parent or whatever just because I would think that if they ever saw me in the community they might not tell anyone but then they are going to think bad of me.

What is interesting in the second instance is that this young woman is talking to me, an "Indian" person. This dialogue I feel was able to take place because of the way the young women often positioned me. Quite often these women mis-understood my age to be the same as theirs. A perceived closeness in age seemed to facilitate their initial impression of the interview.\(^5\)

I have also realized, however, that not all the young women needed help or were in search of any kind of assistance from me. Many of them do have support networks and friends to talk to. For example, one woman, responding to whether or not she would access a service that was directed toward meeting the needs of young South Asian women, had the following to say:
I wouldn’t have needed to go to anybody cause with us, we had, we had each other, my friends. Like i think all of us went through the same thing. Like even now always trying to get out and always trying to do things. We’re all going through the same thing. So i mean i think it would help other girls, but with us, we all have each other. But may be with people who don’t have other girls their age, that helps them. I don’t think i’d ever go cause i have my friends i could turn to.

I found that, at times, I wanted to play the script of the older sister, perhaps really projecting my own desire to have had someone older to talk to when I was young. As Pamela Cotterill argues, "many women do not need a 'sympathetic' listener" (Cotterill, 1992, p.596). During the interview process, I came to reflect on my own conflicting desires, and investments in these "relationships." More importantly, I began to explore how these interviews were a source of support for me. In several youth panels and discussions that I have been involved with over the years, it always seems that during the extended question and answer periods, more often than not, those staying behind are "older" South Asians, those closer to my own peer group than so-called "teenagers" or those fitting conventional notions of youth. I have come to understand that part of the support that "us" older South Asians are so caught up in talking about and securing is quite often a projection on our part of the lack of support services and resources that we had experienced while we were going through our high school years. In no way am I diminishing the contemporary importance and urgency of support services for South Asian Canadian youth; I am merely pointing to the growth of community supports, the concentration of South
Asian young people in the public school system relative to fifteen years ago. Again, the growth in numbers of the South Asian population in various parts of Metropolitan Toronto has contributed to a shift in the "school going" experience of many young South Asians. While before they may have found themselves among a handful of other South Asians, now in many high schools, they may find themselves among the "majority."

While the issues and tensions that young women faced were not unfamiliar to me, what I did find unfamiliar were some of their experiences in relation to the school setting. All but two of the girls described their school as racially and culturally diverse. The majority of these women even went so far as to describe their school as "brown," explaining that "brown" schools had a high concentration of South Asian students. Having spent my school years in a primarily white dominant context, I found that some of my issues in relation to race were quite different than theirs. While issues of cultural shame mediated much of my desire to "hide" my racial/cultural identity during my high school years, I found that many of the women lived within a context which allowed them to celebrate many aspects of their identity. I was struck by how, in the last fifteen years, the sheer numbers of South Asians in particular regions of Metropolitan Toronto had actually helped to produce, in some ways, a school culture that rendered "brown" as a positive signifier.

As I began to interview young women, I quickly realized that I was operating according to stereotypical notions of typical,
modern and traditional "Indian" categories. After being thrown off by the complexities of young women's identities and realizing that they were not easily placed within the categories I thought I could sort them into, I attempted to exercise these very categories on my own family members. For example, over the years, people have frequently asked whether my mother or father were "traditional" or "modern." As I begin to describe my mother, the notions of "traditional" and "modern" as cohesive and clear-cut categories begin to appear illusionary because of their inability to capture complexities and contradictions. I have always known my mother to wear a saree. I have always known my mother to be in paid work, cook the household meals, drive a car, do the cleaning, control her own finances, do the household repairs and the gardening. In which category should I place my mother?

In the following section I provide biographical accounts of five of the young women I interviewed. I provide these accounts as a way of demonstrating the broad range of their life experiences and of presenting to the reader a detailed look at some of their life circumstances. I also provide this account of their biographies to further illustrate the tension between, and assumptions around, modern and traditional, a theme that I explore throughout this thesis. I have chosen to present here the five women that I feel are most representative of the cross-section of women sampled in my study.
When I first met Aarti, a sixteen-year-old Hindu upper middle-class girl, I made assumptions about her being traditional and therefore conservative. At the beginning of the interview (conducted in her room) I learned that she was very religious, had two older brothers and a sister with whom she had little connection, was an avid consumer of the Bombay film industry and a classical "Indian" Kathak dancer. She had pictures of Hindi film stars pinned up above her bed. She described her family relationships as "isolating." She had little to no communication with her mother and brothers and she admitted to feeling suicidal in the recent past.

By the end of the interview, however, I found that I was not able to categorize Aarti so easily. Her dancing had caused her some problems in the "marriage" market and she was unwilling to let go of this aspect of her life to satisfy any potential suitor. This was a source of ongoing tension between her and her parents. She was very articulate, outspoken and involved in many school activities and had aspirations to follow a career as a radio broadcaster. After I interviewed her, she interviewed me on video for a school project. In a follow-up discussion a year later, she told me that she ran away from home on the day of her semi-arranged wedding and stayed in a youth hostel in the outskirts of town. She explained that although she had initially met and introduced her partner to her parents, his insistence that after marriage she give up her pursuit of dancing, and her
parents' pressure to marry, compelled her, on the day of the wedding, to run away. At the time of the second interview, she was seventeen and living with her parents. She was now dating somebody new and kept this relationship hidden from her parents, brothers and sister.

Parminder

I met Parminder, a seventeen-year-old Sikh girl of working-class background, during a crisis. She had recently run away from home for several months to live with her boyfriend. Her parents discovered where she was and took her back home. She was to leave for India for the first time the day after our interview and was afraid that she would be pushed into marriage. She was the youngest in a family of seven. Most of her siblings were married and no longer lived at home. Although Parminder said she loved her boyfriend, she seemed to think that their separation was a "good idea." She was concerned about his over-indulgence in drinking and his participation in a gang. She seemed to think that their love would endure the separation.

Her mother was not formally educated and her father was a prominent member of the community. This prominence seemed to affect her position as a daughter. Because of her father's role in the community, her behaviour, she felt, was constantly monitored and regulated. Parminder explained that her conduct was not only seen as a reflection of herself, but reflected on the reputation of the entire family. If she did not follow the dictates of family and community norms in relation to appropriate
codes of femininity, it reflected negatively on her family and consequently her father's standing in the community. While she was very aware of this and the fact that most of her siblings had followed what she saw as the expected "respectable" path, she still mustered the courage to "run away" from home.

Part of what surprised me at the end of our interview were my assumptions about her Punjabi accent. As we packed up I casually asked her how old she was when she arrived in Toronto from India. "I was born here," she answered. Rephrasing myself I commented that she, of course, must have travelled back and forth to India many times. "I have never been to India," she answered. She explained to me that she had a Punjabi accent because at home she spoke Punjabi with her parents and at school she spoke Punjabi with her friends, Punjabis being the mainstay of her school population.

Salimah

Salimah was an outspoken eighteen-year-old Pakistani girl of lower middle-class background, who, attending a school in Mississauga, described her group of friends as "culturally diverse." She felt quite restricted by her parents and wished to follow a singing career that she knew she would not be able to. This was particularly painful for her because she had already been asked to sing by a prominent talent scout. She was in constant battle with her parents about being able to attend social functions at school and dances. She explained that her parents felt it was not proper for a girl to sing or dance, if it
was going to be in front of men.

Salimah felt that her parents trusted her and saw her as a "good" daughter who did not date, drink or go out late. While she wanted to maintain her image as a "good girl" with her parents, she also felt weighed down by the expectations this image placed on her. She did her best to maintain this impression. She was also, however, quite outspoken (anonymously of course) on the radio about issues affecting young South Asian women. She felt that talking about the restrictions on young women's lives publically, if her parents knew, would ruin their perception of her. While she herself admittedly battled with depression now and again, she was often in the role of providing support to her peers and younger women who had difficulties coping with the often competing expectations of school, peers and family.

Reema

For Reema, an eighteen-year-old Hindu girl of upper middle-class background, celebrating her "South Asianness" wasn't a "big deal." She explained that she was the last of three older siblings who had been quite involved socially in the South Asian scene. She seemed to view the issue of cultural identity, and the excitement over the "Bhangra" dances as a bit tedious. She explained that for her, growing up around siblings who celebrated their cultural/racial identity, while perhaps important for a generation who were attempting to claim racial space, was rather limiting. She did not want to be confined to only socializing in the "brown scene" and preferred a mix of friends. The issue most
affecting Reema's life was her Muslim boyfriend. Because of the religious difference and the fact that, according to her parents, she should not be dating in the first place, this relationship was shrouded in secrecy. While she said she really loved him she was considering ending the relationship. Reema felt that there was no point in investing in a relationship that she knew her parents would not approve of. Interestingly enough, one of her siblings had married a "white" Canadian, who despite initial misgivings and resistance, was now accepted by her parents as part of the family.

Rupinder

Rupinder, an eighteen-year-old Sikh girl of working-class background, described herself as a bit of a loner in relation to her family. She said she preferred it that way. At the beginning of the interview she was very quiet but revealed quite a cynical and sarcastic sense of humour by the end of our meeting. She seemed to feel disenfranchised by both the South Asian community which, in her experience, she found to be parochial and judgemental and by the white community, which she found to be racist.

Although she had a "soft spot" for her father, she had the most altercations with him of anyone in her family. She was the older sibling in a family of two. She seemed to be somewhat fearless in her challenge to the authority of her father. Her latest conflict with him involved an incident where she had gone out to a club and returned home late. When her father threatened
to throw her out of the house. She said, "Fine!," and walked out.

By the end of the interview she spoke in great detail about her experience of sexual abuse by a family member. She felt this sexual abuse had profoundly affected her life and yet her efforts to talk to her parents about it had only isolated her further from them, as they now viewed her as "sexually" promiscuous and "spoiled." She had not spoken about the abuse to any friends or professionals.

Summary

The young women I have described here represent a cross-section of my sample. They do not, however, "cover" the entire range of experiences of the young women I interviewed. I am not implying a conventional reading of the terms "cross-section" or representativeness. Conventional positivistic research methods would use this sample of women as an exemplary category. These methods would aim to generalize about South Asian teenage girls. Lila Abu-Lughod is cautious about research that uses generalizability as a criterion to validate its results. First, she argues that this kind of research participates in a professional discourse of objectivity (Abu-Lughod, 1991, p.151). Secondly, she argues that generalizability tends to lend itself to notions of universality and coherence and is often ahistorical. She argues that:

When one generalizes from experiences and conversations with a number of specific people in a community, one tends to flatten out differences among them to homogenize them. The appearance of an absence of internal differentiation makes it easier to conceive of a group of people as a discrete bounded entity, like
"the Nuer", "the Balinese"...who do this or that and believe such and such (Abu-Lughod, 1991, pp.152-153).

Abu-Lughod argues instead for what she calls "ethnographies of the particular." The focus here shifts from generalizations to exploring how social life proceeds and how individuals make sense of their experiences. This kind of method does not omit the larger, structural social relations that make individual understandings possible. Each individual must be seen as part of and participating in the social relations in which she/he is a part. In this sense Abu-Lughod's position is not in opposition to the kinds of methodological shifts that feminist post-structuralists and scholars like Stuart Hall (1996) are making. A focus on discursive practice allows me to see the articulations, understandings, and negotiations of young South Asian women as simultaneously reflective of and participatory in the very discourses they use to understand their own experiences.

What struck me as common to all the participants was the level of secrecy that permeated much of their lives. They seemed constantly aware of their "expected" roles in relation to school, peers and family. At school the stereotype of South Asian women as passive and traditional seemed to compel them to construct themselves, in many instances, as bold and dauntless. The parental restrictions that mediated their lives were kept hidden from "white" friends. And yet, the same image of teenage bravado was at odds with what they felt was a sense of belonging to community and family expectations. Their experience of "self," in this sense, is very fragmented, a constant pulling on and off of
masks and negotiating of "expected" roles, depending on the context. They expressed both a desire to meet and break out of these "expectations."

During the interviews I was forced to examine the tensions between victimhood and agency. While I could not help but notice how family, community and peer expectations in many ways circumscribed the behaviour of the young women I interviewed, I realized that constructing them as passive victims of their circumstances, as docile recipients of their fate, does not adequately describe them. Despite the conflicts, the secrecy, and consequent depression around the lack of control over their lives, all the women were in constant resistance to, and negotiation of, the circumstances of their lives. Sometimes this resistance came in an explicit show of courage, such as running away from home, albeit a "last resort." More often their defiance was expressed in the form of lying and secrecy. These later strategies allowed them some access to freedom, without jeopardizing family, community or peer acceptance, not withstanding the tremendous emotional costs that this "freedom" came with. Hiding "truths" meant they often lived in fear of being "discovered."

Throughout this thesis I will examine the conflicting discourses that construct women as in need of protection by family and community, on the one hand, and by mainstream western society, on the other. I argue that women are positioned both by "indigenous" discourses that seek to preserve the "authenticity"
of South Asian culture viz-a-viz a dominant culture and are therefore seen as in need of protection from "western" intervention into "cultural practice", and by "dominant" mainstream Canadian discourses that portray them as in need of (westernist) protection from "indigenous" practices of which they are made victims. I explore the discourses that construct and position women in contradictory ways as victims of and agents in both "tradition" and "modernity." In place of "simple" constructions of women as either victims or agents, I see women's subjectivity as complex, fragile and historically constituted. I want to deconstruct discourses of "tradition" and "modernity" so as to reveal the complexity of the subject "woman." She is neither virtuous as keeper of tradition, nor victimized by tradition; neither progressive as an agent of modernity, nor annihilated by modernity's cultural imperialism.

**Issues of Interpretation**

Sherene Razack argues that storytelling, or personal accounts of daily life "includes the notion of an opposition to established knowledge" (Razack, 1990, p.1). The very act of telling a story that has not been told, then, is indeed a political one. It is both the form of the story (here an experiential account) and the subject (South Asian woman) that potentially contests the site of dominant knowledge paradigms. However, Razack also warns against essentialist notions of location and the perils of storytelling in white racist societies.
After an interview with a young woman in which she described rather nonchalantly an incident in which her father hit her during an argument, I began to think of issues of interpretation and responsibility. The following transcript of the conversation describes this incident, which occurred after she asked her parents if she could go out in the evening with friends:

Girl: I thought no problem they’ll let me go. I asked and we got into a huge fight. I’m talking this is one of the worst fights we’ve ever had at our house... My father told me to get out of the house. He said, “get out of the house.” My mom was so worried that my father was going to have a heart attack right then and there. My father punched me in the face...

I: wow...

Girl: And my mom was trying to protect me from him and I was like crying. I wasn’t crying because I haven’t seen my father get so upset, so worked up. I didn’t want him to have a heart attack you know because we had just gone through a family death. It was like really emotional in the house....and that is a perfect scene of the mother trying to stop the you know and both of us just going at each other. Like by this time I’m eighteen I’m no longer a little kid any more you know I’m fighting my father now as...not as...the thing is parents don’t understand. I’m not saying that I’m an equal to my father but that’s how you fight, you fight like that, you start losing your respect for your parents and that’s what they don’t like and on top of it [it is about] what you’re asking. You want to go out this and that and my father punched me and I didn’t even feel it, honestly I did not even feel it.

I: Had he ever done that before?

Girl: Punch me in the face?

I: Or like hit you or...?

Girl: My father’s hit me yeah, a lot of time. When I was younger a lot...I used to always say this is not going to do anything, this is not going to change anything I want to do. It used to quiet me down for the moment but it wasn’t going to...it would scare me for a week but then I would be at it again. I know my limits as to when I can ask, how long
I'm going to have to wait. My parents never grounded me its always been I'm grounded for life I just ask for free passes every other weekend, you know [laughter].

During and after the interview I began to realize that my interpretation of her experience would potentially be very different than hers. Working within a feminist framework shaped my reading of her father's actions very much as an attempt to maintain and enforce his position as patriarch of the household. I see his direct participation in regulating his daughter's femininity through enforcing boundaries and restrictions on her movements and resorting to violence as an extension of this control. While my focus is on violence as part of a system of masculine control over women, her focus in this description concentrates on her father's display of emotion and anxiety about his health. Listening to the entire tape-recorded interview, it became clear that her father was a source of emotional support for her, as well as a resource of knowledge about her culture and history. Both of these were given high regard by her. The way I initially wanted to interpret and analyze her narrative, however, would not have reflected the feelings of love she had for her father. It would have portrayed him as overbearing and abusive. Accordingly, both father and daughter would have been portrayed in uni-dimensional ways.

In the process of interviewing I began to wonder how I was going to use these interviews in my thesis. Was I going to impose my voice? If I chose to ignore their voices I would run the risk of using these narratives as raw material for the needs of my own
research, with little regard to the intention of their descriptions. On the other hand, I could not ignore my own voice or objectives. Katherine Borland speaks to this issue of who controls the text in her article, "That's Not What I Said: Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research" (Borland, 1991). She interviewed her grandmother about an event that took place at the horse races at a time when women seldom appeared in this public space. Borland interprets her grandmother's narrative as an example of "female struggle for autonomy within a hostile male environment." Her grandmother's interpretation was altogether different. To present the narrative solely according to her own interpretation, Borland argues, represents an intrusion upon the text, but to ignore her own perspective altogether would then negate the objectives of her project. Borland offers something very valuable here. Instead of being locked into a debate of "mine" versus "yours," she explores "how gender ideologies are not wholly determinative or always determinative of female identity" (Borland, 1991, p.71).

As feminists, we have learned to pay attention to how identity is mediated by gender. However, we need to avoid a kind of gender reductionism which does not take into account how this gender identity intersects with other social relations and realities. We must take seriously how women themselves make sense of their identities. We need, as feminists, to begin to understand these conflicts and be mindful of, as Liz Stanley describes, "the conundrum of how not to undercut, discredit or
write-off women's consciousness different from our own" (Stanley, 1984, p.201). How to do this without undercutting feminist objectives is, of course, difficult. There seems to be no easy ways out of this dilemma. Rather than using young women's words as accounts of their experience, I have attempted to negotiate around this dilemma by seeing their words, as Davies suggests, as threads to discursive categories that organize their lives. I use their experience or perspective or "feelings" about an issue or event as a trail, if you will, to discovering these categories. In this respect I treat the experiences of young South Asian women as a reality, partial, but nonetheless important and insightful; as a tool to explore and deconstruct the ideologies that inform, organize and are informed by their experience.

In the case of Salimah I cannot ignore the larger context of her relationship to her father in the diasporic Canadian context. During the interview she makes several references to her father's critical role in supporting her love for (Pakistani) Qawali music. In these instances he acted as an interpreter, translator and transmitter of cultural and linguistic knowledge and history. I began to look at both investments and contradictions in narratives of identity. While gender is important and not "wholly determinative," it is important to look at its connection to race -- how in a Canadian context, Salimah's connection to her father provides accessibility to otherwise absent racial and cultural narratives.
1. For the survey of newspapers I looked at: Canadian News Index (1992); Canadian Periodical Index (1994, 1995, 1996) and; Canadian Index, Vol.3 Jan.- Jun. (19951, for a cross section of early to recent 1990's under the heading "immigrants."

2. I am indebted to Kari Dehli's thesis support group for pointing out the ways in which I was uncritically following "conventions of interviewing." They have been very supportive in helping me rethink my position as an "interviewer."

3. Because of the importance of confidentiality, I have changed the names and some biographical details of the young women. I have done so, however, in a way that does not tamper with their social, religious, ethnic or class location. In the quotation of transcripts I have used "i" and not "I" to show that "subjectivity" is constantly negotiated and is therefore constructed rather than inevitable, fixed or natural. Throughout the transcripts I have used "I:" to indicate myself, the Interviewer.

4. Despite the wide geographical span covered by my sample, the South Asian diaspora also spans Burma, Nepal, Malaysia, Trinidad, Jamaica, Guyana, Fiji, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. The populations most concentrated in Canada that are missing from my study are those from Sri Lanka and the Caribbean. The recent wave of migration of Tamil refugees, for example has posed a challenge to the mainstream South Asian community who continue to neglect the particular needs of this group of community members. My research is unable to draw any conclusions about the emerging generation of young Sri Lankans and the specificities around their experience. Also missing from my sample are Indo-Caribbeans. Having lived in diaspora for generations already in the Caribbean, the particularities of their experience as Indo-Caribbean Canadians is different than South Asians who have migrated from the subcontinent. They, like the Sri Lankan population, face both exclusion from the dominant mainstream culture of Canadians as well as from the South Asian community in Canada who tend to be India centric in their rendition of South Asian identity.

5. I would always correct this mis-reading of age. Many were surprised and responded with remarks like, "I thought you were the same age as me," or "you don't seem your age."

6. There is some debate in the literature on the usage of the terms South Asian and Indian. In this thesis, I will use the term South Asian when referring to the diaspora, keeping in mind that this term is specific to, in many ways, the western North American context and "production" of the categories of race and ethnicity. South Asian in many ways unsettles an indo-centric notion of identity. However, I found that many of the girls I interviewed, regardless of where their roots were in the
diaspora, used "indian" as a term of self-identification. Because of ethics of interpretation I found that I could not easily replace their term "indian" with South Asian. I began to look at the currency that "indian" had in terms of diasporic identity.

7. Lata Mani (1990a) talks about this kind of either/or positioning of women in relation to discourses on "sati." I have borrowed her perspective of "sati" in colonial India as a tool of analysis from which to see the ways in which women are positioned in Canada.
Chapter Four: Modernity, Age and Race

In this chapter I introduce some of the discourses around age and race that are particular to the modern era. With respect to the former I show that the problematic of "youth" as a period of storm and stress in the life cycle existed in North America before and during the influx of immigrants from the non-European world at the turn of the twentieth century. The so-called culture conflict that is now seen to characterize relations between present day immigrant youth and their parents was present in public debates and research in the form of anxieties around the impact of modernity on "white" youth three or four generations ago. White, middle-class families and professionals worried about (white, middle-class) "youth" in the early part of this century and discussed the "youth" problem at great length. I draw on the work of Lesley Johnson (1993), Mary Louise Adams (1994) and others to show how "young people as vulnerable" has re-surfaced as a defining feature of the concept of "youth" in the post-war 1950's era. While anxieties around youth manifest(ed) themselves somewhat differently for "white" youth during the 1950s and now, there are similarities in the ways in which youth are positioned as in need of protection and guidance for both South Asian and "white" communities.

I argue that modern discourses construct youth as an age period in which individuals are specifically vulnerable to the dangers posed by modernity. My point is to show that underlying the angst about youth during this century has been distress over
a larger social challenge -- that during this period as a whole, an entire generation was attempting to make sense of the changes brought about by modernity. Of interest to me are the changes affecting the notion of the individual, her/his relationship and responsibility to society and the place of youth within this construction. I review some of the discourses that positioned youth as vulnerable to the "temptations" brought about by modernization and, in particular, look at the panic over juvenile delinquency in post-war Canada. In general, therefore, in this chapter I explore "youth" as an historical construct, a symbol representing social ambivalence toward modernity as a whole.

The distress over modern social change and the use of "youth" to register both anxiety and ambivalence among white middle-class families. I argue, has become relatively invisible in relation to the problem of youth within (non-white) immigrant families. This imperceptibility is due to post-world war discourses of race that continue to translate the modern/tradition paradox characteristic of modernity into a problematic of East/West, backward East and modern West. In this chapter I also want to ask how, when and for whom, do moral panics of youth become racialized and sexualized? I argue that angst about juvenile delinquency, and general social and moral decay were racialized anxieties. I suggest that in the process of registering and containing the fears around modern social progress and its possible "dark" side, white, middle-class Canadians were also fortifying the meaning of white prestige and
and the making of a "white" nation.

With respect to modern discourses of race, I look at the construction of social panic over the arrival of non-white immigrants to Canada at the turn of this century. Stanley Cohen (1972) uses the concept of "moral panic" to explain a disproportionate public reaction or response to an otherwise negligible series of events. Cohen infers a moral panic when "[A] condition, episode person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests" (Cohen, 1972, p.9). The media, he argues, is instrumental in playing up popular fears by sensationalist reporting. The concept of moral panic can be used to understand the anxieties around both youth and immigration at the turn of the century. I argue that the panic over non-white immigration was also about change -- changes brought about by a modernizing capitalist social order which resulted in the need for imported labour power. These changes threatened to dismantle white middle class centrality within the Canadian social, economic and political hierarchy.

The objective of this chapter is threefold. First, I de-mythologize "culture clash" as an "ethnic" phenomenon by showing the ways in which white youth have also been perceived and constructed as "at clash" with the paradox of modern/tradition. Secondly, I want to show that notions of juvenile delinquency, corruptibility, moral and social decay were constructed in relation to, and dependent on, representations of the "non-white" ethnic. And finally, I argue that there are parallels between the
ways in which both "youth" and the "non-white immigrant" are positioned and constructed through modern discourses. They are both seen as potentially volatile, in need of guidance, "development," and/or protection. This discussion is relevant because in this thesis I want to show how protective discourses about "youth" as an (apparently commonsensical) age category intersect with protective discourses around "culture" for South Asian youth, young women in particular. This discussion is important to my exploration of the processes by which protection of culture and protection of adolescent female sexuality overlap and become enmeshed in anxieties about South Asian adolescent girls. These discourses have justified various regulations and forms of social control over women.

Modernity

Similar to the concept of "culture," modernity is also notorious for generating much debate and dispute, both in terms of historizing it as a phenomenon and in terms of specifying its meaning. While some have periodized "modernity" as a process dating back to the fourteenth century (Smart, 1992, p.8), it is most commonly associated with the 18th century Enlightenment period (Rudolph and Rudolph, 1967; Rattansi, 1994). The development of ideas in this era, as well as what can be called its antecedent in the 16th century, namely what is referred to as the "Age of Scientific Revolution" or the "Rise of the Modern Scientific Spirit," has provided much of the epistemological underpinnings of western social and intellectual thought. During
these periods, discoveries about the physical universe through the works of Copernicus, Galileo, Bacon and Descartes began to affect the understanding of the social world (M.L. Handa, 1983). Ali Rattansi describes this interpretation of modernity as "the fateful conjoining of an Enlightenment faith in the capacity of reason and science to penetrate the essential character of nature and humanity, with the development of industrial society" (Rattansi, 1994, p.22).

Rudolph and Rudolph posit the opposition between modernity and tradition as constitutive of Enlightenment thinking and offer the following contrast:

"modernity" assumes that local ties and parochial perspectives give way to universal commitments and cosmopolitan attitudes; that the truths of utility calculation, and science take precedence over those of the emotions, the sacred, and the non-rational; that the individual rather than the group be the primary unit of society and politics; that the associations in which men [sic] live and work be based on choice not birth; that mastery rather than fatalism orient their attitude toward the material and human environment; that identity be chosen and achieved, not ascribed and affirmed; that work be separated from family, residence, and community in bureaucratic organizations; that manhood be delayed while youth prepares for its tasks and responsibilities; that age, even when it is prolonged, surrender much of its authority to youth and men some of theirs to women; that mankind [sic] cease to live as races apart by recognizing in society and politics its common humanity; that government cease to be a manifestation of powers beyond man and out of the reach of ordinary men by basing itself on participation, consent, and public accountability (Rudolph and Rudolph, 1967, pp.3-4).

This description touches on some fundamental shifts in notions of the individual, youth and adulthood, public and private, democracy and politics, all of which were instrumental in the
social reorganization brought about by modernity. The modern notion of the "individual" capable of autonomy, reason and rationality were integral to systems of democratic participation as a form of government and political relations based on private property and individual rights. Thus emerged the idea that reason, science and technology would be instrumental in advancing social progress. This social progress includes the emergence of civil society and ideas of political equality (Marshall, 1994).

The ideas of the Enlightenment era advanced a reorganization of the social world through the tools of "scientific method," and perceived "universal" principles of human nature, namely, reason and rationality (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1976). This era of "scientific reason" made for the first time "rationality" as something that was within the realm of human capacity and not a property of "god" alone (Davies, 1993, p.66). Much of Enlightenment thought continues to shape western liberal notions of self, individual and society. The accomplishments associated with modernity are related to the processes of capitalism, industrialization, urbanization, rationalization and secularization (Marshall, 1994). Marshall Berman sees these processes as having contributed to demographic chaos and systems of mass communication, as well as the continual expansion and fluctuation of the capitalist world market (Berman, 1985). He has described modernity as having created a contradictory and ambiguous set of social conditions. While modernism was seen to promise social progress and advancement, the rapid changes
accompanying it also associated this new era with instability and ambiguity.

While there is considerable difficulty in defining "modernity," I found Rattansi's characterization of modernity as most useful and relevant to the purposes of my discussion. He, (like Berman) identifies modernity as: a period of rapid social change that has generated a kind of ambivalence -- both fear and excitement about the possibility of change; as characterized by a duality

in which rapid and incessant change, and the fragmentation that ensues from the power of market forces, are also accompanied by constant projects which attempt the conservation and indeed invention of traditions (Rattansi, 1994, p.24),'

and as creating the need for an emphasis on classificatory systems and social order as a way of managing ambivalence and the threat of chaos. The most insightful contributions of Rattansi with respect to the characterization of modernity is in delineating imperialism, colonialism and nation-state building as processes constitutive of modernity. With respect to the last, Rattansi notes that the project of nation building

has been driven by cultural assimilation....That is, the striving for stable classificatory systems, articulated with the modern projects of constructing disciplined, managed, healthy nations has consistently involved the weeding out of contaminating 'others' who appear to disturb the social order, who fall foul either of cultural/ethnic boundaries or seem to transgress conceptions of the 'normal' as defined by discourses such as biology, medicine, psychology and psychiatry, sociology, criminology, pedagogy and economics, and their associated disciplinary and regulatory institutions such as hospitals,
prisons, schools and factories (Rattansi, 1994, p.25).

The ambivalence of modernity arises from the simultaneous and contradictory desire for a stable, fixed and unchanging social world as well as for modern change, namely transformation and progress through the tools of industrialization, technologization, rationalization and the (global) proliferation of consumer capitalism. While the western world has embraced the latter it has also constructed various measures to "contain" the fears and/or possible "costs" associated with this rapid social change. The possible liabilities associated with modern change include the threat of moral decay, social disintegration and chaos.

I argue in this thesis that the "invention" and maintenance of certain traditions for the "mainstream Canadian" community and the "minority South Asian" community as synonymous with a Canadian or South Asian identity upholds the kind of stable classificatory system that Rattansi argues is characteristic of modernity. Narratives about Canadian and South Asian "community" identity respond to, in their respective ways, anxieties about social and cultural disintegration and chaos. Modern discourses of "identity" (whether individual or national) privilege the norm of unity and cohesion thereby inferiorizing, marginalizing or excluding the parts that unsettle or disturb the boundaries of a particular identity, as is the case of -- South Asian in Canada. While both maintain unifying discourses of identity, white Canadian occupies a social, economic and politically dominant
position in relation to South Asian. White, middle-class anxieties are constitutive of a moral panic in Cohen’s sense of the term because they are disproportionate to actual shifts or changes in white centrality. The “threat” is more of a “perceived” than substantiated threat because the social, political and economic hierarchy continues to favour white, middle-class Canadians (Walcott, 1993). Moreover the “superiority” of the former is in part secured by the repeated and continuous representation of the latter as inferior, backward or incompatible with “Canadian” society. I argue in this thesis that the kinds of ethnic resources and traditions that an oppositional narrative mobilizes (in this case a South Asian one) must be understood in the context of white supremacy.

Modernity and the Individual

Social theorists in the West have been preoccupied with modernity’s effect on the relationship between the individual and society. The rapid changes accompanying modernity brought with it an increasing anxiety about the "success" of the modern era in the western world from the point of view of the white middle-classes. Would it really bring about progress and prosperity, or would the freedoms accompanying modernity lead to social and moral decay and disintegration?

Australian historian Lesley Johnson argues that the process of modernization led to the fear that individual consciousness would be unable to develop in a stable and coherent way because of the "limitless opportunities to be something else, and to be a
multiplicity of things" (Johnson, 1993, p.38) and the fact that authoritarian enforcement based on "divine" rule was no longer the "order" of the day (Moretti, 1987). The emergence of consumer capitalism and "its promises of the endless opportunities for individuals to transform their lives simply through the purchasing of goods" was instrumental in the process of modernization that Johnson talks about (Johnson, 1993, p.37). This "limitless opportunity" for transformation through consumer capitalism, of course, is not accessible to everyone. It is applicable to the bourgeois notion of the middle-class "individual." The fantasy of transformation through consumption, Johnson argues, threatens to undermine the (white) individual’s ability to develop itself into a coherent unity. The promise of endless choice and opportunity has been seen as a threat to individual cohesiveness, a threat that makes it impossible for an individual to know oneself and to develop harmoniously. Here the model of human growth and development is conceptualized linearly: after passing through a series of biological and social "developmental stages," a human being reaches the threshold of adulthood. Adulthood is seen as the state of being a self-determining, autonomous (modern) individual. This of course assumes that harmonious development of "the individual" was possible in the first place.

The issue confronting eighteenth century Europe was the tension or conflict between the modern notion of the self-determining individual and the traditional notion of social
responsibility (Moretti, 1987). The modern idea of freedom, in some sense, was also seen as an individual's burden. One was now burdened by the responsibility of having to forge one's own identity, albeit in a way that also paralleled the new social order. The new conditions surrounding individual growth "required that they [young people] remain youth for a definite and extended period of time to ensure their successful negotiation of the tasks of growing up, the tasks of becoming a modern individual" (Johnson, 1993, p.44). It demanded young people's responsible participation in the economic sphere, commitment as reproducers in the private sphere and their contribution to the political process while simultaneously promising complete freedom to forge their own identity and destiny.  

**Modernity and Youth: the 1950s**

Franco Moretti (1987) argues that in times of great social change, there is a heightened focus on youth and that particular anxieties about the future are projected onto youth: "the more a society perceives itself as unstable and precarious in its legitimation of the social order or the social norms of its culture, the stronger is the image of youth used to register these anxieties." For a variety of reasons the post-World War II era in Europe and North America has been perceived as a period of tremendous change. It was a time of post war reconstruction, economic boom and consumer capitalism. The (re-)emergence of youth as a symbol and victim of modernity (Johnson, 1993; Adams, 1994) has been understood as an indication of "the cultural
impact," albeit a latent one, of western modernity (Hall, 1990). Johnson argues that in the 1950's these anxieties were translated into prescriptions about "normative" adolescent development in the western world. Young people were increasingly seen as defenseless against the possible dangers of modernization, not only because of their young age but also because preceding methods of "cultural" survival were in some ways obsolete in this post-war era (Hoggart, 1957).

Social anxiety about youth became of particular concern in the western world in the post-World War II era, when "business" interests began targeting "teens" as a separate consumer market. In Canada, for example, a plethora of magazines, films, books, and other consumer items and goods were specifically geared toward the teenager (Adams, 1994). While the interests of business helped to forge the idea of "youth" as separate from adulthood, so too did "professional" discourses in the fields of medicine and psychology. These "professional" disciplines generated theories of biological and psychological development to explain why youth needed special and different attention and "treatment" than adults. Biological theories based their analysis on the physiological changes accompanying "puberty." The onset of puberty, according to this approach, is seen to mark the beginning of passage to adulthood. The onset of emotional, hormonal and psychological changes occurring in "adolescence" due to sexual development, meant that persons in this age group were seen as not quite stable, unable to make their own decisions.
(G.S. Hall, 1907), and/or easily tempted by the "false promises" of modern society (Hoggart, 1957). Thus, they are seen as vulnerable, in need of protection and guidance. Youth need to be protected and guided appropriately in order to adjust and assimilate to the needs and demands of a changing, modern society.

In her research, Mary Louise Adams explores some of the fears around "adolescent" development in post-war Canada. She, like Johnson, argues that "youth" emerged as a symbol of larger anxieties around social progress in the 1950s. She argues that there were competing discourses about youth in the post-war period, "some with clear roots in war-time disruptions, others tied more distinctly to post-war prosperity and the 'modern age'" (Adams, 1994, p.92). In this period anxieties about modernity in general were combined with anxieties about the post-war period.

The post-war era in Canada was both a time of prosperity and war-time recovery.

The Panic over Juvenile Delinquency

The landscape of post-war discourses in Canada reveals an ambivalence towards modernity, post-war recovery and class struggle. Young people's acquiescence to authority was of utmost concern. For young women this was constructed in sexual terms. In 1950's Canada, much of the anxiety over youth had to do with their conformity (or otherwise) to the developing "modern" social order. While there was hope for modern progress, there was also fear around whether the course of social development would bring
forth what it promised. In this period, a return to "family" and "family values" was positioned as the panacea for dangers posed by modernization which were being particularly manifested in a panic around juvenile delinquency (Adams, 1994). The panic of juvenile delinquency focused on youngsters who, without "adequate parental supervision," were not "growing up" with a proper sense of social responsibility and were thereby vulnerable to committing crimes against authority. Even after mothers returned home from war-time duties, and fathers to the "regular" workforce, fear continued to be expressed about the influences of mass media and popular culture of young people, both of which were "at various times, marked as influences capable of corrupting youthful 'innocence,' as threats to young lives and therefore to the future of society as a whole" (Adams, 1994, p.94). Youth was seen as a period of "innocence" and promise which, if not guided or directed properly, could descend into "corruption." In this sense, youth were constructed as potentially volatile.

Juvenile delinquency in this respect was representative of the worst fears of post-war recovery and modern development. White middle-class families were distressed about whether they could enjoy the benefits of consumer capitalism, a booming economy and the new notion of individuality. These developments encompass both the idea of freedom from tradition as well as responsibility to the advancement of social progress. The panic over juvenile delinquency is illustrative of white middle class
anxieties as a whole -- "[t]he notion of a stage of life freed from all the cares and responsibilities of a troubled civilization was their escapist dream, the vision of juvenile degeneracy their recurring nightmare" (Gillis, 1974, p.182). And Adams adds, "of course to middle class adults who believed that 'juvenile degeneracy' was rooted in the working class, that "nightmare" was perhaps a recognition of the volatility of class inequalities" (Adams, 1994, p.94).

While some "experts" saw the "acting out" of the teenager as a normal part of human development (G.S. Hall, 1907) so long as the rebellious teenager became a mature responsible adult ready to assume her/his role in the production and reproduction process, others saw this "acting out" as an expression of what had gone wrong with the modern era, namely that the freedoms of modernity had undermined the concept of authority itself (Tempene, 1950). Psychologist G. Stanley Hall is one of the most prominent researchers who contributed to the idea of "adolescence" as a special stage of human development. Writing at the turn of the century, Hall also viewed "puberty," -- the onset of sexual development -- as a delicate period marking the passage into adulthood. He is noteworthy for popularizing the notion of this phase as a "stressful" period, and what has now come to be popularly understood as the "generation gap" between adults and youth.

Hall viewed adolescence as an "immature" phase that would eventually, if traversed appropriately, culminate into the more
refined state of adulthood. The generation gap and resulting tension was attributable to the fact that individuals go through different stages of human growth (linearly). In other words, generational conflict was attributed to the friction between the "backward" (adolescent) and "advanced" (adult) stages of human development. While biologists and psychologists attempted to understand the "adolescent," many of their theories obscured the social ambivalence and anxiety toward social change as a whole and its affect on the role of the individual as a whole. Any resistance to becoming a modern social being and responsible citizen were accordingly pathologized as immature, backward or unstable. The gap between modernity and tradition, (characteristic of modernity as a set of social conditions as a whole) I would argue is obscured in discourses of the "generation gap."

While by some, delinquency was seen as the result of instability caused by the onset of puberty -- hormones out of control -- for others, delinquency represented a disavowal and transgression of social order and norms and was therefore seen as a threat to society as a whole that "made obvious the limitations of post-war society" (Adams, 1994, p.95). In her research, Adams names "attempted rape, destruction of property, robbery, street violence, disobedience in the classroom, and a pronounced unwillingness to respect authority" as the range of behaviours encompassed by the notion of delinquency -- all of which were seen as possibly leading to social unrest (Adams, 1994, p.115).
Adams argues that discourses around youth and juvenile delinquency in the 1950's had much to do with regulating young women's sexuality. A look at indictments of delinquency in this period reveals a gender subtext. Adams shows that the charge of delinquency for young women most often involved sexual "transgressions." For women, delinquency, and thereby socially irresponsible behaviour, means non-conformity to acceptable sexual "standards." Post-war discourses about female delinquency focused on the movement and behaviour of women in the public sphere. Anxieties about young women going out late at night meant that once young girls were outside of parental supervision "girls would express their sexuality in a manner dangerous to themselves and their communities" (Adams, 1994, p.135). In later chapters, I will show how the anxieties around young women's sexuality operate to regulate young South Asian women today in much the same way as post-war discourses circumscribed the lives of young white women in the 1950s.

A Critique of Age Linearity

While conventional studies on youth view "adolescence" as an age period which marks the transition into adult independence, scholars such as Jennifer Buchanan (1993) have challenged notions of youth transitions that conceptualize development in terms of "linear" progress. While she argues that age influences the life experiences of young people, she asserts, along with others (Wilson and Wyn, 1987) that age in itself is not a sufficient indicator or determinant of life opportunities or material
outcomes. Buchanan asserts that "age" is not a concrete and consistent category across historical and geographic boundaries.

Similarly, Johanna Wyn (1994) argues that the meaning and experience of aging as a process and its connection to historical and cultural processes are largely ignored by the concept of "age," which usually refers exclusively to biological development. The notion of "youth" as a transition to adulthood is a relational one, because its definition depends on its positioning between childhood and adulthood. Wyn argues that adulthood itself is a problematic category because the markers of "adulthood" have themselves become increasingly ambiguous. The promise of independence associated with adulthood has become an illusion for many individuals who do not have access to paid employment in today's capitalist economy.

Both the concepts of youth and adulthood individualize outcomes of inequality by treating "growing up" as an individual project unaffected by social, economic and political changes. I would argue that the concept of freedom and autonomy, as presented for example in the Toronto Life magazine, is a western construct, based on the idea of liberalism in which the autonomous rational individual is meant to pursue her/own interests without any connection to others.

The criticisms about "woman" as a totalizing category that ignores racial differences are similar to critiques of "youth" as a unitary classification. For example, Buchanan argues that the meaning of adulthood is different for young women than for young
men and that women are "involved in a 'multiplicity' of transitions" (Buchanan, 1993, p.62). She asserts that young women do not experience the transition to independence characteristic of "adulthood" in the same linear fashion as men (are presumed to do). For women, "independence" remains elusive as their lives are structured more generally by economic dependency throughout different phases of their adulthood (Buchanan, 1993).

Thus far I have focused on some of the conceptual shifts regarding the significance of "age" according to eighteenth century Enlightenment discourses and the ways in which new meanings of youth were utilized in the first half of this century. I have shown that the angst around social change and social order in the 1950s in general was projected on to youth and manifested in a panic over juvenile delinquency. I have outlined at length modern discourses around youth and social change to dislodge the commonsense notion that it is only (non-white) immigrant families who experience generational conflict or angst about "modernizing." Stereotypical notions construct immigrant families as "traditional" or conservative and therefore unable to adapt to the demands of "modern" Canadian society. I have shown that similar anxieties have historically existed within white, middle-class families.

I would like to now turn to an exploration of modern discourses of race, cultural difference and identity. I argue that modern discourses of race have positioned the "non-white" ethnic in ways which obscure the construction of "whiteness." In
other words, I maintain that it is partially because of modern discourses of race and the ways in which they position and construct the (non-white) "ethnic other" that generational conflict within immigrant families appears more salient than within white families.

In the context of these discourses about race I would then like to show how the "non-white" ethnic has been positioned and represented within post war discourses in Canada. While post-war discourses reveal an anxiety around "growing up" for young adults there was also concern over the influx of non-white immigrants to Canada. White middle classes worried not only about their "own" youth, they also worried about the threat that non-white immigrants were thought to pose to the developing nation. I will look at this interconnection using "South Asian" immigrants as illustrative of this concern.

My discussion of modern discourses of race, cultural difference and identity is also a way of problematizing conventional analyses of youth. While Adams and Johnson, for example, make insightful contributions to a historical study of youth, its shifting meaning and social significance, they tell us little about how constructs of youth are raced. They both use modern (eighteenth and nineteenth century) discourses about social order and the individual to contextualize their 1950's discussion of youth (either Canada or Australia). They do not examine how the making of the modern subject depended on racial discourses which were also prevalent and integral to eighteenth
and nineteenth century discussions of modernity. Their exploration of 1950's youth, then, remains problematic and partial. How do discourses of juvenile delinquency, corruptibility and angst about social degeneracy and moral decay, for example, depend on discourses of the "non-white" ethnic? How were liberal notions of the individual and youth linked to preserving notions of white superiority?

Several scholars have argued that nineteenth century discourses about sexuality, degeneracy, abnormality and competency abetted in protecting the bourgeois vision of state, social order and white middle-class respectability (Foucault, 1978; Stoler, 1995; Razack, 1996b). Bourgeois subjectivity had to be necessarily discernible from both the upper-class aristocracy and the working-class masses. Middle-class respectability came to be a hallmark and distinctive feature of bourgeois identity (Razack, 1996b; Mosse, 1985). Razack argues that "[t]he bourgeois subject is inevitably white while the non-bourgeoisie are equally inevitably raced as non-white" (Razack, 1996b, p.15). The maintenance of social order through the regulation of sexuality and ideas about delinquency must necessarily then be seen as racial constructs. And as Razack adds, "[f]or the twentieth century, the making of the bourgeois subject continues" (Razack, 1996b, p.13). Drawing on this kind of analysis in what follows I also outline how middle-class respectability was, in part, supported and maintained through panics about non-white immigrants in Canada.
In the eighteenth and nineteenth century the western world began to adopt the doctrines of Enlightenment philosophy and apply them in pursuit of social, economic and political development. One of the principal means through which modern development was achieved was colonization. The process of European colonization and expansion had profound implications for definitions of European "self" and "other." As Rattansi points out:

Most forms of western racism are inconceivable and incomprehensible without an understanding of how 'western' identities - and those of its Others - have continually been formed and created by actual and imagined encounters with the non-western Others of modernity. Identities such as 'the West' and "European", even 'white', their conflation with conceptions of rationality, 'civilization' and Christianity, and the superimposition upon these of images of paganism and savagery as constituted by binaries such as naked/clothed, oral/literate, technologically backward/advanced, were not already 'in place' - they came into being in processes of imperial exploitation and colonial domination (Rattansi, 1994, p.36).

In this sense, our understanding of race, as Rattansi argues, is also steeped in modern ideas about progress, advancement, science and rationality. The white western modern subject was constructed in relation to that what it was not -- its existence as a category had to be continually reinforced and asserted through representations of the "East" as its (constructed and imagined) opposite. Similarly, David Theo Goldberg shows how the pursuit of science and progress were made possible only as a racial construct and how colonial subjugation was integral to the
production of a raced subjectivity. He argues that Enlightenment epistemology itself was based on the tenet of domination:

Subjugation perhaps properly defines the order of the Enlightenment: subjugation of nature by human intellect, colonial control through physical and cultural domination, and economic superiority through mastery of the laws of the market. The confidence with which the culture of the West approached the world to appropriate it is reflected in the constructs of science, industry, and empire that principally represent the wealth of the period....The emergence of independent scientific domains of anthropology and biology in the Enlightenment defined a classificatory order of racial groupings....In cataloguing the variety of racial aliens, however, Enlightenment science simultaneously extended racial self-definition to the West [as superior]....The catalog of national characters emerged in lock step with the classification of races (Goldberg, 1993, pp.29-30).

Modern notions of race, as Goldberg points out, are also reflective of enlightenment doctrines of progress, and integral to discourses of East/West. The concept of race as an evaluative category can be dated back to mid-nineteenth century scientific modes of inquiry that led to the study of human differentiation and became enmeshed in ideas about social advancement and human evolution. Also known as Social Darwinism, ideas about biological competition and survival between species were applied to social, economic and political discussions about friction within a species (Jackson and Penrose, 1993). Goldberg explains how the notions of progress and advancement were predicated on ideas of inequality that delegated superior and inferior subject positions. The advancement of the West was supported by the subjugation of the East. Colonialism, in addition to the ranking of races and nations, is an outcome and participant in
modernity's conception of social progress. Science as a discipline has helped to legitimate and rationalize these differentiations.

East, both in terms of racial and national representation has come to occupy an "inferior" position viz-à-viz the West. The categories of modernity and tradition, far from being simply descriptive, have become evaluative. The former is associated with progress, advancement and superiority, and the latter with the "backward," "primitive" and the "uncivilized." "Modern" has become synonymous with European and North American models of social, political and economic capitalist development while non-western societies have become the markers of "tradition."

According to these discourses the East is "backward" because it has not fully embraced or entered into the modern world. It is therefore in need of "development" and "western" guidance.

Peter Jackson and Jan Penrose reflect on this relationship between West and non-West by concluding that

[It is always the subordinated Other who is designated as "ethnic" rather than the dominant self, inscribing not merely the existence of racialized difference but also its significance in terms of the differential relations of power that are brought to bear on the process of definition (Jackson and Penrose, 1993, p.18).

Jackson and Penrose (1993), Rattansi (1994) and Goldberg (1993) show how discourses of racial and cultural difference are integral to representations of identity for both East and West. The relationship between East and West is normalized so that the racial "other," the "third world," the "minority" is associated
more with pre-modernity and is seen to be possessing more "culture" and "ethnicity" in relation to the dominant, first world, "majority" which appears to be "unmarked" in this respect.

It is for these reasons, historically, that "third world" nations, and the people associated with them, have come to hold the mark of tradition. Their sense of nation-ness and "ethnic" rank in the context of an international social and economic order dominated by the West, has always relationally been an inferior one. By an extension of this logic, South Asians in Canada are connected to notions of tradition, backward-ness and pre-modernity. Certainly in my own research I found that young women were consistently positioned by discourses of East/West, backward/modern and/or brown/white. From my interviews I argue that most of the conflict and tension that young South Asian women experience in Canada is produced and constructed through discourses of tradition/modern. This either/or opposition generates conflict and contradiction for women who do not comply with the "cultural" codes of either East or West exclusively. This compliance, of course, is not always voluntary, but subject to the socially produced markers of "race" and/or "ethnicity." In other words, it is in the negotiation and contestation of modern/tradition that young women disrupt and destabilize the binary. Transgression makes visible the norms, rules and markers that define and constitute "communities" as "bordered" entities. I explore these constructions and how young women negotiate and resist these oppositional discourses in Chapters Six, Seven and
History of South Asian Immigration

The following discussion focuses on an historical exploration of South Asian immigration and settlement in Canada from the turn of the century. I examine how the various modern discourses about race that I have delineated manifested themselves in both the representation and panic over non-white immigrants in Canada. I begin with the turn of the century because it is during this period that South Asians first arrived in significant numbers to this country. I present an historical account of settlement and some of the debates around South Asian immigration for several main reasons. First, the historical context is extremely important partially because of its representational absence from Canadian history books. Nowhere during my entire educational process was I taught about the contribution of “ethnic minorities” to the process of nation-building or the history of racist policies and movements in this country. In this sense the presence of this story/account is subversive and political because it challenges and opposes “established knowledge” (Razack, 1992, p.1).

Secondly, this historical context provides a backdrop to some of the contemporary debates about nation, identity and cultural difference that I will be discussing in much of this thesis. Thirdly, of course I wish to draw parallels between the ways in which the “non-white ethnic” and “youth” have been constructed within modern discourses. And finally, I explore
twentieth century discourses around immigration to contextualize
the positioning of youth and white, middle-class respectability.
Twentieth century moral panics over immigration and
representations of the "ethnic other" as backward, inferior or
unsuitable helped to construct the synonymity between whiteness
and Canadian nationhood.

The attitude toward South Asians in Canada can be divided
according to the three "waves" of immigration. Doreen Indra
(1979), who bases her analysis on research in British Columbia,
argues that in the first period (1905-1914), South Asians were
seen as morally and politically undesirable (Indra, 1979). In the
second period of immigration, from 1928-37, there was a dramatic
decrease of South Asian migration to this country. Little
attention was paid to the South Asian community by the mainstream
press during this time, although they were still seen as morally
questionable. Because of immigration controls, during this second
phase, they were not considered as a threat (Indra, 1979). In the
third wave of immigration (1967-1976), Indra argues that because
South Asian immigrants were arriving in greater numbers as a
result of a more flexible immigration policy, and because they
had also made considerable economic and political gains, they re-
emerged as a threat to Canadian society in dominant and popular
discourses. They were increasingly associated with immorality and
crime in the popular (white) imagination (Indra, 1979).

A look at Canadian immigration policy from the turn of this
century to the present reveals contradictory discourses and
practices regarding non-white migration to Canada. This tension stems from both the need for immigrant labour in Canada as well as the desire to maintain (white) cultural hegemony. Bolaria and Li (1988) argue that the intersecting needs of colonialism and capitalism brought forth the migration of South Asians to Canada. They use a political economy approach to examine the migration of South Asians and argue that the systematic recruitment of Indian labour within the British Empire began with the abolishment of slavery in 1833-34. Many historians argue that during this time British colonialists were looking for a supply of labour that was cheap and manageable (Gangulee, 1947; Tinker, 1974; Saha, 1970; Sandhu 1969). Having exhausted other possible avenues for labour either because importing this labour was too expensive and fraught with legal problems (as in the case of Chinese workers), or because the supply of labour was considered unmanageable (as in the case of recently freed black slaves whose protest against slavery was expressed in the refusal to do plantation work), the British government looked to the Indian colony as a source of labour (Bolaria and Li, 1988) for its colonies. Colonial circumstances in India, as well as famine and poverty-stricken conditions, made the offer of going abroad for the promise of new opportunity and a better life (even as indentured labourers in the West Indies) seem appealing.

The anxiety about new immigrants in Canada first surfaced at the turn of the century when, due to labour needs, the British settlers in Canada began to recruit workers. The arrival of South
Asians in Canada dates back to 1900 (Bolaria and Li, 1988). The first immigrants were predominantly Punjabi Sikhs who settled in British Columbia. Most of them worked in the sawmills, road and railway construction, mining, fishing, lumber yards and as agricultural labourers (Buchignani and Indra, 1985). Their arrival went relatively unnoticed at first. During this period Canadian public opinion was focused on Japanese and Chinese migrants, whose settlement in the second half of the nineteenth century, had, by this time, resulted in a public outcry in the western provinces (Buchignani and Indra, 1985; Bolaria and Li, 1988). There was increasing pressure from all segments of the white population in British Columbia to restrict Chinese and Japanese immigration. South Asians thus entered British Columbia at a time when anti-immigrant sentiments were being manifested in policies that economically, politically and socially disenfranchised and excluded Chinese and Japanese immigrants (Buchignani and Indra, 1985). While little attention was paid to the first South Asian immigrants, their increase in numbers captured the province's attention by 1906; by 1908 there was a complete ban on South Asian immigrants.

Buchignani and Indra summarize the mood toward immigration at the turn of the century:

The kind of person who was a desirable immigrant was a contentious social issue at the turn of the century. The result was a compromising immigration policy that tempered common ethnic and racial biases with practical economic considerations: the "right kind" of British and Americans were best; Germans and Scandinavians were all right; Eastern Europeans could be tolerated on economic grounds;
Southern Europeans were to be discouraged; and Asians and blacks should not come at all (Buchignani and Indra, 1985, p.4).

At the turn of the century, the British imperial government found itself in a peculiar predicament regarding the position of "Indians" within the Empire. On one hand, there was the need for agricultural labour in the western provinces, and on the other, there was pressure from the Canadian colony to restrict the "spread" of Indians in Canada. It was during this time that cultural difference was first used as a means of justifying the restriction of South Asians' entry into Canada. To give impetus and justification for a ban on further Asian migration, officials argued that South Asians were not adaptable or suitable for residence in the country. For example, a sessional paper of a House of Commons proceedings at the turn of the century records the following plea:

"It is clearly recognized in regard to emigration from India to Canada that the native of India is not a person suited to this country, that accustomed as many of them are to the conditions of a tropical climate, and possessing manners and customs so unlike our own people, their inability to readily adapt themselves to surroundings entirely different could not do other than entail an amount of privation and suffering which renders a discontinuation of such immigration most desirable in the interests of the Indians themselves (House of Commons, Sessional Paper No. 360, 1908, pp.7-8 as cited in Bolaria and Li, 1988, p.146)."

The "white" anxiety over non-white immigration in general translated into a racially restrictive immigration policy from 1908 until after the Second World War. There was no significant migration of South Asians again until 1962 (Buchignani and Indra,
Whereas approximately 5,000 South Asians entered Canada between 1900 and 1908, only 29 South Asians were admitted between 1909-1913 (Bolaria and Li, 1988, p.170). By 1931 the Canadian Census indicated that there were only 1,400 South Asians living in Canada (Holland, 1943, p.168).

A number of official measures were taken to prevent the growth of the South Asian population in Canada during the restrictive immigration period. First, none of the 5,000, mainly Sikh men, who first settled in British Columbia were permitted to have their wives or children join them (Srivastava, 1974). This restriction remained until 1919 (Holland, 1943, p.168), and functioned as a kind of imposed birth control method. Secondly, South Asians living in Canada were denied legal and political rights until 1947. This "alien" status meant that many lived under the fear of deportation, were occupationally and geographically confined, and were residentially segregated (Gangulee, 1947; Tinker, 1976). Thirdly, and most damaging to the growth of the South Asian population in Canada during this period, was the imposition of the "Continuous Journey" stipulation in 1908. It allowed only those who came directly from India to Canada, without any stop-overs along the way, to enter the country. Since the main mode of transportation was water at the time, this meant that it was virtually impossible to meet this requirement. Although the Canadian Pacific Railway was the only company able to conduct a continuous journey, from India to Canada, they were prohibited by the government of Canada to sell

The infamous Komagata Maru incident is illustrative of the unwillingness on the part of both the imperial and the Canadian (Dominion) government to extend the right of settlement, or even visitation to South Asians at this time. In this instance, the continuous journey stipulation was tested by an independent Indian entrepreneur who chartered a ship in Calcutta in 1914. Upon its arrival to Canada, most of the 376 passengers were refused entry and ordered deported. The government used the threat of contagious disease as grounds to issue deportation orders. The ship sat in the port of Vancouver for 60 days, not even allowing food to be brought on board until it was forced to sail back (Buchignani and Indra, 1985, pp.53-58). Upon reaching the shores of India, most of the passengers were arrested and interned under the orders of British colonial rulers (Bolaria and Li, 1988).

Moral Panic over Immigration

Until the Second World War, the anxiety over non-white immigrants to Canada was reflected in a racially restrictive immigration policy. However, there were other signs of white angst over migrants. Perhaps the most telling sign of socially constructed anxiety over non-white immigration in North America came in the form of what is referred to as the issue of "Race Suicide," a term popularized by American president Theodore Roosevelt at the turn of the century. This period was witness to
a racist panic over immigrants outnumbering the "white" population. In the United States and Canada, as well as in other western countries, there was concern over declining fertility rates of "native-born" residents. This decline was seen to be the result of urbanization, "alien immigration" and feminism -- all viewed to be the outcomes of a modernizing social order (McLaren and McLaren, 1986; Gordon, 1977). Some sectors of mainstream society viewed middle-class women as selfish for wanting to control their own fertility and blamed them for the declining birth rate of white middle-class families. Not only was women's practice of birth control seen as a threat to white middle-class family, and family values from traditionalist, moral and religious grounds, but it was also implicated in predictions about the extinction of the white race, whose numbers were now shrinking relative to "other" groups in the population. Also at issue was "woman's duty" to the nation. Her responsibility as a good Canadian citizen meant ensuring the reproduction of the "white" race. Finally, the use of birth control was seen as a direct rebellion against woman's "natural" obligation to motherhood.

Authors Francis A. Walker and Robert Hunter were instrumental in advancing the fear around white race extinction in North America. In the late 1800's, economist Francis A. Walker argued that immigration posed a threat because the poverty and "wretchedness" of immigrants made the spectre of bringing offspring into the world for white families appear undesirable.
Changing social conditions, economic competition, and a weakening of the "moral fibre" of American society presumably brought about by immigrants, led to a decline in fertility rates for the white population (Walker, 1891). In 1904, writer Robert Hunter added credence to this fear by concluding that if not monitored, the growth of the non-white population would succeed in replacing and obliterating the white population altogether. He also pointed to the class dimensions of this extinction, arguing that the rich were being outnumbered by the poor.

The decrease in birth-rates for the middle-class, white population created a panic and predictions of a so-called "race suicide." While the anxiety about the extinction of "the race" was a response to actual shifts in the birth rate, sexual practices and family structure brought about by the forces of modernization (Gordon, 1977), the arrival of immigrants -- non-white immigrants in particular -- was being blamed for the drop in fertility rates. In the United States there was concern that the "Yankee stock," which displayed the lowest birth rates, would be overwhelmed, numerically and hence politically, by immigrants, non-whites, and the poor.

In Canada, there were similar concerns. The concern over non-white immigration during the years of restrictive immigration is best illustrated in John Morley's (Secretary for India), comment to the Viceroy with regard to this matter in 1908:

The great topic of the hour is the question of Asiatics in the Transvaal...one of the largest questions concerning the Empire as a whole and indeed not only the empire but all white
governments against all yellow, brown and black immigrants (cited in Tinker, 1976, pp. 23-24).

At the turn of the century, while there was a decrease in the population growth of white Canadians, the increase in population rates as a whole was largely due to "foreign" immigration. For example, McLaren and McLaren state that the population increased from 4.3 million to 8.5 million from 1881 to 1920, largely due to immigration and that there was social angst around whether the newcomers could be "Canadianized" or whether they would "overwhelm the young nation" (McLaren and McLaren, 1986, p.16). An article by W.S. Wallace, eventual editor of the Canadian Historical Review, entitled "The Canadian Immigration Policy," appeared in Canadian Magazine in 1907-1908. Wallace explained the spectre of "race suicide" in the following way:

The native-born [sic] population, in the struggle to keep up appearances in the face of the increasing competition, fails to propagate itself, commits race suicide, in short, whereas the immigrant population, being inferior, and having no appearance to keep up, propagate itself like fish of the sea (Wallace, 1907-1908, p.360 as cited in McLaren and McLaren, 1986).

Immigrants, like the poor sectors of white society, were seen to be of inferior genetic "stock." Eugenicists, strongly in favour of immigration control, used, developed and promoted standard theories about so-called gene pool purity, and what they saw as the consequent purity of "race," as the grounds upon which to push for control of the birth rate of "undesirables." They sought to encourage those with "superior" genetic stock to refrain from birth control, while encouraging those with "inferior" genes to
practice fertility control. The former were WASP and affluent, while the latter included immigrant, poor, mentally and physically disabled and the "criminal" populations (Gordon, 1977).

American feminist scholar Linda Gordon shows the connection between seemingly dissimilar early twentieth century movements which supported the use of birth control, such as feminists and eugenicists, and their connection to the social angst around "race" purity as a whole. It is not surprising that the issue of immigration and women’s right to control their sexualities were interconnected and manifested themselves in the controversy over the use of birth control. According to "purity" theories, the issue of birth control had double implications. It was frowned upon when it was used by white, middle-class women because it was seen as a means by which the reproduction of the white population was being limited; yet it was upheld as a noble gesture when used by non-white and poor populations to restrict their numbers.

Being Well-Born, a customary Eugenics textbook, posed in its 1916 edition, the following social question and commentary:

from the rate at which immigrants are increasing it is obvious that our very life-blood is at stake. For our own protection we must face the question of what types or races should be ruled out... (cited in Gordon, 1977, p. 277)

It should be noted that many white feminist advocates for birth control at the time went along with the racist and ethnocentric ideas of many eugenicists. Feminists, such as Margaret Sanger and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, viewed "immigrants and working class men
as drunken undesirables" (Gordon, 1977, p.281).

Those who claimed that the white "race" was under threat of extinction were concerned about the following issues: a) that white women in the nineteenth century began to reproduce at a decreasing rate; b) that the decline in the birth rate was conscious and intentional; c) that the fertility rate of "moral" and "respectable WASP" people was considerably lower than immigrants, blacks, and poorer classes, and; d) that the drastic decline in the birth rates began in the late nineteenth century (Gordon, 1977, pp. 153-155). A review of the arguments posed by proponents of the race suicide theory reveals underlying subtexts about gender, race and class and an overall strategy to manage and justify noticeable inequities within the developing modern social order. Much of the controversy around the "outnumbering" of the non-white population and the use of "eugenics" to control, limit or encourage the birth rate of some peoples over others is reflective of underlying class, race and gender disparities and struggles. Linda Gordon writes:

Although changes of the greatest magnitude were taking place, they had been occurring for so long that....The birth-rate differential was in fact only a lag. The suddenness of the race-suicide alarm was due partly to the impact in immigration - - the sudden and massive introduction of people from rural and preindustrialized situations; just as the twentieth century migration of blacks from the South to the North produced similar alarms about the birth rate (Gordon, 1977, p.155).

She concludes that "the societal changes that make large families no longer advantageous -- [such as] the high cost of education, food and rent and the end of productive child labour" contributed
to the decline in fertility rates among white, middle-class families in the western world (Gordon, 1977, p.155).

While a substantive historical exploration of examples of racial misconduct and transgressions is beyond the scope of this research, in the context of twentieth century moral panics about race and immigration, I would like to suggest that white, middle-class anxieties about "their" youth and the 1950s discourses of juvenile delinquency were, in addition to being about an ambivalence toward social change, also about maintaining whiteness. While Adams (1994) suggests that juvenile delinquency was a sexual construct, I would like to suggest that it was also a racial construct. Transgressions against authority can also be read as racial transgressions. The fears around "corrupting" youthful innocence are possibly also about white youth becoming "less white." (It is doubtful that youthful innocence was embodied by black or South Asian Canadians, for example.) From an exploration of moral panics about race it is obvious that notions of "inferiority," "poverty and wretchedness" are raced (as non-white). In relation to this construction the white ideal is superior (biologically and socially) and middle class. To extend an argument that Razack makes in relation to nineteenth century discourses around prostitution to the context of Canada and discourses of youth, I would suggest that regulations that aimed to control delinquency, moral and social decay simultaneously inscribed and fortified the "essence" of white, middle-class respectability and centrality. She argues that:
Bourgeois bodies, the home, the class and ultimately the nation all had to be protected from the contamination of the lower orders. Society had to be cleansed from degeneracy, abnormalcy, excess (Razack, 1996b, p.14).

Degeneracy, abnormalcy, and excess were seen to be stemming from immigrants and other undesirables. I suggest that the meaning of degeneracy and delinquency is integrally tied to fears about non-white immigrants.

My discussion of moral panics around immigration have shown that dominant discourses of the "ethnic" as potentially volatile, incompatible with white cultural norms and/or a threat to the "white" race, were a means to register anxiety toward modern social change at the turn of the century. This anxiety translated into a concern about the boundaries, centrality and synonymity of white national identity. In this sense anxiety toward social change is enmeshed in racial discourses. Canadian immigration policies reflect the ambivalence and contradiction between the desire to "develop" the nation (economically) and the threat that (the required) migrant labour could pose with respect to the established (white) cultural and social fabric of Canada. Moral panics over the "non-white" immigrant translated into and justified racially restrictive Canadian immigration policies for the first half of this century. The construction of South Asians as culturally incompatible and inferior "rationalized" their legal regulation and social marginalization.
Conclusion

In this Chapter I have traced some of the discourses on modernity, youth and immigration. The concerns over youth and immigration from the turn of this century, far from being unconnected worries, are in some ways integral to each other and historically related. The focus on age is a way of registering the ambivalence about a shifting social order. The focus on "race" is a sign of angst over a possible shift in a power hierarchy that privileges "white" centrality. Moral panics about non-white immigration then serve as a means to manage the "dark" side of this ambivalence. The focus on non-white immigration is also about the failures of modern capitalism. One of the ways to justify class inequality in the era of progress and advancement is by scapegoating non-white presence as the source of disparity and resulting social strife. Moral panics about youth in the post-war era have operated as a diversion from examining the failures of modern social progress and the promises of capitalist growth.

Dominant discourses have positioned guidance and protection (of youth) as the panacea for tensions inherent to "growing up" in the modern world. Similarly, I argue, that moral panics about the "non-white ethnic" have operated as a diversion from examining class disparities and other inequities in the power structure of this country. Limitation, restriction and "preventing the spread of" non-white immigrants have been presented as solutions to economic and social tensions within
Canada. The arrival of "non-white" immigrants to Canada and the discourses of racial and cultural difference that position them obscures the ambivalence and "clash" between the desire to embrace modern social change and the desire to contain it. This "clash" is constructed and represented in racial terms, obscuring the problematic and dynamics of modernity and tradition as oppositional categories.

I have suggested that there are parallels between modern constructions of youth and the non-white ethnic. This discussion will help us examine how race and age work together in positioning young South Asians as particularly vulnerable to the dangers of modernity. This positioning and construction have justified the regulation and "protection" of South Asian women in various ways. The dangers of modernity are perceived by the South Asian community in the form of the threat of "westernism," and by "mainstream" Canadian society they are perceived in the form of threat to "Canadianism." I have also argued that representations of the non-white ethnic have been central to the making of a "white" nation. The fears characteristic of modernity, and certainly in twentieth century discourses around social change -- degeneracy, delinquency and social decay -- are racial constructs which have abetted in securing notions of white, middle-class respectability. This respectability is accomplished in comparison with and distinction from its racial opposite.

In this chapter I have explored how "youth" is a central concept in discourses that have attempted to monitor the changes
brought about by the processes of modernization. These changes, I have suggested, are about shifting identities -- both of the role of the individual and in the boundaries of Canadian national identity. The latter reflects the shifting place of the "Anglo-white" ethnic community.

In Chapter Six I will look at how Canada's policy of multiculturalism was constituted as the official response to the reality of cultural diversity. I will explore how notions of tolerance, national identity and unity have operated through this policy in ways that continue to assert white as the norm in Canada. I suggest that a subtext of assimilationism justifies the construction of the "non-white" ethnic "as in need of development." There is a correlation between the degree of assimilation and degree of "development" or advancement. Resistance to convergence with "white" cultural norms becomes an indicator of how "backward" the "non-white" ethnic is. Later on in this thesis I will return to the concept of "moral panic" to understand the contemporary concern over Bhangra day dances and immigrants in general. In the following chapter I examine how the figure of "woman" was constituted in and affected by modernization. Women, and their sexualities in particular, were seen as in need of protection from "threats" posed by a rapidly modernizing social order. More specifically, I place the concept of modernity in the colonial context to show how "women" have become instrumental in an East-West battle over cultural difference.
1. In this chapter, I draw extensively from Mary Louise Adams (1994), precisely because her doctoral thesis research, The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Construction of Heterosexuality, represents the first of its kind to document some of the discourses around youth and modernity in the Canadian context.

2. While I talk about "shifts" here, I do so with caution. I realize that the acknowledgement of these changes is in itself a product of modernity and is only thinkable in terms of the "modern."

3. I would like to clarify the usage of the terms, modernity, modernization and modern. "Modernity" can be understood as an historical period and epistemological stance; "modernization," as the social and technological processes that have brought this period about; and "modern" as an adjective describing the resulting social conditions. Rey Chow treats this triad as inseparable categories pertaining "to the increasing technologization of culture" (Chow, 1993, p. 55). While I refer to modernity as a noun/subject at various points in this chapter I do so for practical purposes. I understand modernity to be both a set of social conditions as well as a way of understanding, constructing and describing the social world. In this sense there is a dialectic between the (modern) social world and the ideas of modernity. Neither precedes the other but both are negotiated and constructed in and through each other.


5. These expectations and possibilities for the "new" individual were highly gendered, applying almost always only to males.

6. Lesley Johnson also identifies the introduction of mass secondary education as one of the changes in the post-war era.

7. Although I am discussing the 1950’s, G.S. Hall’s ideas developed at the turn of the century about "adolescence" as determined by biological/hormonal changes, persisted as a dominant discourse around youth in the post-war climate.

8. There are several anxieties particular to the post-war period. The Second World War meant that many middle-class young people were "growing up" without the company of either father (who was committed to serving his "patriotic duty" as soldier) or mother (who also out of national duty joined the ranks of paid employment to "help out") (Adams, 1994). During the war, discourses about normative child development and "mothering" were
connected and helped to meet the needs of a changing labour force (Prentice, 1993). As soldiers returned from the war, Canadian women were told that it was time to leave their jobs to the men and to return to "real" duty of raising children (Pierson, 1986).

9. South Asians first left India in large numbers as indentured labourers. This type of labour was used especially by the British for the development of West Indian colonies. Under the indentured system, the migrant would exchange his/her labour for the expense of passage (from India to the West Indies). The migrant was not free to work in any other capacity until this debt of passage was paid off. The payment of passage could take decades. This system was officially abolished in 1920 (Bolaria and Li, 1988).

10. India’s independence from Britain in 1947 changed its international status. Also the Canadian Citizenship Act of 1947 gave access to citizenship for South Asians living in Canada (Subhas, 1982, p.23).

11. I would like to point out the connection between discourses of youth and the development of the nation -- as in "young" nation.
Chapter Five: Colonial Discourses; Nation, Tradition, Culture and Women

While the last chapter focused on modern discourses around age and race, this chapter will explore notions of womanhood. I will look at how these notions are enmeshed in discourses about community, culture and nation. This chapter examines how women, in the context of larger political struggles, become positioned as representative of the collectivities of "culture," "ethnicity" and/or nation. How did "women" come to represent the boundaries of cultural difference? In the last chapter with respect to white women and race suicide, I touched on the correlation between gender and ethnicity. I explored how white women were central to discourses around white identity and nationhood. In this chapter I establish, in a more detailed way, the ways in which ethnic boundaries depend on notions of gender. I argue that the concepts of cultural preservation and cultural authenticity are not only held together by notions of gender, but that women's sexualities in particular are used to mark the boundaries of "cultural" and/or "ethnic" identity.

This chapter will look specifically at some of the debates about women in colonial India. By examining the historiography of nationalist struggle for independence from British rule, I will show how certain notions of womanhood, tradition and culture were mobilized and used by both British colonialists and Indian nationalists. I am interested in how the concept of modernity became instrumental in mobilizing certain gendered discourses around "tradition" and "culture." Modernity was a key notion in
discourses supporting Britain’s civilizing mission in India, which mobilized struggles over the gendered meanings of "tradition" and "culture." I will explore the ways in which British colonialists used, and intervened in, the "question of women" in order to position themselves as culturally and morally superior to the indigenous population of India. Indian nationalists, in turn, mobilized certain notions of womanhood that enabled them to justify their aspirations for self-government. Their nationalist project inculcated a vision of modernization that was distinct from westernization and therefore not at odds with what they saw as the true "Eastern", "Indian" identity (Chatterjee, 1993). Notions of womanhood were instrumental to forging this distinction. Placing the concept of modernity within the colonial context of India, Nalini Natarajan argues that the woman’s body became the site for testing out modernity as a set of social conditions (Natarajan, 1994). This positioning, she contends, continues to occur. Natarajan argues that modernity is often presented as a sexual threat for women and that "women" have become the site of an East-West cultural battle. I agree and argue that as a result, current questions of cultural "authenticity" and cultural preservation are inextricably tied to the history of regulation of women’s sexualities.

Showing how gendered notions of modernity and tradition were instrumental in Indian colonial discourses is of relevance to the arguments as a whole in this thesis. In later chapters I will
explore how colonial notions of women persist in shaping the positioning of the subjectivities of young South Asian women in the Canadian context. I argue that the positioning of South Asian peoples viz-à-viz a dominant white/Anglo population continues to be around a boundary between, and to reproduce discourses of "tradition," "culture" and "women" that are similar to those that operated in colonial India. In fact, it is the continuing production of such markers and boundaries that gives meaning and context to the term "South Asian community" in Canada. "South Asian" is a meaningful category because it is continually marked as distinguishable from the dominant "norm."

Before continuing I would like to explain my use of colonial discourse in this chapter. For the purposes of this discussion I have adopted Lata Mani's definition of Indian "colonial discourse" as:

a mode of understanding Indian society that emerged alongside colonial rule and over time was shared to a greater or lesser extent by officials, missionaries and the indigenous elite, although deployed by these various groups to different, often ideologically opposite ends (Mani, 1990b, p.90).

**Women and Modernity**

While changes associated with modernity in the West, such as the privatization of the family and the separation of the "household" from the economy are all gendered processes, some feminists argue that the impact of these changes on women's lives has been overlooked (Marshall, 1994; Johnson, 1993; Morris, 1988). Meaghan Morris, for example, claims that women's lives in the private sphere have been one of modernization's most
significant experimental sites.

In an analysis of modernist texts Lesley Johnson (1993) concludes that the female figure most often represents the "Other" of modernity, "the closed individual of the traditional world and the victim of the human costs and tragedy of modernization" (Johnson, 1993, p.27). In her work on 1950's Australia she found that while there were all kinds of prescriptions for youth in a period that was considered full of uncertainty, young women were positioned differently than young men because they were considered to be outside the effects of modernity. It was thought that young women, whose lives were predetermined by biological destiny, need not bother with the requirements set out for the modern individual (Johnson, 1993). She and Mary Louise Adams (1994) argue that there were all kinds of consequences for women which can be seen most noticeably in relation to regulations around their sexualities.

The contradiction between the ideal of essential woman as untouched by modernity and the reality of regulations that have circumscribed women's lives is best captured, I think, by Joan Landes who argues that:

On the one hand, woman, like nature, provided a moral antidote to the worst abuses of civilization . . . [w]omen's virtue could offer a justification for her necessary privatization. How else could her spirituality, innocence or purity be preserved? On the other hand, woman as nature inhibited the progressive side of society and its rational reconstruction. In so far as woman represented a backward, traditional, irrational force, she had to be controlled, contended with and contained (Landes, 1984, p.21).
Landes' reflection accounts for some of the contradictory discourses that have positioned women in the modern era. The changes brought about by modernity, as I discussed in the previous chapter, mobilized fears and anxieties about change in general.

I would like to return to the contradiction between the modernist notions of freedom and the "traditional" notions of social responsibility, which take on specific meanings for women. Woman's social responsibility within modernity is perceived to be the preservation of a social order that is seen to be threatened by modern social change. Women have come to be associated with the memory of all that is seen to be good from pre-modern times. Women, in this sense, could provide the antidote to the anxieties associated with modern social progress -- namely the possibility that limitless freedom might bring about moral and social disintegration. The contradiction for women within modernity is one whereby the notion of womanhood has to incorporate the freedoms supposedly opened up by modern "progress" while simultaneously attending to the responsibility relegated to women for preserving the morality of the individual and the social order, especially through the family.

To refer back to Franco Moretti's argument from the previous chapter, the notion of modern self-government includes both the individual's capacity to govern the self through the ability to "reason," and the social capacity to self-govern through democratic participation. Within this construction, the only way
that "traditional" notions of responsibility can be maintained if the individual perceives the norms of social order as her/his own. As Moretti argues:

[the ideal of the self-determining or self-legislating individual meant that social order could no longer be maintained by the force of tradition, and consent to that order could no longer be gained through the exercise of the authority of a sovereign form of power...The problem was posed in terms of how the 'free individual' could be required to be, at the same time, the 'convinced citizen' -- not as a fearful subject, but as one who perceives 'the social norms as one's own (as paraphrased by Johnson, 1993, p.37).]

As Landes points out, the question becomes one of how to preserve "women's innocence" without it being at the expense of modern social progress. In this chapter I will add yet another dimension to Landes' analysis. I will show how in colonial India, the spirituality, innocence and purity that Landes speaks of were enmeshed in a debate about culture and cultural difference. Women became synonymous with the characteristics of innocence, spirituality and purity and were also positioned as the moral guardians and keepers of a particular brand of "Indian culture." Both British and Indian nationalists contributed to this positing of women and culture (Bagchi, 1993; Mani, 1990a; Mani, 1990b; Chatterjee, 1993).

**Culture and Nation**

Benedict Anderson (1983; 1991) has provided a significant contribution to the study of nationalism. He argues that nationalism, or what he sometimes prefers to call nation-ness, is a cultural artifact that is historically locatable. He contends that the origins of eighteenth century European nationalism have
their cultural roots in the alliance between industrial capitalism and print capitalism and the demise of religiously based communities and "dynastic realms" (Anderson, 1991, p.22). His contribution to the study of nationalism has been twofold. First, he formulated the idea that the business of nation making is based on imagination. Nations, "imagined communities," are built on the mobilization of certain cultural and historical artifacts. He treats nationalism as a kind of social organization rather than merely a political or ideological expression. It is for this reason he likens nationalism to kinship and religion "rather than with 'liberalism' or fascism'" (Anderson, 1991, p.5). He argues that nationalism or nation-ness is like a language in that it is a sign for multiple particularities, which, after the late eighteenth century wave of European nationalist movements for sovereignty, has in some sense become modular and uniform. The rise of nationalism, argues Anderson, has had much to do with the rise of modern print culture and print capitalism which have provided the means for the articulation of this new "national" language (Anderson, 1983, pp.17-49).

Anderson's work is relevant to some of the arguments I am making in this thesis. I show how South Asian "community" identity in Canada is accomplished by mobilizing certain discourses around ethnicity and cultural preservation. In this sense it "imagines" itself by using certain historical (colonial) notions of tradition, "culture" and gender. The concept of
imagination, narrative or fiction disrupts the idea that nation-ness or community identity is a "natural" outgrowth of fixed, and objective notions of "ethnic" identity.

Joseph Levenson (1965) explores the different conceptions of community, drawing a distinction between what he calls "culturalism" and "nationalism." The former, which he locates in "pre-modern" history, based its notion of community in a natural belief of cultural superiority; it did not seek approval or justification outside of the collectivity itself. Only when cultural values had to seek legitimation in relation to an outside force in the late nineteenth century, according to Levenson, do we begin to see a disintegration of culturalism and a swift transition to nationalism. Similarly the Asian historian, Duara Prasenjit, argues that the notion of ethnicity and its association with the nation state is a "modern" phenomenon. Nationalism, here, is understood as culture being protected by the state or as the "politicization of culture" (Prasenjit, 1995, p.56). Prasenjit explains how notions of community and nation are mobilized:

An incipient nationality is formed when the perception of the boundaries of community are transformed, namely, when soft boundaries are transformed into hard ones. This happens when a group succeeds in imposing a historical narrative of descent and/or dissent on both heterogeneous and related cultural practices....The narrative of descent is used to define and mobilize a community, often by privileging a particular cultural practice (or set of practices) as the constitutive principle of the community - such as language, religion or common historical experience - thereby heightening the self-consciousness of this community in relation to those around it (Prasenjit, 1995, p.66).
Both Levenson and Prasenjit perceive power struggles between communities as having an important impact on "community" consciousness. Awareness of "identity" is seen to be heightened in relation to an outside threat. Prasenjit argues for a notion of history that "is frequently linked to differentiating the self from an Other" (Prasenjit, 1995, p.66). He argues that the idea of nationalism or community self-consciousness is not a natural evolutionary process but that cultural symbols of a community are deliberately mobilized by powerful elites and politicians within a collectivity for specific political gains and entitlements. While Levenson and Prasenjit suggest an idyllic representation of community identity by intimating that "pre-modern" communities had no power struggles or "self-consciousness," and their ideas around the "growth" of nationalism contradict those of Anderson, I find their work useful to my own analysis. The concept of "identification" in relation to "other" is central to my arguments around cultural difference and identity.

I argue that the contestation between East and West, and the construction of their respective identities, is based on their relationship to one another. The meaning of each is constructed through the demarcating of symbolic boundaries. Women are central to this demarcation. This self/other East/West relationship is, of course, not an equal one. In constructing its own "oppositional" narrative as a minority community both currently in the West and previously during the colonial era, South Asian Canadian and Indian nationalist discourses, respectively
mobilize(d) certain signifiers of community identity as a strategy to assert its own right to cultural (self) determination.

**Women as Markers of Collectives**

Rather than viewing nationalism as a modern phenomenon that emerged out of a "natural" evolutionary process based on the commonality of ethnicity, religion or origin, Anderson, Levenson and Prasenjit view it as socially and historically constructed. Both Prasenjit and Levenson suggest that pre-modern social organization was devoid of "cultural" power struggles. While one may disagree with this somewhat utopian view of pre-modernity, their theories about community self-awareness provide useful accounts of the impact of colonial rule and the consequent waves of national struggles waged by "third world" countries in the first half of this century. While their contribution to the study of nationalism has been significant, Anderson, Levenson and Prasenjit leave out the place of women in discourses of nation.

Women have often assumed the task of upholding certain cultural practices which are seen as constitutive of community identity. The boundaries and self-awareness of "community" that Prasenjit and Levenson talk about have in many ways been inextricably linked to the mobilization of certain notions of "woman."

Historians have sought to uncover the connection between gender and how it has been used as a political and "ethnic" marker in times of change, resistance and revolution, both in liberal and conservative discourses. Using Anderson's analogy
between nationalism and kinship/religion, Valentine Moghadam (1994) argues that women are commissioned as the carriers of cultural values and traditions and become emblematic of the very community of which they are a part:

[if] the nation is an extended family writ large, then women's role is to carry out the tasks of nurturance and reproduction. If the nation is defined as a religious entity, then the appropriate models of womanhood are to be found in the scripture (Moghadam, 1994, p.4).

Moghadam argues that notions of "womanhood" fluctuate according to the needs and narrative of nationhood. Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis (1993) take this point further by arguing that the boundary of ethnicity is inseparable from notions of gender. They contend that women are responsible for upholding the "norms" and consequent identity of an ethnic collective:

The boundary of the ethnic is often dependent on gender and there is a reliance on gender attributes for specifying ethnic identity: much of ethnic culture is organized around rules relating to sexuality, marriage and the family, and a true member will perform these roles properly. Communal boundaries often use differences in the way that women are socially constructed as markers. Such markers (for example, expectations about honour, purity, the mothering of patriots, reproducers of the nation, transmitters of ethnic culture) often symbolize the use of women as an ethnic resource (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1989, p.113-114).

Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989; 1993) make a distinction between ethnicity and nation. They argue that while ethnicity involves a sense of belonging to a particular collective, nation-building is one of the projects that this "sense of belonging" can be mobilized to accomplish.
Several post-colonial historians have attempted to recover the "body" of woman, so to speak. By this I mean there have been several attempts to understand the ways in which women's bodies become a site and signifier of the nation in periods of colonization, resistance and nation-building. The genesis of the Indian nation state provides a good example of how gender and ethnicity worked together in carving out notions of national identity.

The Struggle for National Independence

British colonialists used "women" as a yardstick from which to measure the extent of modernization in India. The low status of Indian women was used as an indicator of the "backward" condition of the entire country. Arguing that the prevalence of certain cultural practices involving women "proved" that Indians were unfit to rule themselves, British colonizers relied on a discourse that distinguished between "civilized" and "uncivilized" to justify their continued occupation of India. In response to Britain's justification of continued rule, "women" were usurped by an Indian (male) nationalist agenda that set out to "prove" the validity of Indian cultural practices through discourses relying on notions of authenticity and the right to cultural difference. A look at colonial history shows us the junctures at which women and tradition became synonymous with each other.

Through a revisioning of the colonial past, historians have made visible the intersections of the female body and nationalist
discourse. Several feminist indologists have argued that women’s sexualities were the battleground of debates on "culture" and "tradition" (Sangari and Vaid, 1990; Mani, 1990a; Mani, 1990b; Bagchi, 1993). The reform movement of the early nineteenth century, what some have referred to as the first wave of the Indian feminist movement (Nandita Gandhi, 1985; Forbes 1984), was spearheaded by male reformers who sought to change the status and position of (upper class/caste) women. In the pre-twentieth century middle/upper class Hindu women had no access to property rights, were subject to child marriages and in some communities, involved in the practice of sati (a widow’s self-immolation on her husband’s funeral pyre) (Everett, 1983; Jayawardena, 1986).

Of concern to Muslim reformers at this time were issues such as purdah, polygamy and women’s education (Jayawardena, 1986, p.92). Mani’s work on "sati" provides an excellent deconstruction of the various notions around "tradition" and "culture" that took place during British colonial rule in India. She has shown that debates around sati, for example, while seemingly being about women, were more about what constitutes "authentic" cultural tradition. In other words, there was a struggle over the meaning of what constitutes "Indian" culture and in essence, its boundaries. For both Indian nationalists and British rulers women became the battlegrounds on which to test notions of tradition.

Mani contends that the discourses of tradition that operated during British rule and continue to operate today are colonial in nature for several reasons (Mani, 1990b). Firstly, they operate
according to an assumption that tradition is synonymous with stasis. This occurs because tradition is often associated with religious textual tradition, namely scriptures. Mani suggests that the centrality of religious texts was itself a colonial creation. She argues that British colonials, in an effort to regulate sati in a way that would not appear overtly interventionist, relied on brahmanic's scriptures and positioned themselves as protagonists interested in returning the Indian masses to the "original" and "authentic" practice of sati. Colonialists in favour of abolishing certain kinds of sati did not intervene on the grounds of the barbarity of the practice against women, but on grounds that sought to reinforce their interpretation of tradition (Mani, 1990b). This interpretation then became part of discourses justifying their "civilizing" mission in India.

British colonialists consolidated their rule in India through the use of "law" as a vehicle of administration (Sahgal, 1992). This involved a process of codification of "indigenous" law through a reliance on religious texts as the ultimate authority on Indian custom and practice. Privileging brahmanic texts as the mainstay of Indian society led to several social reconstructions. It advanced the notion of "cultural" tradition as fixed according to written religious text rather than as a dynamic process of practice and interpretation. It also ignored the ways in which people interpreted and practised the scriptures, as well as the process of legal interpretation.
(Sahgal, 1992, p.168). According to Mani, colonial constructions view tradition as ahistorical and timeless. She argues that "'tradition,' interchangeable for the most part with 'religion' and 'culture' is designated as a sphere distinct from material life" (Mani, 1990b, p. 116).²

Indigenous discourses on sati also tended to rely on scriptural texts in order to safeguard indigenous ownership and self-determination of this practice and to deflect British intervention into "personal Indian" matters. In both discourses, religion becomes synonymous with tradition and passivity, and women come to signify tradition for both colonial rulers and the indigenous elite:

For the British, rescuing women becomes part of the civilizing mission. For the indigenous elite, protection of their status or its reform becomes an urgent necessity, in terms of the honour of the collective - religious or national. For all participants in nineteenth century debates on social reform, women represent embarrassment or potential. And given the discursive construction of women as either abject victims or heroines, they frequently represent both shame and promise (Mani, 1990b, p.118).

The exclusive use of brahmanic texts also helped to privilege "Hindu" notions of tradition and culture and maintain and forge the construction of "Hindu" and "Muslim" as oppositional and distinct heritages. The application of religious documents ignored totally the "secularism, rationalism, and non-conformity [of] pre-British Muslim ruled India..." (Sarkar, 1975, pp.52-53, as cited in Mani, 1990b, p. 114). In fact, Gita Sahgal (1992) argues that the treatment of religious texts as the basis of the entire legal system in colonial India led to the fixity of
religious identities that were hitherto non-existent. This process assumed that Hindu and Muslim were oppositional and internally homogenous categories and people were now forced to construct and conduct themselves only according to these colonial religious categories of law.

"Women" were usurped by both indigenous and colonial leaders in a struggle over political hegemony. They became the focus of a struggle for national independence that was integrally linked to a politics of cultural "authenticity." For Indian nationalists, the category "woman", and more accurately, certain notions of the Hindu woman, became emblematic of an Indian national identity (Natarajan, 1994; Bagchi, 1993; Sangari and \\^Aid, 1990; Mani, 1990a; Mani, 1990b).

\section*{Woman as Nation}

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Indian nationalists sought to differentiate themselves from both the idea of past tradition and from the West (Chatterjee, 1993, pp.116-134). During "the entire phase of national struggle, the crucial need was to protect, preserve, and strengthen the inner core of national culture, its spiritual essence" (Chatterjee, 1993, p.121). Women, substantially, became the sign of this inner identity, which was in need of protection and preservation. To use Landes' analogy, Indian nationalists attempted to preserve the innocence of women while simultaneously meeting the needs of modernization. They proposed a new kind of woman who could enjoy the freedoms of the modern world, such as education and paid
employment, while at the same time attending to the responsibilities of the home, upholding cultural norms and the virtues associated with spirituality. Keeping up with modern progress would keep India on par with the British. The nationalist project promulgated a notion of civilization, which, while rooted in a post-Enlightenment discourse of progress and modernity, sought to set itself apart from both a disgraceful past that the British reminded them was a mark of inferiority, and from the West. What developed, Chatterjee argues, was

a dominant characteristic of femininity in the new construct of 'woman' standing as a sign for 'nation,' namely spiritual qualities of self-sacrifice, benevolence, devotion, religiosity, and so on. This spirituality did not, as we have seen, impede the chances of woman moving out of the physical confines of the home; on the contrary, it facilitated it, making it possible for her to go into the world under conditions that would not threaten her femininity. In fact the image of woman as goddess or mother served to erase her sexuality in the world outside her home (Chatterjee, 1993, p.131).

Chatterjee argues that Indian nationalist discourse can only be understood in relation to the dichotomy between the private and the public, what he calls, the home and the world (Chatterjee, 1993, pp.120-121). Chatterjee contends that the Indian nationalists asserted that the essential identity of the East "lay in its distinctive, and superior, spiritual culture" (the home) which had not been and did not have to be colonized, whereas keeping abreast of the modern material western world (the world) was a must (Chatterjee, 1993, p.121).

Chatterjee explores how the discourse of Indian nationalism attempted to resolve the "woman" question. The nationalist agenda
based their vision of women on certain assumptions about femininity, about woman as closer to nature, nurturing and spirituality (Chatterjee, 1993). Ketu Katrak (1992) argues, for example, that Mahatma Gandhi, influential national leader and most associated with his non-violent strategy to overthrow British rule, also participated in maintaining the patriarchal norms of the time. While Gandhi proposed a new role for women which brought them out of the homes and into the streets, he did not challenge the gender divide of the domestic sphere.

Gandhi’s justification for women’s participation in non-violent public protest relied on prevailing notions of masculinity and femininity. As Gandhi wrote in the 1920’s, "the female sex is not the weaker sex; it is the nobler of the two: for it is even today the embodiment of sacrifice, silent suffering, humility, faith and knowledge" (as cited in Jayawaradena, 1986, p.95). Women were seen to be inherently sacrificial, and possessed the virtues of innocence, purity and suffering and were best suited to symbolize civil disobedience, because according to Gandhi, "women optimally embodied...a dual impulse for 'obedience and rebellion against authority' primarily within the family" which he felt he could mobilize for a revolution against colonial rule (Katrak, 1992, p.396). These qualities were glorified and became the standard that women should uphold in relation to the nationalist struggle. Katrak argues that Gandhi deliberately chose certain mythological heroines over others because they best embodied these virtues."
Katrak points to two significant aspects of what happens to female sexuality in this vision of spiritual embodiment. She argues that although certain aspects of Hindu mythology recognize that the spiritual lies within the body and, according to the science of yoga, the body is seen to be the site through which to reach a spiritual plateau, incorporating "women" into spirituality has brought about a schism in the mind-body union. For women, the idea of the material body being part of the spiritual is associated with sexual danger. Ketrak argues, for example, that certain patriarchal mythologies have replaced other more women-centered narratives so as to contain the power that women once had. In this substitution the divine and the lover are portrayed as one and the same, and women's fertility is both the object of fear and worship:

in this very mythologizing of female sexual power lies a deeply oppressive paradox. Male power and male sexuality are legitimate; female sexuality understood as female power, must be controlled and bounded through social custom... (Katrak, 1992, p.398)

For women, when spirit and body meet, the female body - bearing the mark of the sexual and in this sense overdetermined by it - contains the "threat" of sexuality. In other words, in this construction, woman threatens to be sexual (and therefore an active agent and therefore powerful). The only way to make the body-spirit union unthreatening for men is if woman's sexuality is completely subsumed under the spiritual realm and leaves behind "the realms of the psychic, of desire, of pleasure" (Katrak, 1992, p.391).
The West was positioned as synonymous with the kind of modernity nationalists wanted to distinguish themselves from because they saw western modernism as contradictory to the "Indian" identity that needed preserving. According to nationalist discourses, the inner core of this identity was seen to be contained within the private sphere, and could, it was thought, be preserved by women. A multitude of claims were made by Indian nationalists in relation to the superior moral character of women that justified their suitability for this role. Women and the true essence of "Indian" identity became synonymous, both seen as in need of protection from the threat of western modernity.

Jasodhara Bagchi (1993) argues that "the contest for hegemony under colonialism has sometimes been perceived simply as one between [colonialist] Social Reform based on the commonality of reason, and Nationalism, based on cultural difference" (Bagchi, 1993, p.23). Her interpretation of this struggle, however, locates the former as also having contributed to the construction of a national identity grounded in "culture." She argues that in working closely with an indigenous elite and in grounding its arguments for reform in notions of "tradition," the British augmented the connection between national identity and culture. Bagchi contends that the nationalists, similarly, relied heavily on a nationalist discourse that glorified "indigenous practices" not only "emphasizing their 'difference' from the values and milieu of the western rulers" (Bagchi, 1993, p.25) but
also arguing for their cultural superiority. She concludes that:

The Hindu womanhood, with its propensity towards penance, fasts and rituals became the hallmark of the purity of our national identity, increasingly ethnicized to mean a Hindu identity (Bagchi, 1993, p.25).

In a bid to consolidate nationalist interests, "woman" was "sacrificed" to serve the social good, in this case the interests of the Indian nation. "Woman" in this process is commissioned as "carrier" of the nation, the marker of national distinctness symbolizing the specificity of certain cultural practices. I am suggesting that by extension, women are also seen as the carriers of "culture." British colonialists contributed to establishing a chain of synonymity of woman, tradition and national identity by refuting the interpretative nature of religious texts and advancing their own "civilized" notions of practices involving women. This intervention was a show of "superiority" in order to justify the "rightful" place of British colonial rule in India.

East, West and Sexual Difference

Women became de-sexualized in the process of nation-building. The idea of the "new woman" was advanced in the interests of the nation. Women's sexualities, in many ways, became the marker of virtue and a symbol of what differentiated her from the western woman. Modesty as a code of dress and behaviour and the proper use of the body (refraining from smoking or drinking) became symbolic markers of this cultural difference. Chatterjee explains:

A woman identified as westernized, for instance, would invite the ascription of all that the "normal" woman
(mother/sister/wife/daughter) is not - brazen, avaricious, irreligious, sexually promiscuous...
(Chatterjee, 1993, p. 131).

The very notion of the "new Indian woman" was forged on the grounds of her difference from her western counterpart. This narrative represented the white woman as everything the "indian" woman was not. Chatterjee points to the "ethnic" and class dimensions of this notion and of the nationalist project which promised:

superiority over the western woman for whom, it was believed, education meant only the acquisition of material skills to compete with men in the outside world and hence a loss of feminine (spiritual) virtues; superiority over the preceding generations of women in their own homes who had been denied the opportunity of freedom by an oppressive and degenerate social tradition; and superiority over women of the lower classes who were actually incapable of appreciating the virtues of freedom (Chatterjee, 1993, p. 129).

While I have shown that "woman"/"women" became the battleground for forging the boundaries of "indian" identity in the face of colonial rule, there is also substantial evidence indicating that notions of European woman were mobilized in discourses of empire in order to maintain boundaries around European identity and community (McClintock, 1995; Stoler, 1991; 1990). Historian Ann Stoler adds to colonial historical analysis by exploring the ways in which "white" women's sexualities have also been regulated through colonial discourses. She argues that "the very categories of 'colonizer' and 'colorized' were secured through forms of sexual control that defined the domestic arrangements of Europeans and the cultural investments by which
they identified themselves" (Stoler, 1991, p.52). The sense of identity of Europeans and the inclusion and exclusion of members within the definition of European community "required regulating sexual, conjugal, and domestic life of both Europeans in the colonies and their colonized subjects" (Stoler, 1991, p.53). Stoler argues that the Empire also operated according to certain notions of femininity which fluctuated according to colonial needs. For example, she points out that between 1600-1900 the immigration of European women to the colonies was virtually prohibited. This was justified in relation to particular assumptions about European women. In the case of Dutch colonial rulers, it was argued that Dutch women "might hinder permanent settlement by goading their burgher husbands to quickly lucrative or nefarious trade, and then repatriate to display their newfound wealth" (Taylor, 1983, p.14) or that their children would not be able to adapt to the conditions of the colonies and their ill-health would require families to return "backhome" (Stoler, 1991). During this period concubinage was a common set-up in the colonies. European men would cohabit with local women. This, she argued, worked just fine for colonial rulers, met the needs of the white settlers and actually saved on maintenance costs for the empire. Assumptions about femininity, namely that women are whimsical, unwise, predisposed to the fancies of middle-class consumerism and unfit for the hardships of living in the settlements, were reasons used to exclude European women from the colonies.
Stoler argues that these notions of femininity changed, however, when concubinage threatened the boundaries of European community. As offspring resulted from these mixed unions, the line separating rulers from "natives" became less clear. The racial blurring that occurred due to children of interracial blending raised certain troubling questions for the colonizers: How were these children to be categorized? Mixed-race children created a crisis in the definition of European identity and fears about a possible future: "the political fear that such Eurasians would demand economic success, [and] political rights..." (Stoler, 1991, p.79). Parallel and related to anxieties around race purity in the first half of this century in the western world, these fears translated into a panic about white race degeneracy and cultural contamination in the colonies. Stoler argues that the idea and practice of eugenics served as a means to protect the vulnerabilities of white rule and to safeguard the notion of white supremacy.

Colonial rulers sought to reinforce their sense of cultural difference. Eugenics helped to solidify class and racial markers of colonial superiority. The entrance of women to the colonies, Stoler claims, helped to bolster the image of a deteriorating empire. She argues that white prestige, which colonial women helped to restore, was a significant feature of colonial mentality and "was the primary cause of a long list of otherwise inexplicable colonial postures, prejudices, fears and violences" (Stoler, 1991, p.63). Women emerged as the hallmarks of
respectability and civilization. White women from the metropolis were, in the 1920's and 1930's, called upon to restore moral order to the colonies and became exemplars of devoted and voluntary subordinates to, and defenders of, colonial men (Stoler, 1991).

The arrival of European women to the colonies also served as a means to shift public opinion, invoke sympathy in favour of colonialists when needed, and served as a justification for mobilizing certain regulations on the lives of "natives." For example, both Stoler and Jenny Sharpe (1993) argue that the panic over the rape of white women by "native men" that began to circulate in the colonies in the late nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century, was due to a crisis in colonial authority. Sharpe argues that rebellions such as the "Indian Mutiny" of 1857 mobilized a discourse of sexual assault of white women that was really about race. The idea of the "native" man as incapable of sexual restraint and as a threat to European women and white honour emerged as a means of maintaining the notion of white racial superiority. Stoler argues that this panic also helped to put in place certain legal measures that increased the regulation of "natives," such as the need for segregated social spaces, harsher penalties for crossing racial lines, and the restriction of interracial mixing.

These restrictions also affected white women, who were expected to conform to codes of dress and sexual conduct -- they were not to mingle "too closely" with "native" men or dress and
act in "alluring" ways. Stoler concludes that:

[a] defense of community, morality, and white male power was achieved by increasing control over and consensus among Europeans, by affirming the vulnerability of white women, the sexual threat of native men, and by creating new sanctions to limit the liberties of both (Stoler, 1991, p.70).

By revealing the construction of gender divides, analyses of historians such as Sharpe and Stoler help to break the assumption of a homogeneous colonial community. They also help to explore the ways in which gender operated both in relation to "white" as well as "native" women. For both European rulers and "native" nationalists, colonial notions of women operated as a means of demarcating boundaries of cultural difference that helped to procure specific and conflicting political objectives.

Conclusion

Lydia Liu argues that the sexualization of national struggles has created woman as a fractured subjectivity, a struggle between either/or categories of gender, class and national identities:

...the female body is ultimately displaced by nationalism, whose discourse denies the specificity of female experience by giving larger symbolic meanings to the signifier...(Liu, 1994, p.44).

In this construction, woman must "choose" between herself or the nation, her gender or her race, her gender or her class.

This chapter has introduced some of the contradictions for women within modernity, colonialism and nationalism. Identified with nature and the act of pro-creation, women have been relegated to the task of upholding the virtues associated with
all that modern change is said to move away from. They, like youth, are associated with purity and innocence, which, if left untouched and protected from the "ills" of the modern world could help to preserve some vestiges of a past "golden" age and thereby alleviate some of the fears around rapid change. However, in nationalist discourses women were placed in a position of having to preserve "premodernity" in a way that was not at odds with modern change. Within modernity, moral sexual regulation is actually another means to ensure the maintenance of social order, while simultaneously neutralizing fears around moral decay and possible lawlessness.

This chapter has explored how women become the markers of "ethnic" difference and nationhood. Both Indian nationalists and British colonialists were concerned about the authenticity and boundaries of their respective cultural collectives in a struggle over political hegemony. Indian nationalists resolved the contradiction between modernization and westernization by "allowing" women to modernize without forsaking what was perceived to be a true "Indian" identity. Notions of womanhood were used not only as a way of resolving the ambivalence between pre-modernity and modernity but also a means to assert claim to Indian self-rule. Concepts of femininity in the context of colonial India became inseparable from a politics of cultural authenticity, preservation and "Indian" identity itself. Later in this thesis I will show how similar notions of woman are mobilized in the South Asian diaspora in order to construct and
maintain their sense of cultural difference in relation to dominant cultural norms and practices.²

Exploring the ways in which the British Empire used notions of femininity to articulate their own position of superiority and civilization shows that dominant communities also assert, monitor and mobilize cultural ideologies in an effort to define and maintain the boundaries around their community identity. The relationship between East and West is an interconnected one in this respect, each responding to the perceived threat of the other. In the following chapter I will examine how a sense of nation-ness or belonging is created in the South Asian diaspora and the East-West contestation that continues to play itself out in the contemporary context of Canada. This piece of my argument interrogates the relationship between race, nation and diaspora.
1. Natarajan (1994) argues, in the context of India, that women have become the terrain of a nationalist message of "containment of the threat to national culture from diasporic Indian populations" living outside the Indian subcontinent (Natarajan, 1994, p.87). In later chapters, I adopt her notion of modernity as sexual threat in the Canadian context. I argue that similar notions of modernity operate within the South Asian community in Canada.


4. The reality of lower-caste women was remarkably different at this time. Because of the significant role they played in the production process, separation, remarriage and greater autonomy in relation to social norms was not unheard of (Everett, 1983).

5. Brahmanic scriptures form the basis of (textually, not necessarily in practice) hindu philosophical and religious principles.

6. For a more thorough examination of colonialist assumptions of Indian tradition and cultural practices as well as the process by which they became encoded in the legal system, see: Lata Mani (1990b) "Contentious Traditions" in Sangari and Vaid (eds.), Recasting Women.

7. For example, Gandhi praised the virtues of figures like Sita and Draupadi who, according to hindu mythology, embodied notions of strength that lay in the characteristics of self-sacrifice and passivity. He chose these symbols over heroines such as Rani of Jhansi who cloaked herself in male attire and in 1857 led troops into battle against the British Raj (see Ketrak, 1992, p.398).

8. While there is similarity between the colonial and diasporic context, in this thesis I argue that relations of power, especially with respect to issues of representation, are organized differently in diaspora.
Chapter Six: Diasporic Context; Canadian Multiculturalism and Race

In the last chapter I looked at definitions of nation and "indian-ness" and how, in the colonial context, they were forged and held together by notions of woman. In the next two chapters I explore the idea of Canadian national identity. I look at the ways in which Canada has been "imagined" as a community. Previously in this thesis I explored some of the tensions arising from white reactions to non-white immigration to Canada in the first half of this century. Justifications for racial exclusion were manifested in discourses of cultural and racial difference. While the former focused on the (lack of) suitability and adaptability of non-white immigrants to "Canadian ways of life," the latter revealed itself in debates about racial purity and so called gene pool contamination. The post-war era has seen continued attempts to grapple with issues of identity and the "challenge" of diversity. Contests over cultural difference have heightened in the post-war period in parts of Europe and North America where, as James Lynch, Modgil and Modgil (1992) argue, large immigrant populations and ensuing changes in demographic composition have thrust a new concept of cultural pluralism to the fore and have forced nations to re-examine their fundamental cultural values and assumptions, not the least those cultural presuppositions that are embedded in the hegemony of their elites over the institutions of cultural transmission (Lynch et. al., 1992, p.2).

In Canada there is a continuing struggle over the meaning of nationhood and cultural identity which is reflected both in
public debates as well as in governmental policies over immigration. The settlement of non-white immigrants in Canada continues to unsettle and threaten the boundaries of Canadian cultural identity as does any refusal to assimilate.

I would like to map out some of the relationships of South Asian communities to the dominant culture(s) of Canada. In order to understand these relationships we need to look at the ways in which "Canadians" have attempted to come to terms with Canada's cultural diversity and the ways in which the notion of "culture" have been conceptualized. In particular I will focus on the ways in which diasporic communities have been excluded from dominant definitions of Canadian national identity and the "'naturalizing' effects of the hegemony of one collectivity" over "others" (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1993, p.21). In this chapter I look at Canada's policy of multiculturalism and the ways in which it has helped to create and maintain a certain narrative of Canadian nationhood. I argue that the official discourse of multiculturalism, intended as a way of managing cultural diversity, has in essence created a fragmented identity for "Canada," and that this fragmentation is hierarchically organized, producing insiders and outsiders. Drawing on my interview material I will then illustrate how this fragmentation is played out in the lives of young South Asian women.

I will also examine the anxiety over "Bhangra" dances. Pushing both the boundaries of music and cultural authenticity, the emergence of Bhangra day dances has become a new site of
East-West contestation in a battle between South Asian parents and children/youth. While the Anglo-European population and mainstream media have framed this phenomenon very much in terms of a panic about immigrant youth sub-culture and violence, the South Asian community has added the advent of Bhangra dances to its anxieties about cultural authenticity and retention. While I will examine South Asians' fear about culture and identity in the next chapter, I argue in this section that from the point of view of mainstream Canadian society, the day dances, "rebellious" minority youth and strict parents, represent a panic over the boundaries of "Canadian" identity. Portraying elements of the South Asian community as "backward" taps into the fear that there are "unassimilated" people "running around"; a reminder, no doubt, that the imagined community of Canadians is no longer numerically dominated by a white-Anglo population. The signifiers of young women, violent dances and strict parents provoke a conflicting set of anxieties about the nature and possibility of assimilation. To substantiate this claim I will look at selected media coverage in relation to the South Asian community and some of the reactions toward demographic "changes" in the greater Metropolitan Toronto area. 

**Diasporic Imagination**

While there is disagreement over the direction of causality most historians would concede that the notions of "nation" and nationalism are profoundly connected to ideas of "culture" and identity. So tied are the notions of culture and nation that it
is difficult to think about "ethnic" identity outside the parameters of a nation. Anthias and Yuval-Davis argue that the nation-state system assumes a correlation between political geographical boundaries and national collectivities (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1993). The idea that people from the same "ethnic" backgrounds inhabit the same geographical space, however, is erroneous. No such pure nation-states exist. There are always people settled within nation-states who do not share the dominant national identity and historically there have also been national collectivities that have never inhabited a nation-state, such as the Kurds and the Palestinians (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1993).

Anthias and Yuval-Davis assert that:

The fact that there still exists this automatic assumption about the overlap between the boundaries of the state citizens and 'the nation', is one expression of the naturalizing effect of the hegemony of one collectivity and its access to ideological apparatuses of both state and civil society. This constructs minorities into assumed deviants from the 'normal' and excludes them from important power resources (Anthias, and Yuval-Davis, 1993, pp.21-22).

There is, furthermore, an assumption that all affinities to "nation-ness" (Anderson, 1991) or belonging are homogeneous once they are contained within the same geographical boundary, and that all people living within that boundary share a sense of allegiance to the same collectivity, and that there are, therefore, no internal boundaries of exclusion. In the context of colonial India, we saw that the sense of identity and nation that Indian nationalists constructed within the colonial framework became a dominant ideal that was, in essence, a middle-class
Hindu one. It excluded numerous other "Indians" such as tribal, lower class and caste, and Muslim peoples, who were located outside the dominant definition of what the ideal "Indian" was.

The term for nation without borders, in other words diasporic communities, can be traced back to the Greek word for scatter (Bonnett and Llewellyn, 1990). This term has been most commonly associated with the Jews and has come to mean the exile or plight of a similar people. In the past few decades, however, the notion of diaspora has also received attention in relation to a black and Pan-African identity and more recently Chinese and South Asian. The idea of diaspora attempts to account for what happens to community identity when people migrate. I would like to combine, with a slight modification, both Prasenjit's and Anderson's notions of nationalisms that were discussed in the previous chapters. I retain Anderson's notion of imagined community to show that diasporic peoples also rely on the work of imagination to construct their idea of community and identity. However, while his exploration of identity was originally intended to understand the formation of nation-state systems in the nineteenth century, in the twentieth century we have become more intensely aware of the ways in which people maintain, reconstitute, and reproduce a sense of community and culture beyond those territories presumed to "belong" to specific "national" or "ethnic" groups. Prasenjit similarly explores nation-state nationalism arguing that nationalism is state protected culture or the self-awareness of cultural identity in
relation to an "other."

In this thesis I explore some of the ways South Asian "identity" has been imagined and constructed in the context of Canada. In the next few chapters I continue to explore the relationship of "self" to "other," in Prasenjit's sense, in the diasporic context. I argue that while diaspora continues to "imagine" national and community identity, this imagination takes place within the context of racism for non-white diasporic communities in the West.

Amarpal K. Dhaliwal argues that diaspora can be understood as a means of registering the political struggles of the "displaced" (Dhaliwal, 1994). Diasporic communities struggle to define community outside nation state parameters. These definitions are linked to both "back-home" and "in-home" nationalisms (Dhaliwal, 1994). Diaspora not only engages with the ways in which people imagine their sense of community and belonging when they are displaced from the geographical territory associated with home, but I would argue that it also has the potential to account for the displacements that take place within "home." In other words, because diasporic peoples often make a claim of national allegiance to both their country of residence and their "original" homeland, "diaspora" has the potential to unsettle the assumption of homogeneity associated with "nation-ness." Several scholars argue that diaspora both defies and reproduces the "norms" of the nation state (Clifford, 1994; Grewal, 1994). For example, Inderpal Grewal maintains that the
political and economic positioning of minority communities in the West means that their cultural narratives both challenge and reproduce "forms of nationalism and citizenships and politics of the nation-state, as well as the disciplinary technologies of transnational capital" (Grewal, 1994, p.46). In this sense she argues that the construction of diaspora cannot be read solely as a response to post-colonial displacement and a connection to "back-home" because it also participates in the local and national politics of the "here and now." In the next few chapters I show how South Asian diaspora both emulates and attempts to subvert the exclusionary norms of the nation-state system.

Paul Gilroy (1987), along with Lemelle and Kelly (1994), argue for a revisioning of Benedict Anderson's "imagined community." Gilroy, in There Ain't No black in the Union Jack, asserts that most diasporic communities are not included as insiders of the imagined community of a dominant culture. Gilroy argues that estrangement from the dominant "imagined" nation is produced through the exclusionary effects of racism. I will now turn to examine the effects of racism in the Canadian context to show how "non-white minorities" continue to be excluded by the dominant definition of "Canadian."

"Multicultural" Norms

Canada's official response to its demographic reality of "diasporic communities" has been the adoption of a multicultural policy. According to the Minister of State's document, Multiculturalism and the Government of Canada (1978), there were
several developments that lead to the adoption of a multicultural policy in Canada. Among them, Norman Cafik argues was "the large number of newcomers and the varied countries they represented [which] seemed to be leading to growing tension among immigrants, native born Canadians and various established ethno-cultural groups" (Honorable Norman Cafik, 1978, p.6). The government of Canada set up a Royal Commission in the late 1960s to suggest the steps needed to implement an equal partnership between the "two founding races" [sic], namely the English and the French:

During the course of the Royal Commission investigation, a number of concerns were raised by immigrant groups and minorities around acknowledging the full range of Canada’s cultural diversity. Many argued for a recognition of all the cultural groups living in Canada as opposed to just two. The multicultural policy arose as a response to public pressure by minority groups to be included in the community of Canadians. Despite its consideration of diversity, in 1969 the Royal Commission concluded that "[a]lthough we should not overlook Canada’s ‘cultural diversity,’ this should be done keeping in mind that there are two dominant cultures, French and English." It was at the Commission’s suggestion that Prime Minister Premier Trudeau opted for an official policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework in 1971. There was unanimous support from all political parties for this strategy. Norman Cafik’s report states that by the early seventies it had become clear that "a more encompassing policy for the French and varied cultural
communities other than English was necessary if Canadian unity was to be achieved" (Cafik, 1978, p.6). Multiculturalism was officially adopted as a policy for Canada in 1971. The newly appointed Minister of State for Multiculturalism was responsible for the

full realization of the multicultural nature of Canadian society through programs which promote the preservation and sharing of cultural heritages and which facilitate mutual understanding and appreciation of all Canadians...special consideration is given to projects which promote the cultural integration of immigrants (Cafik, 1978, p.16).

Furthermore, at the same time the government committed itself to a concern about "preserving human rights, developing Canadian identity, strengthening citizenship participation, reinforcing Canadian unity and encouraging cultural diversification within a bilingual framework" (Cafik, 1978, p.50).

In reviewing the government's own account of the steps leading to Canada's official adoption of multiculturalism, it becomes clear that this policy was predicated on the following: an interest in national unity; that the idea of unity is dependent on a singular national identity; and that while there is an acknowledgement of cultural diversity, it is only, at most, conceptualized within a framework of duality. Ironically, even the fate of this duality is constantly being tested by a nationalist movement for an independent Quebec.

The reactions of political party leaders holding office at the time when the Multicultural bill was introduced demonstrate the "limits" to official recognition of Canada's diversity. For
example, Progressive Conservative party leader Robert Stanfield voiced his party's approval with the following qualifying comment:

...I wish to state immediately...that the emphasis we have given to multiculturalism in no way constitutes an attack on the basic duality of our country (as cited in Cafik, 1978, p.10).

Premier Trudeau explained:

Canadian identity will not be undermined by multiculturalism. Indeed we believe that cultural pluralism is the very essence of Canadian identity (as cited in Cafik, 1978, p.50).

Several scholars remain sceptical of Canada's commitment to cultural pluralism, arguing that the bill was more a strategy to appease non-white minorities than a genuine commitment to altering Canada's status quo (Fleras and Elliot, 1992; Ng, 1990; Stasiulis, 1990; Walcott 1993).

Roxana Ng's work demonstrates that as a component of the nation building process, the Canadian government adopted multiculturalism partly because it did not threaten the idea of the original "founding" "fathers," namely the division of the country between English and French bourgeois men. She claims that this is an ideological frame which provided "a new way to manage Canadian society" (Ng, 1990, p.2). In a more powerful indictment of the Canadian government, Rinaldo Walcott goes further to suggest that "[r]acism is a part of the ideology of multiculturalism" (Walcott, 1993, p.54). I will pursue this argument further in what follows.

While the policy of multiculturalism at one level is meant
as an alternative to the model of assimilation, I maintain that assimilation continues to operate as an implicit principle underlying the notion of "integration." Cafik, himself a supporter of the policy, points to "the large number of newcomers and the varied countries they represented" as the source of tension among "Canadians," whom he implicitly suggests are "white." This perspective does not account for the reaction (or lack thereof), both culturally and structurally, of Anglo-Canadians to the "influx of immigrants," nor does it account for the connection between Canadian labour needs and immigration.

Although Prime Minister Trudeau, at the time of the introduction of the bill, made a plea for tolerance when he explained that no "ethnic group takes precedence over any other" [and] no citizen or group of citizens is other than Canadian" (as cited in Cafik, 1978, p.41), the daily reality is such that an Anglo identity continues to dominate as the cultural norm in Canada and to be synonymous with Canadian national identity. Later on in this chapter I will draw on interviews with young South Asian women to show how this is lived and how it regulates and circumscribes much of their daily lives.

The notion of tolerance has played a central role in the management of Canadian pluralism. Writing about western Europe, Philomena Essed (1990) argues that late twentieth century racism operates through a discourse of tolerance. She asserts that tolerance in a culturally pluralistic society presumes that people of colour and other immigrants "accept and internalize the
norms and values of the dominant group" while at the same time having "permission" to retain their cultural identity, so long as it does not conflict with the dominant social, legal order (Essed, 1991, p.17). As a discourse of culture has (apparently) come to replace a discourse of race as a means of understanding difference in the twentieth century, so too, has the idea of "cultural" tolerance been substituted for "racial tolerance" in Canada.¹

Anthias and Yuval-Davis claim that there are several problems relating to mobilizing multiculturalism as a way of managing cultural difference. Firstly, they argue that while countries adopting a multicultural policy predicate their sense of nationhood on the idea of tolerance of difference, the boundaries marking the difference between collectivities and the aspects of cultural difference that will be tolerated are unclear. They ask:

Which cultures, or elements of cultures, would be 'legitimately' included in the multiculturalist vision and which would not? Outlawing cultural systems such as polygamy or the ritual use of drugs immediately come to mind...How tolerant the hegemonic culture is about various social practices clearly will determine what can or cannot be allowed (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1993, p.37).

An article that appeared in the Toronto Star in 1994 by the Chairman of the Voice of Canadians Committee echoes the expectation that "newcomers" assimilate to "Canadian" traditional values and demonstrates the limits to "multicultural" tolerance:

Canadians are not opposed to having other cultures join us in Canada. We are not opposed to other cultures preserving those parts of their culture that they wish
to preserve, provided it is at their own expense and provided those cultural values are not in fundamental conflict with Canadian values and traditions...In an attempt to be fair, the values of all cultures have been taught as being the equivalent of the values of this country. This is a dangerous and divisive concept, as well as being untrue (Dick Field, Toronto Star, Dec. 23 1994, A27).

Field exemplifies both Essed's claim about the limits of tolerance as well as Anthias and Yuval-Davis' argument about the ambiguity of cultural boundaries. Whether basing his claims on physiological or cultural markers, Field's notion of difference is not based on principles of neutrality, but is one which allocates power differentially and assumes and maintains superior and inferior positions. Difference here is part of a hierarchy which privileges the white/western/anglo and relegates the "non" of this derivative to the realm of the "other" in a way that enshrines western culture and cultural ways as the yardstick from which to judge all other cultural, ideological, social and economic realities (Lugones, 1990; Amos and Parmar, 1984).

Secondly, Anthias and Yuval-Davis argue that multiculturalist constructions often assume internal homogeneity of a particular cultural collectivity and that all members of the collective are equally invested in that particular culture. Such assumptions, they argue, create the idea of an authentic voice and obscure the internal power dynamics that result from class, gender or political differences. They conclude that:

the whole notion of multiculturalism assumes definite, static, ahistorical and essentialist units of culture with fixed boundaries and with no space for growth or change (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1993, p.38).
Multiculturalism and assimilation are representative of the "sameness versus difference" debate I spoke about in my methodology chapter. Gita Sahgal and Nira Yuval-Davis (1992) argue that this tension is inherent in the ideology of secular democracy, which attempts to safeguard both individual and collective rights. In theory, this ideology is meant to guarantee the rights of religious and cultural minorities (Sahgal and Yuval-Davis, 1992, p.7). Sahgal and Yuval-Davis point out, however, that while this "multiculturalist" perspective "sees members of different groupings as essentially different from the 'norm'," it also sees them "as internally homogeneous" (Sahgal and Yuval Davis, 1992, p.8).

Mary Louise Adams, taking up the work of Michel Foucault on discourse and power, argues that the construction of norms and the process of normalization involve "discourses and practices that produce subjects who are 'normal,' who live in 'normality' and, most importantly, find it hard to imagine anything differently" (Adams, 1994, p.23). Adams provides an historical overview of the different uses of "norm" as description and "norm" as a standard of measure. In the first instance "normal" can refer to that what is common or typical while in the second instance "normal" is an evaluative category (Hacking, 1993). The normal/pathological dichotomy emerged in the field of medicine in the 1800's when "normal" became associated with healthy. The norm in this sense came to be seen as more than a description of what was common in that it became a standard of measure, a desirable
condition, how things should be. The notions of "norm" and normal, Adams concludes, although different, have contributed to the idea of "normal" as a significant social marker and as a vehicle of measuring difference. She argues that "it is when this measure of difference goes to work through moral discourses that it becomes a norm, a regulatory standard of behaviour, an expression of disciplinary power" (Adams, 1994, p.26).

According to Corrigan and Sayer, "norms" and the process of "normalization" form a significant part of moral regulation, which they define as the process by which the ideologies of hegemonic interests come to be seen as "natural." They point out that only certain discourses have the status of being normative and "natural" depending, of course, on whether or not they serve and maintain the established social order. Adams argues that:

Moral regulation helps establish dominant modes of being as not only legitimate, but as desirable. Thus, as individuals, we become embedded in and embrace the very processes which restrict possibility in our lives and which diminish our abilities to make sense of ourselves and the world around us....moral regulation limits the number of acceptable or possible social identities that we can take on, all the while making this situation of reduced opportunity appear normal (Adams, 1994, pp.27-28).

While I could provide further detailed criticisms of the Canadian multicultural policy, I am more interested here in the gap between the official rhetoric of accepting difference and the daily practices that continue to construct "white" as norm in Canada. In the following section, I will draw on my interviews with young South Asian women to show the prevalence of white as norm and the ways in which young women challenge and negotiate
the idea of fixed cultural boundaries. I argue that narratives of multiculturalism have generated a contradictory and fragmented Canadian identity which positions young South Asian women in paradoxical ways. Moreover, I will show that young women resist the multicultural narratives that position them as "homogeneous" entities.

Race, Culture and Identity: South Asian Girls

"no ethnic group takes precedence over any other" (Trudeau as cited in Cafik, p.50, 1978)

"cultural diversity...keeping in mind that there are two dominant cultures" (Stanfield as cited in Cafik, p.10, 1978)

Race is a significant feature in the lives of the young South Asian women interviewed. In this section I argue that young South Asian women receive mixed messages about what "Canadian" means. On the one hand they are told that there are two dominant cultures in Canada, on the other hand, that their culture is just as important as the two primary ones. The message here is: you can be different but not too different from the dominant culture(s). The narrative of Canadian-ness is based on often invisible boundaries marking the difference between the dominant cultures and "others." This invisibility is linked to the fact that the hegemony of "white" anglo norms appears natural and commonsense to those who embody them.

The tension between "sameness" and "difference" is negotiated daily in the lives of second generation South Asian girls. This struggle takes place in two senses: first, in relation to "white" as the normative reference point. Negotiation
of self-identity in this sense means not being "too different" from the white norm. Second, the negotiation of "identity" takes place in relation to "brown" as the point of reference in that there is a desire not to be perceived the same as "stereotypical" South Asians. I found that the girls contest the internal homogeneity of the category "South Asian" that Sahgal and Yuval-Davis speak about. The remaining body of this chapter will elaborate on these notions of "difference."

"Brown" Schools and "White" Schools

In my experience of attending school in Toronto during the 1970's, I confronted a lot of isolation. I went through my teenage years at a time when there were fewer South Asians in the city and attended a school where there were almost no other non-white students or teachers. The issues I encountered are somewhat similar to what I find, fifteen years later, in my interviews with young women. Being accepted by both peers and parents is extremely important and yet often the behaviours and lifestyle of both are somewhat contradictory and unacceptable to each other. While this is common of most "teenage"/parent/peer relationships, for "minority" youth and their parents the issue of race and culture figure prominently in the equation. I spent most of my junior and high school years attempting to hide my South Asian identity and being ashamed of it because, on many levels, I knew that the culture of my parents would not be accepted by my white school friends. What I found different between my own experience and the experiences of the young South Asian women I interviewed
was that most of them attend schools that they described as ethnically diverse and multicultural. Their experience of "cultural-esteem" seemed remarkably higher than my own." In the interviews we spent a lot of time talking about school contexts, peers and family. Drawing from memories of my own experience I asked all the participants whether or not they had ever felt ashamed of their culture in relation to their peers. Some of them could not relate to questions about cultural shame and consequently interpreted questions about racism in relation to "brown" rather than white as the point of reference. For example, in relation to notions of "cultural" shame, Parminder had the following to say:

I: Was there ever a time when you were ashamed of being an Indian?

P: No Never!

I: You know because of the racism?

P: No, may be when i was younger i felt a little bad i remember in grade three this girl who sat beside me she got lice and...

I: She was Indian?

P: No she was West-Indian' and ahh you know everyone found out that she got lice. You know and they all looked at me and they said, you know, "you gave her the lice," and they checked my hair and it was fine. Just because she has it doesn't mean that it came from me. And that was the kind of times i remember but otherwise you know when people say things you know i just ignore it and doesn't bother me. I'm proud to be indian.

I: So you never felt that you wanted to try and be white?

P: Oh no...
Parminder’s experiences of racism stem from "early" years of her schooling. During our conversation, she made a distinction between racism and cultural shame. Although she says that she experienced a lot of racism in her elementary school, she does not extend this to the experience of low cultural esteem. She explains that she attends a "brown" school, a term used commonly among South Asians to describe schools that are predominantly comprised of South Asian students. Most of her friends are Punjabi and she speaks this language both at school and at home.

Zarah, a fifteen-year-old girl, made similar comments about racism and cultural pride in her interview:

I: Okay, would you say there has ever been a time when you have been ashamed of being...

Z: Ahh, well no i haven’t.

I: Like you felt that maybe you wanted to hide the fact?

Z: Well when i was younger because everyone used to say oh my god, they’re so disgust... they’re so dirty, whatever right? And then that kind of gets your self-esteem down right? So i kind of, i’m like why, why me?

I: So how old were you when that was happening?

Z: I was in grade eight, so i was thirteen.

I: So how do you feel now?

Z: I feel really good to be a Pakistani, and i live up to that.

Zarah also describes her school as multicultural, with the majority of the population being "brown" and Chinese. While she remarks on the connection between racism and self-esteem when she was younger, a few years later, surrounded by a mostly non-white
assumption here was that a question framed around race was
asked her the question again, this time in relation to race. My
among South Asians. A little later in the interview, I attempt to
outside" reference. Her response is in relation to differences
question about cultural shame in relation to an "outside" and not
because of the majority-South Asian context, she interprets the
"black" and Chinesecompartment the rest of the school's "mix."
the time of the interview this had dropped to seventy percent.
first opened, ninety percent of the students were South Asian. At
Arti described her school as "brown." She explained that when it

error? (What do you think about race?)
that everyone can
everyone reacted and I used to get mad. Like why isn't
equality community from guys to girls from young to old.
when the toys went on for like the Muslims the
which idea. Like in our
beliefs and why the girls had to fast and not the guys.
A: Yeah, there was a lot of times when I questioned our

timeframe, she responded:
asked Arti, a sixteen-year-old Hindu girl, the very same
cultural shame by a few of the participants. For example, when I
was struck by the interpretation of my question about
prefered that she finds there.

diverse composition and the normativeness of ignorance to
draws a correlation between the Jack of Race, the school's
everyone. They wouldn't ever say anything like prejudice. "Zaran
back up that person right? Our school is like that, they like
she was now attending she said, "No, no. Or else everyone would
asked if she had experienced anything more recently at the school
school population, she comments on her cultural pride. When I
automatically imply "white" racism:

I: So do you have any memories either at this school or the one before of racism at school?

A: Ahhm, no. Actually i can't say that i've ever been really a victim of racism so to say, but i can tell you that you feel it because of such a segregated society, that being close friends with only Muslims, you never have that feeling of having a close friend. You can never have a best friend...

Aarti goes on to talk about divisions between Hindus and Muslims and parental "warnings" about "Muslim" people. Although most of her friends are Muslim, she nevertheless holds stereotypical perceptions of them. While further on in this thesis I will explore the hegemony of Hindu/Sikh subculture and community among South Asians in Canada, what I would like to draw attention to here is Aarti's interpretation of racism. Even a question about racism, an inquiry in which I intended to explore with her the exclusion of South Asians from white dominant culture, resulted in a response that talks about exclusion and difference among and in relation to other South Asians. This seems directly tied into her schooling context in which it is "brown" and not white that comprises the "dominant" culture.

The experiences of two of the girls I interviewed who attended schools that were predominantly "white" were remarkably different than those of most of the other young women. I would like to contrast the experiences of Parminder and Aarti to Nina, one of these young women. Nina, an eighteen-year-old Sikh girl, recounts a story of her childhood in response to being asked if she can recall an instance of "racial" shame:
N: Not really, i mean like i've had little incidents happen like ever since i was younger but i never really thought to associate it with...i never really thought bad of who i was because i guess it hasn't really on a general...cause it's not like it happened everyday and i was being like discriminated or isolated because of my...so it doesn't like affect me or it doesn't really bug me. But i've had little things happen to me like when i was young. Things just like...i remember i was five or six or something and this girl that i met....i remember one time i came to her house and i remember her mom like telling me to get out of her house.

I: Because...

N: [interruption] I was, yeah.

I: She said that?

N: Yeah, she said like...and i just remember all a big blur. But all of a sudden i was like in her house on the couch and all of a sudden i was being kicked out of her house.

I: Hmmm.

N: And it was just like you know. But i never really thought of like you know to associate to my...in that way i haven't really been....It hasn't been bad in that i haven't always looked at myself and said oh my god, i'm so different.

Nina uses various descriptors that downplay racism as a factor affecting her experience. She describes the event of being kicked out of somebody's house as "little" and argues that because these kinds of occurrences do not happen on a daily basis she is not affected by them overall. Although the incident involves an adult who ousts her from the house because she is not white, Nina does not identify this event and others like it with the fact of "difference." What is also interesting here is that she never actually attributes the difference to "skin colour" or "culture."
And yet there is a level of conversation going on between us where we understand what is being named without actually naming it.

Philomena Essed asserts that one of the features of racism in the context of "tolerance" is the denial of its existence. Denial can be partly located in the fact that practices of racism have become so routine, repetitive and familiar as part of everyday life that they are unrecognizable (especially to non-marginalized groups). Pulling on notions of commonsense that confirm "accepted" opinion, the "new" racism conceals the ideologies and practices that legitimate and support it (Lawrence, 1982). The implicitness in Nina's story, the fact that she does not name race or culture as the points of exclusion, and our shared mutual comprehension of what is not being identified, supports Essed's arguments about commonsense understandings of racism and the sense of shared experience they can generate.

In the above quote and in the interview generally, Nina does not position herself as a victim of racism. While a conventional reading of this portion of transcript could regard her refusal to see how she is positioned as different while others do as a form of denial (of the existence of racism), I would argue that it can also be read as an example of resistance. It suggests a refusal to accept the positioning by others. The victim narrative would mean having to accept the taxonomy of "difference." Her choice is between accepting the label of "difference" or asserting herself as no different than the norm. Further on in the interview, Nina
discusses her relationship to her "white" friends. Here she comments on the notion of difference. While she sees herself as different from white she rejects the totality of difference:

I: Do you feel totally accepted by them? [white friends]

N: yeah, i do. Like i mean we get into little things like i mean as far as i'm different like because of being indian and everything. They say little things you know, like ah yeah, stupid indians and like they know that i'm there. But as far as like i mean I've never been rejected by them or anything like that....they know that i'm indian i make them know. Like i'm not, i don't flaunt it... but i don't let them, not that i don't let them forget it but you know, not that they should but they're aware that i am Indian cause they, i mean i feel like i constantly have to explain to them why i am indian because of the way my parents are. I have to explain that I can't do this with you i can't do this with you. Why? Because my parents are indian and that's why i can't.

Nina describes her friends, primarily "white jocks," as comprising the "in" group in the school. In the above passage she may suggest that part of the negotiation around racial identity involves "divesting" oneself from one's ethnic/racial location. In relation to her friends at school, Nina argues that it is because of her parents' culture that she cannot participate in certain social practices. Here her sense of belonging to the category "Indian" rests on her parents association to it. By locating her parents as "Indian," and the source of her difference, it is her parents inflexibility to change and not her friends' racism that become the problem. This also becomes a way for her to relinquish any responsibility for being "Indian," although at no time does she reject this as an "identity" altogether. G. Tsolidis argues that:
Ethnic minority adolescents, who are already questioning so much about themselves and their environment, are also being told that their parents are socially unacceptable and inadequate. Their parents' status is diminished and insulted because of cultural dissonance, linguistic factors and economic dislocation. Messages about parents are also messages about their children. Clearly dissociating oneself from the family, under these circumstances, is to raise one's own status (Tsolidis, 1990, p.60).

For Nina, aligning herself with her parents in this case not only means choosing her parents over her friends, but takes on the added meaning of choosing her parents' "culture" over the culture of her white and westernized peers. An affiliation with "white" culture in the context of a predominantly white school, where the point of reference is "white", increases Nina's status. This is an example, therefore, of both resisting being positioned as different by others as well as a means of simultaneously increasing one's social rank.

"Refs", "Fobs" and "Typical"

I found many similar examples of how young women resisted stereotypical representations of "South Asian-ness" while simultaneously seeking to maintain a higher status in relation to other South Asians. Many of the girls I interviewed differentiated themselves from what they called the "typical Indian" and described themselves as "normal," "cool" or "neutral." In some cases a typical Indian was identified as someone "fresh off the boat" (f.o.b.) or "refugee" (ref). In the following exchange about the composition of her high school, Rupinder, an eighteen-year-old Sikh girl says the following:
R: It was predominantly South Asian, but like fresh off the boat ones and a couple of them like us who have been here for a while. But I don't know again it was like no one really like mixed with anybody.

I: So what was the view of the people who had recently arrived by the ones who have been around for a while?

R: I think our view of them is like they're not cool enough for us. Like I'm not trying to be snobby about it but... and they perceive us as being like sluts and you know what I mean? And they think we're trying to be too westernized if we don't like have our hair in braids. And I guess the way they talk. I guess we don't really want to associate with them cause we don't have the accent and they do.

The conversation reveals a certain representation of newly arrived immigrants and the separation that Rupinder makes between them and herself as second generation South Asians. While Rupinder holds a stereotype of more recent South Asian immigrants, she perceives them as holding a stereotype of her. In this discourse "West" and "East" become fixed categories so that the differences within each category aren't as important as the perceived commonalities that hold it together, thus creating the stereotype. In the preceding passage, people from the "homeland" are viewed with caution and seen as possessing certain views about sexuality. Again this points to the centrality of sexuality and gender as markers of national and "community" identity. This "cultural" difference is also described in terms of bodily markers, such as hairstyle and accents. What remains unspoken is that the new immigrants are different because they aren't conforming to western hairstyle and accents "typical" of this country.

In the following conversation, Nina mobilizes notions of
normality to understand the diversity of "the South Asian experience":

N: We have a few indians [at our school] but not what people would consider normal indians...

I: What do you think people mean when they say 'normal' indians?

N: Well right now in this day and age I see a lot of people see normal indians like i guess cool indians. Like normal indians, like you and me sort of rather than with long hair. I guess I can’t describe it on the recording (laughter).

I: Keep going...

N: You know like with long hair and you know like in accents.

I: Is it just in the way that they dress?

N: Yeah and then their accent and just the fact that they’re right from India or Sri Lanka or wherever they’re from.

Here, "uncool" becomes the signifier for "new" South Asians and "normal," represents second generation South Asians. Nina positions herself as "Indian" while simultaneously distinguishing herself from the stereotype of the "typical indian," whose accents and long hair not are representative of a degree of assimilation that is "cool." Interestingly enough she invites me in along with herself as part of the "cool" Indian, even though we both have long hair. The South Asians to whom she refers display cultural markers that are visibly different than the western norm and point to their recent migration. Of course, what she is not explicitly stating is that Anglicized accents, modes of dress and hair are normative while other kinds of accents are not. This supports Mary Louise Adams’ (1994) argument around how
normalization is accomplished, namely through taken for granted and commonsense notions of difference that need not be continually mentioned. Normalization works as a self-regulating discourse where the subject actually comes to desire what is "normal." But, as my transcripts demonstrate, this desiring of what is "normal" is a tremendously painful and conflicted experience.

Rupinder and Nina both speak to a eurocentric notion of normality and difference. The hidden narrative in this framework points to the conditionality and relationality of difference: the notion that being different is "cool" so long as it remains within an acceptable limit, relative to the norm. They reveal threads to a discourse of difference that locates difference as arising from individuals rather than being constructed in and through social, political and historical relations of power and struggle. Nina bases her perspective not so much on direct experience as on a commonsense notion of "normal" and she alludes to "people" and "in this day and age" to lend credibility to her claim. She uses "people" as a universal category, although it is clear that she is not referring to the beliefs or practices of the people she is describing, but rather to long-term inhabitants of this country.

Nina reveals the desire on the part of second generation South Asians to be seen as different from "other" South Asians, namely those newly arrived, "not as assimilated as us" South Asians. I argue that this is both an example of resistance to
internal cohesion that Sahgal, Anthias and Yaval-Davis speak about as well as a means to maintain and negotiate higher status in relation to the dominant community. For example, in relation to the former, many girls felt self-conscious in the context of an all-brown space. Nina reveals the following:

I: Did you feel kind of embarrassed if you were seen talking to another Indian at school?

G: Actually yeah, yeah, cause i didn’t want people to think that he’s my only friend. You know what i mean, cause he’s brown he’s my own friend. Or because she’s brown, she’s my only friend and because we’re brown we should stick together. I didn’t want that impression to come... I didn’t allow myself to become good friends with that person. But i didn’t stop myself from talking to that person if i had a question to ask them.

This portion of our conversation suggests a desire to escape the association that all South Asians should stick together. There is an interesting assumption that friendship with a white person would obviously not be based only on skin colour. What is not being named is that this desire is forged in relation to the "white gaze." To illustrate this point further I would like to draw on an excerpt of conversation with Nina where she discusses her relationship to her best friend, "A" and her boyfriend, both of whom are South Asian:

I: Do you think when people see you and "A" together that they must think that...

N: Yeah, yeah and that sometimes we even worry about that. We go, “don’t you think if people saw us together...” Like i worry. I know it’s bad but sometimes even if we’re walking, like even if i’m walking with my boyfriend somewhere, like if we’re walking in a group, i feel so, i feel like so centred cause we’re all the same and i feel like people look at us that way and i think that way about "A" too. Cause when i see two indian people i’m like, “oh yeah they’re
just together cause they’re indian," but they don’t realize that we’re together not cause we’re indian but..

I: [interrupt] But do you think people think that about white people like if they see a group of white people?

N: Yeah, they would think that, too, i guess. Yeah i think so. But i don’t know why but it seems like more, not obvious, but i notice it more though. Like i know even in like movies or whatever, like two best friends... my best friend is Greek and i’m like, "why don’t they show two best friends of two different cultures." I look at it the same way. May be other people don’t. But because i see indian people that way, i see every culture that way, like [in hushed tone] when i see Oriental people i think of them in the same way like they always have to hang around together. It seems like everything is so racially....

Several important themes emerge from Nina’s talk. First, as in the previous quote, Nina shows how she is positioned in relation to a white reference point. Although she views all people of the same culture who hang out together as "cliquish," for her, white people in a crowd are not as noticeable when they are together. This points to how "white" ethnicity in her context is normative and therefore has the privilege, in this case, of appearing invisible. This excerpt of conversation can also be interpreted as a resistance to the stereotype of internal homogeneity. This is presented in a line of reasoning that suggests that "just because we’re South Asian does not mean we are all the same, or have the same interests, or should be friends." Part of what is being expressed by Nina here is a desire for anonymity in the same way that "white" people are seen to experience it. South Asian people are more conspicuous as a group because of their "racial" difference from "white." Nina unsettles the assumption
that the only important features in friendships among "brown" people are ethnicity and race. Her argument in support of inter-racial and cross-cultural friendships is a means by which to break the stereotype of internal cohesion and unsettle a seemingly fixed "racial" boundary.

I found that the young women I interviewed did not just describe the "typical indian" in relation to a stereotype, but also described this "type" in relation to a host of traits which they perceived as negative. "Typical indian" was thus described as: "gossipy," "snobby," and "not very nice," or "It’s in the way they act, they...have an attitude," and they are "ignorant." The following conversation with Reema, for example, illustrates the ways in which the "typical indian" is represented and how she places herself in relation to this construction. Reema explains why she did not like going to South Asian dances:

R: I didn’t like the atmosphere i didn’t like the people there and i don’t like to be with a whole bunch of indians cause i like a mix.

I: What don’t you like about it?

R: I don’t like the way how all the indian people were, how they were together, just the way they acted, it wasn’t me, cause i’m not like typical typical indian. You know what i mean?

I: How do you define a typical indian?

R: Gossipy, i don’t know they just, like, i can’t stand when people talk indian all the time, like Punjabi or whatever that makes me sick. I don’t know just the way they act you know, you can tell, they act a bit different.

I: Could you try and define what that is?
R: Cause they’re so sometimes they’re really stuck up, they think they’re too good and they’re not very nice, you know they have an attitude. Like that.

I: [a bit later] So if you don’t see yourself as typically Indian, like how would you describe yourself?

R: I don’t know I guess I’m neutral kind of... one thing I don’t like is if you’re Indian people believe you have to stay with Indians, I don’t like that I find that you know you should go around and talk to everyone else too. That’s what I don’t like, like I don’t stop myself, I talk to everyone I don’t care, I don’t want to be known as oh okay all my friends are Indian and I’m just..., you know what I mean?

Reema identifies "typical" Indian as dependent on markers of ethnicity, such as language (Punjabi). However, she and many of the other girls, also described "typical Indian" as anything that they would like to distinguish themselves from, and it seemed to stand in for any behaviour or practice that they disliked. While this construction resists the "outside" ("white") stereotype of internal cohesion, it also contests "inside" pressures to remain within the group boundary of South Asian. So strong is the desire to resist expected norms around group loyalty and internal homogeneity that Reema’s statement around people-speaking-Punjabi-all-the-time "makes me sick" can be read as both resistance and compliance, rather than solely as a form of allegiance to a "white" anglo norm. Both Nina and Reema are attempting to move outside what they see as a parochial notion of community.⁹ For Reema, growing up around older siblings who are identified with South Asian signifiers, popular culture and friends, the idea of a "brown" space is neither novel nor subversive. In her context, moving out of "brown" into the realm
of inter-religious and inter-racial social spaces is an act of subversion and breaking of norms.

While this construction of the "typical indian" can be read as part of a process of "racialization" that has fixed "indian" so that it is associated with the negative or as an example of internalized racism, I also began to see it as a form of "negative" identification: they seemed to be more at ease in describing what "indian" was not or the type of "indian" they did not want to be associated with rather than defining what it actually represented. In a study of Puerto Rican "gang girls" in New York, Anne Campbell describes a similar process of self-definition by rejection (Campbell, 1987). In her research, Campbell found that girls' sense of self as gang members is derived from their rejection of various aspects of membership of three interlocking societal identities: class, race, and gender. They arrive at a female gang identity by default rather than by affirmation. The fragmented and reactive nature of their self definition helps to make sense of many of the contradictions which are present in the social talk of the gang girl. By "backing away" from one aspect of an assigned role, she may run the risk of being cast in another unacceptable role from which she must also extricate herself...The point is that not all components of a given role are rejected...(Campbell, 1987, p.452)

She argues that these girls' sense of individuality is partly achieved through a rejection of certain aspects of identity that are associated with their social position. While they do not reject their ethnicity or womanhood altogether, they attempt to articulate that they are not "that kind of woman" (Campbell: 1987, p.452). Campbell explains that:
the words and typifications we use to characterize our enemies are often an important guide to the ascriptions we most reject in ourselves. By extension, our self concept may evolve from our rejection of such negative personal attributes rather than from the active construction of a social identity (Campbell, 1987, p.452).

Campbell describes the relationship between Puerto Ricans living in the United States and Puerto Ricans living in Puerto Rico in terms that are similar to what I have found among the young girls living in Canada to those "back home." Most of the young girls she interviewed identified the moral values of "back home" Puerto Rico as old-fashioned in comparison to those of Puerto Rican New Yorkers. She argues that they emphasized their "American" status and its "superiority over other more recently arrived immigrants" (Campbell, 1987, p.456).

As I showed earlier, the distinction between "refs" or "fobs" and "cool" or "normal" "indians" serves as a means of making a bid for a "Canadian" status that is superior to that of recent arrivals. Campbell does not problematize the hierarchical ordering between "American" and "Puerto Rican", however. I found that the rejection of behaviours associated with certain social roles and "status" is not as neutral as Campbell’s study seems to suggest. On the contrary, it is precisely because specific social roles and status are embedded in sets of meaning that evaluate white dominant culture as more desirable and superior that these young girls reject some aspects of behaviour associated with "indian." While I agree with Campbell’s assertion that girls reject certain behaviours and qualities in order to identify
themselves as distinct from other individuals in the same group, I would go further to suggest that the discourse around "typical indian" is a response to the "white" dominant norm. In this sense, it constitutes a resistance to, or rupturing of, assigned (stereotypical) subject positions.

Even though the girls engage in some behaviours and practices that they label as "typical indian," what they are resisting through the construction of "typical indian" is the association of certain behaviours and practices with a "totalizing" identity. In other words, the only means by which they can reject a stereotypical "indian" identity is by distancing themselves from "that kind of indian."

"Brown" Schools, Multicultural Narratives and Hidden Norms

While I have shown how Nina and Rupinder attempt to refuse the idea of internal community cohesion, I would like to expand on how a resistance to being aligned with the "culture of parents" and newly arrived South Asians also works to seek higher social status in a society which privileges assimilation and integration. My research supports and extends the arguments that Adams, Essed, Corrigan and Sayer make with respect to the "hidden-ness" of norms like these. I argue that much of what is normative is embedded in taken for granted notions of sameness and difference. The "commonsense of difference" in many ways makes it invisible. While I have contrasted the experiences of young women attending "brown" schools to that of a predominantly white school, I would now like to discuss how even young women
attending "brown" schools reveal the normative construction of "white." Although their schools are racially diverse, the girls who attend them are also positioned in a discourse that tells them that they can be different but not "too" different from the "white" norm. I found that part of the invisibility of white as norm has to do with a discourse of multiculturalism that emphasizes tolerance (Essed, 1991). The limits of this tolerance, however, are enmeshed in commonsense notions of race, culture and difference.

Reading and re-reading through the transcribed interviews brought my attention to how the young women took up notions of multiculturalism in the context of their schooling environment. All but two of the girls described their school as multicultural. Their use of the term "multicultural" tended to be descriptive of the school population rather than based on actual practices of multiculturalism. Most of the girls described their school as multicultural in terms of the "cultural" mix of the school, the organization of official "multicultural" days, and the use of space within school premises. Faiza, an eighteen-year-old Muslim girl, explains multiculturalism in the following way:

We have multicultural weeks each year and they have like a few displays and they've got a few things in different locations, like a karaoke machine for like Japan and last year they had in the gym belly dancers and some guy who walked on glass like from Jamaica or Brazil. I don't know something like that. He was West Indian. They had indian girls doing classical dancing, bharat natyam, just so everyone is aware of different cultures which i think is really good cause i don't know of any other school that does that. So it's not in the curriculum but [it] does make you more aware of things.
Through Faiza's description we can trace the dominant construction of multiculturalism which identifies it as a positive strategy in the promotion and sharing of "differences." Here, exposure to other cultures is seen as pivotal in the creation of good feelings and racial harmony. In Faiza's quote, "culture" is equated with curiosity and/or exotic entertainment worthy of display precisely because of its difference. It is a break from the ordinary, banal aspects of everyday "normal" culture. That non-white culture and history stand outside the norm of whiteness without even naming whiteness as normative is testimony to the subtle and powerful process of normalization that is taking place here. In her account, multiculturalism in school is reduced to a "show and tell" version of culture. Multiculturalism becomes synonymous with a celebration of the cursory manifestations of culture such as "food" and "dance," permitted at designated times and spaces within the official and otherwise "white" context.

What is interesting, however, is that Faiza and others who identify multiculturalism as positive also claim that the curriculum does not reflect the "cultural" mix of the school. Aarti, responding to the question about whether she feels the school has taught her anything about the Indian subcontinent or her history says, "no, not really, I don't find that at all, it's just normal." In this one sentence she exposes the limitations to formal education on the notions of multicultural exchange. "Normal" signifies instruction that is predominantly based on a
eurocentric curriculum. Similarly, Ayesha, an eighteen-year-old Ismaili Muslim girl says the following about cultural exchange:

I try to get more into my religion, like being Indian and stuff, just to you know, i never experienced being with Indians and stuff so i try to get more into it so i found my religion more, i try and learn about it. And i try and learn about other religions like i always ask R about hers and like about Sikhs and i ask her about her religion and you know i look at everything, everything as a whole.

Her remarks are as suggestive about her own culture, as they are about the culture of other non-white groups. Ayesha’s perspective of cultural dialogue and “sharing” indicates that she cannot rely on school-based systems of learning, and she needs to seek out her own sources of information. Learning about “other” cultures is embedded within a notion of individual choice and responsibility. This particular brand of multiculturalism contradicts governmental rhetoric which claims that the breaking "down of discriminatory attitudes and cultural jealousies" is to be achieved in part by a multicultural education promoting the tolerance and acceptance of difference (Trudeau, 1971, p.8545).

The girls’ talk about multiculturalism provides insight into how multiculturalism comes to be seen as a positive development, despite its marginal position in relation to the official school curriculum. In fact, some girls actually attributed a decrease in racism to the advent of multiculturalism. Thus, in a conversation with Rupinder, she explains that she no longer experiences racial name-calling like she used to and she reflects on why she thinks this has changed:

R: i guess it goes back to that you know how they
usually never publicized multi-culturalism back then
and it felt like we were in the melting pot then i
guess. That and just everyone telling you speak english
and you know, it was like you were pressured into it.

While examining their discussions, rather than focusing on
whether their accounts documented an actual decrease in racism, I
began to look at how they were naming, and not naming, racism.
All of the women seemed to downplay racist events and often
produced a preferred reading of "cultural" mis-communication
rather than one of racism and power. Their acceptance of the
notion that their schools and their larger social context was
"multicultural" seemed to foreclose any possibility that
discriminatory acts toward them were actually racist. Many women
started with the statement "no, not really" in response to my
question whether they had ever experienced racism, then they
would continue to relay various accounts of racist incidents. I
use the word "incidents" quite purposefully to indicate that
these young women very much defined racism in terms of "events,"
rather than subtler, on-going or systematic daily practices. The
previous example of Nina being kicked out of a "white" family's
house because she was South Asian, and her description of this as
a "little" incident illustrates the invisibility of racism and
perhaps even the difficulty in acknowledging that she is a target
of racism.

The idea of multiculturalism as a positive development in
relation to the sharing of differences also seemed to dominate as
a theme with respect to clothing. I found that young South Asian
women's relationship to clothes also reveals hidden norms with
respect to multicultural "tolerance." The following discussion with Anita about clothing shows some of the hidden discourses around race and multiculturalism:

I: Would you at your school feel comfortable wearing a salwaar kameez?

A: Yeah, at our school, we do, we do feel comfortable.

I: Would you feel comfortable wearing it outside of school, say a restaurant?

A: Yeah, but what i don't like is ahhm i still don't like going shopping with it on.

I: Do you know why?

A: I don't know i think its more like indirectly it's more like a personal thing but you think of excuses like it's harder to try on clothes and so forth but ahhm i think i (interruption from family member)

I: So you were saying?

A: Yeah i think it's like from the beginning i never liked...i can go anywhere with a salwaar kameez, i can go to a little plaza i can go anywhere but still sometimes when i like go to see a movie or something i don't want to go in a salwaar kameez i'd rather go in western clothes just to fit in.

I: But at school, there's...?

A: No, there's no problem.

I: So when you're outside then, do you feel that if you wore a salwaar kameez that you'd be made to feel embarrassed that people would look at you in a certain way?

A: I think it's more if ahh people look at you and you know there's no need to be different at this point in time you know i'm not making a statement or something by wearing a suit and it would be more comfortable if i wear something, you know. It's not like i don't wear western clothes and i can't wear it so ahhm...It's not saying its a hard strict rule you know not to wear it but, you know. I prefer not to and you know there's no point and i feel comfortable within myself.
I: So do you feel, you wear salwaar kameez to school?

A: Yeah, like on devali and like we had a whole project on india and we all dressed up in suits so there's no harm in our school, like on multicultural day everybody gets dressed up so.

There are several interesting moments in Anita's conversation. She commences by identifying her school as a safe place in which to practice her "ethnic" identity. She feels comfortable wearing a salwaar kameez on multicultural day and devali and yet the fact that she wears it at these particular times gives her the sense that it is permissible more generally. The designation of specific times and days is not presented as exceptions to "normal" school protocol but rather as reflective of the school's tolerant atmosphere. For openers, she says, "yeah, at our school we do, we do feel comfortable." She suggests that at other schools people may not feel as comfortable.

Anita makes visible how assimilation organizes her practices in the public sphere. She maintains that western clothes are important to "fitting in" and that "other" kinds of clothes, namely the salwaar kameez, carry the marker of difference. She reveals the desire for a certain kind of anonymity that is part of "fitting in." That wearing a salwaar kameez involves "dressing up" and makes a statement indicates that the wearing of "western" clothes promises a sense of normality and anonymity that South Asian clothes do not. Feeling comfortable in western clothes in certain spaces at certain times is presented as a matter of individual choice and preference and thereby hides the discourse of assimilation and integration. This representation also hides
the power that this particular discourse has in constructing "difference" as other and as less desirable. In the preceding passage, Anita indicates that time and space are important indicators for the permission of "difference." She suggests that there are certain times and places when being different does not make sense because it is seen to "overplay" difference. In the context of sanctioned and "appropriate" times and spaces, such as multicultural day, the difference is seen to be part of the statement it is supposed to make, non-white race and ethnicity is supposed to accentuate itself.

"Norms" become so taken for granted that their presence as a standard of measure actually becomes invisible, even to the person who is governing herself according to them (Adams, 1994). It is not so much that permission to practice non-white ethnicity is overt, but that this display of culture is only "normal" at designated times and places (and thus can be "safely contained"). It is only when we are reminded that Bharat Natyam and glass-walking are not part of the daily school protocol that we are able to see that there is in fact a constructed "normal" that such practices fall outside of.

"Indian"/Canadian Dichotomy

While the young women all identified themselves as "Indian," they had great difficulty in defining what this was. In most cases they were full of contradictions. The young women relied on essentialist notions of race, such as physical traits, as well as notions of "ethnicity." Often the attempt to define "Indian" was
forged in relation to what it is not, in other words, "Canadian."

For example, in the following quote, two sisters, Pam and Tina discuss their view of their father:

T: My dad's honkified.

P: Totally. He can't even speak Hindi properly.

T: He's very, very Canadian, English. He lived in England. You know the only part of him that's Indian is his religion.

Their father's "Indian-ness" is conditional on his religious affiliation. Pam and Tina categorize their father as Canadian because his retention of the "Hindi" language is poor. Because the girls discussed the notion of "Indian" in relation to "white," I asked them to define what they saw by the two. They responded in the following way:

P: Indian values, I'd say like activities. You know like the typical going skiing every winter and going camping every summer, I think those are, those are white values. Do you know what I mean? A typical Indian couple or family would not think of going skiing or, I mean sure they take it up as a hobby, influenced by a white person.

T: It's not a value, it's just a hobby.

P: I know but most like...that's the thing, most...the hobbies, you know like it starts from there and then from there it's sort of like the lifestyle. Would be... ahhm...like basically doing what white people would do. Like going at Christmas time. Church every Christmas, Easter, church. But that has something to do with the fact that my stepmother's Christian. But even before my father married my stepmother, we would go to church.

I: But what do you see, like when you use the term typical Indian, what is that to you?

A: A typical Indian would be a person who would live in India but living in Canada, like living Indian morals and values
I: Which is?
A: Which is subzi [cooked vegetables] every evening like, more or less that, temple every Saturday and Sunday

Both of the sisters draw on stereotypical views of "Canadian-ness" and "indian-ness." In this portion of the transcript, religion, food and particular activities are important markers for both "Canadian" and "indian" identities. Canadian, however, is very much defined in relation to "white" activities, hobbies and lifestyles and is not inclusive of "indian" food or language or non-Christian religions. Both Tina and Pam on several occasions emphasized the fact that they were not "typical indian." What I found interesting is that although they see themselves as different from the "typical indian" label, and define this partly in relation to "temple" visits, later on in the interview, Pam and Tina have the following to say in relation to white friends:

T: They don’t understand. Like when i do something like go to temple or something like that. There’s a lot of things that you do within the community that brings you closer as friends...it’s like we’re doing something together and we’re doing something within a small group and that’s what makes it more important you know.

P: Like white people, like going roller skating or going to a movie or something like that.

T: Their interests are different.

P: While i would prefer to go to a club or going to see an indian movie or something like that or doing something that is not typically white.

Here the same "temple" that was presented earlier as being associated with a "typically indian" activity from which they saw
themselves as distinct, is now presented as a means of consolidating group identity. The temple, a "brown" space, provides a sense of belongingness.

As I argued earlier Canadian multiculturalism appears to allow for tolerance and difference within a bicultural context. This produces ambivalent and contradictory messages for those who fall outside of the "white" Canadian norm. For young South Asian women, the social context in which they live constructs fixed notions of "Indian," and privileges "white Canadian." Young women attempt to negotiate between "Canadian" and "Indian." The tensions between assimilation and multiculturalism produce a dichotomy between "too Indian" or "too Canadian." The women I interviewed showed the tension between the two by attempting to continuously negotiate between these two identities. The following two passages are taken from two separate interviews with two women, Rupinder and Nina. They speak to the "Indian"/"White" dichotomy:

R: I was mostly like with the Indians cause people just see you as being who you're hanging around with. Like they think just because you have like mostly white friends you're like anti-Indian. And if you're hanging around with Indians they think you're racist and you don't want to be with anyone but your own kind. So just...I don't know subconsciously I guess (we) just train ourselves just to be with our kind.

* * * *

N: It's sort of like I'm considered like a white person. Cause all my friends are white...and like I don't consider myself different from them as a whole but I don't consider myself the same. I realize I'm different.

I: Than?
N: Than, like my friends. I don't want to be considered like "you guys," like "you white people." Like i don't want to be considered like that but i don't want to be considered like the white people and [me]. I don't consider myself different in that way but i don't consider myself totally into their, like make myself white or anything. But that makes me angry when they're like "you [are] this."

The first quote discusses the relationship between friends and its association with "identity." Here, the racial make-up of friends becomes implicit in the marking of an individual's identity. "Race" then becomes an important factor in mediating one's perceived identity with, affiliation and loyalty to an "ethnic" collective. Rupinder chooses to hang around with her "own kind" in order to resist being labelled anti-"indian." The second quote is from "Nina," whom I introduced earlier on in this chapter. Even though she was previously shown to resist the taxonomy of victimhood and "difference," here we can see that "difference" is not a category that she rejects altogether as insignificant to her sense of identity. In this portion of conversation she is referring to a group of black kids in her school and to her brother, who see her as "whitewashed." Her dilemma is one in which she, on the one hand, does not want to be seen as the "same as her white friends" and yet on the other, not wanting to be seen as a mere appendage to her white friends, ("white people and me") either and therefore "different from." This points to the fluidity of "identity" constructions and the contradictory ways in which power operates.

**Summarizing Young Girls' Talk**

Bronwyn Davies argues that "being simultaneously the same
and different (a member who knows and takes pleasure in the ways of the social group and a specific identifiable being) are difficult to hold in balance" (Davies, 1993, p.21). Davies uses the term social group as a generic category, a general, universal, "human" condition. To look within this category, however, would reveal race as another layer and level of this struggle over balance. I have used portions of transcripts from my interviews with young South Asian women to show that, at times, this struggle is about a desire not to be culturally different or identifiable in relation to the "white" norm. In the transcripts there is an almost simultaneous level of identification with "indian," as well as a differentiation from what is "normally" (in the evaluative sense of the term) perceived as "indian." This suggests that as second generation South Asians these women's sense of identity and relation to the notion of difference is at least dual (or even ambivalent). In other words, the discourse of difference that they are attempting to negotiate articulates both their distinctness from the "white" norm as well as their difference from the stereotypical image of "South Asian."

The young women in my study attempt to negotiate their "racialized" positioning while simultaneously maintaining and not diminishing their social rank and status in relation to the "white" norm. The talk about "refs" and "fobs" is part of a narrative of South Asian identity that excludes newly arrived young South Asians. For those who have been here longer, the talk
about "refs" and "fobs" allows them to benefit from a system that favours assimilationism. In order to contextualize the discourses of race and difference that appear in the interviews with young South Asian women, I now turn to mainstream representations of South Asian community, culture and families. These representations of "culture conflict" between South Asian parents and youth draw heavily on a subtext of "backward, restrictive" parents and "confused, uncontrollable and oppressed youth." This subtext, I argue, is best understood in relation to a larger backdrop of demographic changes in Canada and continuing "white" anxiety over its "cultural," political and economic place within the power base of this country.

Bhangra Dances, Representations of Culture Conflict and Definitions of Canadian Nationhood

I would now like to turn to the final section of this chapter. Having shown how discourses of multiculturalism mask normative constructions of white-ness and the subtext of (white) Canadian assimilation, I would now like to look at how this masking works to secure boundaries around "white" identity and forge representations of the "non-white" ethnic as "in need of development." This kind of portrayal provides justifications for (western) intervention and the protection of young South Asian women. In this section I explore some of the ways in which newspaper articles and mainstream media construct a perception of "culture conflict" and a representation of young South Asian women as victims of this conflict. The conflicts of young South
Asian women are presented as arising from F. ents' refusal to assimilate into Canadian society. According to this construction, this assimilation would mean the adoption of more liberal/advanced progressive ideas and practices, over regressive/restrictive/backward ones. I interpret this construction of culture conflict as "white" fears around the preservation of white national, political and economic identity. I would argue that the continuing arrival of non-white immigrants to Canada in the post-war era has resulted in a resurgence of "moral panics" over immigration. This panic, I argue, is about the perception of the shifting place of white middle classes in the power hierarchy of this country. A rep:ntation of "culture conflict" within South Asian families as the source of tension for South Asian youth serves as a means to (re-) assert and maintain white cultural norms as a preferred and more "civilized" Canadian national identity over "other" possible narratives of nationhood.

Teun Van Dijk (1993) argues that the media play a crucial role in the reproduction of racism. He argues that news on "ethnic affairs" in most western countries consistently represent ethnic relations in ways that replicate stereotypes. Media coverage on immigration often emphasizes "problems, illegality, large numbers, fraud, and demographic or cultural threats" (Dijk, 1993, p.248). Accordingly, the underlying subtext in most media accounts is the construction of the non-white ethnic as "different, problematic, deviant or threatening" (Dijk, 1993,
p.249). Through this kind of representation of the "ethnic other," the media simultaneously reinforces the prestige, superiority and respectability of "whiteness." As Dijk writes:

Whereas other cultures are routinely derogated as backward or primitive, western culture and its values are either taken for granted or positively presented as modern, rational, and humanitarian (Dijk, 1993, p.250).

My discussion of selected media coverage on immigration and the South Asian community supports Dijk's analysis of media racism. The media, of course, do not exist autonomous from the white dominant social relations of which they are a part. In this way they reproduce dominant perspectives and representations of "race relations" all the while appearing seemingly neutral and tolerant to "difference." I now turn to a discussion of music, identity and representations of South Asian community by the mainstream media to explore some of the ways in which young women are positioned and constructed and how these representations simultaneously secure a definition of "whiteness" that equate it with notions of relative superiority.

Previously I have shown how young South Asian women articulate identity through a process of negative association. While a definition by rejection articulates a resistance to stereotypical notions of what is South Asian, it also reveals threads to discourses that show some definitions of "Canadian." In a more subversive reading of their talk, the subtext becomes: white Canadian people do not get lice; they are not dirty or disgusting; and you are different from the definition of Canadian if you are "indian." A "typical indian" is not a "typical
Canadian" and appears a certain way, in dress, hair and accent. What we get here is a certain narrative of race and ethnicity which constructs "white" as natural and non-white as "different" in evaluative terms. While long-term inhabitants of this country have more status than a newly arrived immigrant, they are not automatically included in the definition of "acceptable" Canadians. The following conversation between the two sisters, Tina and Pam, shows that "Canadian" is not inclusive of South Asian cultural practices:

A: Montreal is a cosmopolitan city but the brown people there are spread out and they're also Canadianized more.

B: Like you wouldn't catch an indian person or an indian child over there, let's say a teenager, listening to indian music, at all.

A: Not at all, they don't do that there.

B: It's embarrassing for them.

This comparison between South Asians living in Toronto and Montreal suggests that Toronto is a city which has a higher concentration of South Asians in particular areas. But what also emerges is the observation that the definition of Canadian is not inclusive of "other," in this case, South Asian cultural practices. The girls explain that what makes Montreal South Asians more Canadian is an absence of overtly "indian" signifers, in this case music.

The terrain of music has recently received a lot of attention by both the mainstream media and segments of the South Asian community. For the most part the media have explored the
explosion of South Asian fusion music and dances as a site where the "clash of cultures" is most evident between South Asian teenagers and their parents. South Asian dances began to receive media attention with the advent of "day" dances which started as an alternative to night dances in 1990. In particular, they were brought to public attention in 1991 when promoters, known as Punjab Culture Shock, planned a dance just before Christmas holidays with then popular Bhangra star novice Apache Indian in a Mississauga club. The night before the event, the venue was firebombed, causing minor damage. This event received a lot of media coverage and it was suspected that it was conservative members of the South Asian community who were involved in the "firebombing" incident. This event served as a catalyst, bringing to the forefront a variety of issues concerning second generation youth in Toronto and "dances" in general.

The media predominantly described the day dance controversy as between "strict", traditional parents and teenagers wanting to enjoy the "freedoms" of Canadian society. Fifth Estate journalist Krish Wood did a special report on day dances in November of 1993. She described these dances as a rebellion against traditions and parents and argued that young women were particularly caught between the "strict traditions of parents on the one hand and the temptations offered by Canada’s liberal youth driven society," on the other. She claimed that young South Asian girls "sneak out to do what most teenagers do all the time." Among the people she interviewed was Mr. Pandoori (head of
the Malton Sikh temple) who is well-known in the South Asian community for his conservative beliefs. He argued that the dances must be stopped, that the teenagers that go to these dances are "pigs" and only girls that want to "smoke, drink and get pregnant" would go to these places.

Wood used the dances as a backdrop to explore attitudes of childrearing, violence and abuse among South Asians. Her report showed how the "strictness" of parents with their teenage girls was in some cases leading to violence. She also focused on the history of South Asian migration to Ontario. She explains that "thousands of South Asians emigrated in the late 1960's and 70's," especially a high Sikh population and that there are 30,000 students of South Asian descent in the Peel region, which in some schools accounts for over fifty percent of the school population.

Currently, the renewed panic over visible minority immigrants holds considerable force in popular discourses in many western countries. Christopher Husbands (1994) argues that the moral panic over immigrants has in recent years connected to an underlying anxiety over national identity and nationhood in the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany and the Netherlands. He maintains that the rise of right wing factions in opposition to multiculturalism and immigration is, in these countries, indicative of this panic. Lurking beneath the anxieties about immigrants on the part of the white population is the fear about being outnumbered demographically by "foreigners."
as well as a perceived threat of "cultural dilution." There is a renewed emphasis on national identity and ascertaining the boundaries and definition of nationhood. While each of these countries has an official rhetoric of flexibility and tolerance, the idea of nationhood and identity continues to be challenged, especially in what Husbands refers to as a time of economic and moral barrenness (Husbands, 1994). Building on Stanley Cohen's (1972) definition of "moral panic," Husbands claims that the evidence of a moral panic is easily recognizable through reviewing media reporting. Indicators include media reports which focus on "regular polling data, the 'difference' of certain social groups (in this case non-white 'ethnic' groups)," and reporting that suggests that a particular group or migrants from a particular country are a problem (Husbands, 1994, p.193).

Using the dances as a point of exploration I would argue that Wood's brand of representation in the mainstream media is partially a response to a concern about the diminishing centrality of "white" Canadian identity. I explore how the influx of non-white immigrants in Canada in general and the areas of greater Metropolitan Toronto in particular, has added to this anxiety. The attempt to recover "white" is accomplished by a representation of the "ethnic" as "backward." White Canada, in relation to a backdrop of unruly immigrant teenagers and out of control of overly strict immigrant parents, emerges as the preferred more "civilized" and "normal" identity to aspire to and helps to maintain "white-anglo" as the "Canadian" norm. I would
like to extend Husband's (1994) "European" analysis of new moral panics to the context of Canada. I briefly reviewed the Canadian Periodical Index, Canadian News Index and the Canadian Index to survey news items around immigration in the early 90's and also more recently. These indexes list most of the prominent newspapers across the country such as the Calgary Herald, the Winnipeg Free Press, the Globe & Mail (G&M), the Montreal Gazette and the Halifax Chronicle Herald.

In mid-September of 1992 all five newspapers reported the findings of a Canadian Immigration Department Survey. The G&M reported that Canadians are "in their most hostile mood in years toward immigrants" (G&M, Sep. 14, 1992, A4). Ceding to "minority" status was among the concerns that "Canadians" had according to this poll and one-third of those surveyed wanted to exclude those "people who are different than most Canadians" (G&M, Sep 14, 1992, A4). Three months later the G&M ran a column entitled, "Immigrants' origins increasingly diverse: Demographers fear racist backlash." This article assuages the fear of white people being outnumbered but emphasizes the threat around "difference." It begins by reporting that, proportionally, the percentage of immigrants has remained almost identical since the Second World War. However, it continues to point out that while in the early 1960's, 90% of migrants were of European descent (Britain and Italy), now Asian immigrants (from Hong Kong and India) comprise almost half of all immigrants (G&M, Dec. 9, 1992, A9). Stating that the immigration policy is meant to
"bolster" birth rates because since the 1970's "Canadians have not been bearing enough children to replace themselves," (G&M, Dec. 9, 1992, A9) the article had a motif similar to what can be found in race-suicide appeals at the turn of the century.

More recently, in 1995, the same newspaper printed an article on the front page entitled, "Population crisis feared as billions enter fertile years: Failing to address impact on immigration, economies may be 'ultimate global blunder'" (G&M, March 4, 1995, A1). The article draws attention to the "billions" of young people in developing countries who are now entering their reproductive years. It draws a direct link to the impact it will have on the West. This fertility is not only "threatening to worsen economic distress in developing countries" but will "stimulate even greater immigration" (G&M, March 4, 1995, A1). The article augments anxieties of possible "ethnic invasion."

In an article in the Montreal Gazette, reporter Harvey Schachter focuses on the changes confronting the City of Toronto. "Change," he argues, "provokes tension. Massive change can provoke massive tension. And this has been massive change" (Montreal Gazette, Dec. 21, 1994, B3). The change he is referring to is the inflow of non-white immigrants. He starts off with a reflection about commuting on the public transport system: "I'm beginning to feel that I'm a visible minority on the Toronto Subways. I'm white" (Montreal Gazette, Dec. 21, 1994, B3). In an attempt to understand the growing backlash toward non-white immigrants, he contends that, "[i]t's not a question of
races... it's a question of comfort levels, of not feeling alien in your own city" (Montreal Gazette, Dec. 21, 1994, B3).

Similarly, around the same time, the Globe and Mail did a three part series called "Suburbs in Transition." The series' descriptor read, "Some of Canada's burgeoning regional municipalities have become laboratories for government's policies on immigration and multiculturalism" (G&M, Dec. 29, 1994, A1). The series reporter, Lila Sarick, entitling the first in the series, "Region deals with influx of immigrants," focuses on some of the tensions in the Peel region, treating the area as a microcosm and consequent reflection of Toronto and other Canadian urban centres.

I will draw primarily from the final part, entitled, "A region grown like a gawky adolescent: Many Peel residents accept, if not enthusiastically embrace, its multicultural nature," which is interesting for its metaphor and connection between adolescent development and the development of a racially diverse urban community. Here "youth" (as in adolescence), like the "development" of predominantly "non-white" ethnic community, are constructed as in need of guidance or as being in an "immature" state.

Sarick begins her article with a "reality check" forecast for Toronto residents, warning them to expect "more traffic, more portable classrooms, and more immigrants" (G&M, Dec. 30, 1994, A1). She argues that Brampton and Mississauga are no longer "traditional" suburban communities. This is substantiated by the
fact that the region's 700,000 population is now constituted by visible minorities (G&M, Dec. 28, 1994, A4) and that "[by] 2001, the region's population is expected to be almost a million people, 40% born outside of Canada and 1/3 members of a visible minority group" (G&M, Dec. 30, 1994, A1). The article makes an implicit link between violence and the growing "ethnic" population, explaining that for some residents Peel's rapid multicultural growth has "brought unpleasant side effects" such as concern over a recent shooting in a nearby mall. Worries among residents, Sarick reports, include: decrease in property values; over-development; possibility of urban slums; and non-English speaking residents.

The tension in the area is between social developers and educators who are unprepared for the reality of Peel's population growth. They realize that many services must be provided to meet its residents' needs and there are those, who, like Norman Fishbein, worry about their displacement:

Four or five years ago you got on the bus and the ethnic population wasn't very evident....I'm a born Canadian and I always feel now they're trying to push us out (G&M, Dec. 30, 1994, A1).

The article reassures people like Mr. Fishbein with a reflection from Peel Regional Police Chief Robert Lunney who says, "We don't experience a lot of ethnic crime...The process of assimilation is well under way" (G&M Dec, 30, 1994, p. A1). Sarick refers to what's going on in Peel as a multicultural experiment.

I would finally like to reference an article printed in May of 1995 which reported the findings of an Immigration Association
of Canada poll. This survey found that 3 out of 5 Canadians desire a 5-year moratorium on immigration in order that "the country absorbs newcomers already arrived" (Montreal Gazette, May 18, 1995, A9). On the same day, the Calgary Herald entitled its column, "Close doors, speak English, majority tells pollster" and reported that the poll "found more people in favour of Canada being an English-speaking culture than a multicultural society" (Calgary Herald, May 18, 1995, A13). Notice the discrepancy in parallels here, it is not English speaking and multi-lingual. And in February of this year, Macleans Magazine ran an article, "New Talk of A B.C. Influx" in relation to immigrants from Hong Kong (Ajello, 1996) . The article quotes a radio talk show host who reports "There's an underlying fear out there, that we're going to be eaten alive come '97." He is referencing the 1997 transfer of Hong Kong to Chinese jurisdiction.

I have selected only a small portion of the articles on immigrants indexed between 1990-1996. I have chosen to explore these newspaper articles for several reasons. Firstly, Husbands' theory of "new moral panic" certainly seems applicable here. All the articles indicate some of the trends that Husbands talks about in relation to "moral panics," such as an emphasis on "demographic" changes and the possibility of being "outnumbered," "difference" of certain social groups, possible cultural dilution, and a construction of "non-white" migrant populations as the source of economic and social problems in Canada. The articles demonstrate, in accordance with Husbands (1994) and
Cohen (1972), the significant role of the media in relation to moral panics. Secondly, I use these articles as an indicator of public opinion. In this sense, media do not conjure up entirely, but rather play up, various aspects of popular opinion and also works to constitute and create public opinion. The recurring theme of (white) public opinion is an illustration of anxiety.

The newspaper articles frequently reference polling data that emphasize both numbers and cultural "difference." Even the use of language, such as, "influx," "population crisis," "Billions," "Close doors" and "flux" conjures up numerical images of immigrants clamouring to "break in" to the country. The Globe & Mail reports that the "percentage of Canadians who are immigrants has remained almost exactly the same since the Second World War but their cultural backgrounds have not" (G&M, 1992, A1). However, in media reports, the numerical significance of the immigrant population continues to be emphasized, playing on the (white) fear of being outnumbered. Some of the articles also touch on urbanization and the influx of immigrants as indicators of rapid and unmanageable change. The references to cultural difference and numeracy serve as a diversion from anxieties about a rapidly modernizing society. Moreover, a focus on immigrants as the source of the nation's problems helps as a foil for socioeconomic changes and class tensions.

I would interpret the concern over immigrants in Toronto and across the nation as, in large part, about anxiety over a faltering economy. In 1992 the Globe & Mail reported that the
national unemployment rate was 11.8%, the highest in the decade, increasing angst over job security (G&M, Dec. 9, 1992, A9). And although there is no evidence that new immigrants "snatch" jobs from Canadian-born citizens, in places like Toronto and Vancouver, cities with the largest inflow of immigrants, the resentment toward newcomers is greater (G&M, 1992, A9).

The focus on immigration and on the resulting "tensions" can also be read as an underlying concern about the boundaries of Canadian identity. Even though there is an official Canadian rhetoric about tolerance, flexibility and acceptance, these articles demonstrate some of the ways in which the tension between assimilation and tolerance continue to be played out. The articles also demonstrate the continuing negotiation of national identity and definition of Canadian nationhood. From the newspaper clippings we get a sense that immigrants bring crime, increase tension, are violent, decrease property values and make you (read: white Canadian) feel uncomfortable. Implicit in the reversal is that white English-speaking Canadians are peaceful, are a more lucrative investment because they do not decrease property values, and make you feel comfortable. White Canadian parents don't beat their kids and are not strict with their daughters. There is a familiar colonial East-West tone to this discourse. How South Asian parents treat their daughters, for example, in Woods' and Hayes' reports, becomes emblematic of the entire backward condition of the South Asian community. The treatment of women within "their" community serves as an
indicator of the extent of modernity (read: assimilation). It is because the boundaries of white ethnicity are threatened both numerically (as a majority) and culturally, that the narrative of the "ethnic immigrant" is useful.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to interrogate how the concepts of nation and race operate in the Canadian context. I have argued that discourses of racism and nationalism are intermeshed in ways that appear natural and it is because of this seeming immutability that they are able to accomplish their ideological work (Jackson and Penrose, 1993). Jackson and Penrose argue that:

[the nation-state is a crucial locus for the articulation of racist ideologies, because of the extent to which it embodies the idea of "race" and legitimizes it through the granting or withholding of citizenship, the right to enter and remain within a country and a host of other entitlements (Jackson and Penrose, 1993, p.9)]

Non-white immigration to Canada has challenged the synonymity and hegemony of "whiteness" and Canadian, not only in relation to bringing the rights of minorities to the forefront in the way that Jackson and Penrose mention, but also in terms of the rights of first-generation progeny. The presence of second generation immigrants is a constant reminder about the tension between citizenship, birth place and "Canadian-ness." I have shown that the three are not synonymous, despite official claims to the contrary, and that second generation South Asians are not automatically or necessarily included in the definition of
Canadian. Susan Smith argues that "immigration controls, at least as much as territorial extent, are an indicator of where the boundaries of a nation state lie" (Smith, 1993, p.51). While Canada officially applauds its identity as a "nation of immigrants," (Smith, 1993, p.52) conversations with young South Asian women reveal how they must negotiate discourses that show the limits to this celebration of difference.

There are many dimensions to the ways in which race mediates the lives of young South Asian women in Canada. I have emphasized the aspects of race, and have shown that the idea of tolerance to cultural difference is conditional. Canadian multiculturalism has produced a normative discourse about difference and tolerance that is inherently contradictory, allowing for difference within a limited (bi-) cultural framework. This contradiction, for the young women in my study, is manifested in their constant negotiation of "sameness" and "difference" between Canadian and "Indian" subject positions.

While their text reveals a narrative about how discourses around race, ethnicity and difference position them, it also reveals narratives around Canadian identity and nationhood. The threads to discursive constructions of race, ethnicity and difference that otherwise appear natural and separate have been placed in a wider context of change in Canada. Underlying the mainstream media fixation with "immigrant" youth and conflict with parents is an anxiety about the boundaries and definition of Canadian identity and the perceived displacement of white
Canadians both "culturally" and economically. That this displacement is not real or substantial does not reduce the anxiety.

Analogizing from Ann Stoler's arguments about the preservation of "white" prestige in the process of empire-making, I have shown that media arguments about "culture conflict" among second generation South Asians attempt to recover the category white as an immutable natural feature of Canadian nationhood. This is accomplished by a subtext that touches on modern ideas of "civility" and rationality as being the cornerstone of Canadian identity, representing that which the "backward ethnic" is not. Anglo-conformity emerges as a more preferred Canadian aesthetic in relation to the not quite assimilated or modern "non-white" ethnic. In this sense, I would argue that "assimilation" stands in for "modernization". A refusal to assimilate is a refusal to become a "modern," western subject. Modern progress, far from concerned with economic advancement only, is also invested in inculcating a cultural and social aesthetics that are compatible with modernity.

Drawing on arguments I made in Chapter Four, I would like to suggest that because the non-white ethnic is associated with the mark of "tradition" and pre-modernity, holding on to "traditional" back-home practices signifies a transgression of the modern western vision of modern progress. This construction of the "non-white" ethnic as backward, potentially volatile, or in need of development continuously reasserts the superiority of
the West and justifies the need for "developing," "guiding" or "containing" non-white immigrants, their children and the "problems" they bring with them.

Finally, I have explored the ways in which young South Asians both desire and are excluded from the "imagined" community of Canadians. In the next chapter I argue that this outsider position is instrumental to the ways in which young South Asian women are positioned by their own community in Canada. Similar to nationalist discourses, diasporic narratives use notions of women to maintain, construct and assert cultural boundaries in relation to the dominant culture. While this chapter looked at the ways in which race and nation work together, the next chapter examines the intersections of ethnicity and gender in the diasporic context.
1. I have placed quotation marks around "founding" because I do not believe that a land that is already inhabited can be discovered or founded. I would also like to question the notion of English and French as "races."


3. I have placed quotation marks around "fathers" because although it is very much the work of men in the public sphere that produced the confederacy of Canada, this would not have been possible without the work or women in the private sphere.

4. For a more detailed analysis of the connection between the needs of capitalist development, labour and immigration, in Canada, see: B. Singh Bolaria and Peter Li (1988) Racial Oppression in Canada.

5. Nineteenth century arguments about racial inferiority (based on biological and genetic differences) are no longer credible and have been replaced with notions of cultural inferiority (see Abu-Lughod (1988), also Essed (1991)).

6. I would also like to mention that Field's comment is also a critique of relativistic discourses of cultural difference.

7. I use the term "cultural" esteem to mean the level of "pride" in one's own "cultural" "ethnic" and/or "racial" "identity." This is a term I have borrowed from Baldev Mutta, community development worker at the Peel Department of Health.

8. While I will be elaborating further on the construction and preservation of internal boundaries around "indian-ness" in chapter eight, I would like to draw attention to the fact that Parminder does not include "west-indian" into her definition of "indian."

9. I will be elaborating further on the idea of "insider" norms in the next chapter. I explore how certain notions of community, ethnicity and gender work together in regulating the lives of young South Asian women in Canada.

10. So as not to present "identity" as a complete product but as a constant negotiation of the self I/i have purposely selected the lower case "i" in the presentation of transcripts.

12. The 1991 census shows that 4.3 million immigrants are residing in Canada, which is 16.1% of the Canadian population, consistent with the 1940's (G&M, Dec. 9, 1992, A9).

13. My objective here is not to single out Hayes and Woods for partial reporting. According to a rationalist framework their representations of the South Asian community would fall under the category of balanced, fair and objective reporting. My purpose is more to look at some of the ways in which discourses around race, ethnicity, gender, modernity and culture work and are hidden under "commonsense" representations and readings of demographic change.
Chapter Seven: The "Ethnic" Factor; Gender as a Defining Feature of South Asian Community Identity

In all of my interviews with young South Asian women, conflicts with parents emerged as the most salient and persistent issue. While five of the girls felt they were better off than other South Asian girls in terms of freedom, the other nine emphasized the "strictness" of their parents. All of the women spoke about the restrictions on their lives and tied this into the expectations around being a "girl." While some were able to escape these confines, other girls, because of limiting family circumstances and lack of networks, were unable to risk "committing" any significant acts of disobedience. Having experienced my "adolescent" years fifteen years prior to them, I was struck by the degree to which I could relate to the issues and concerns they were raising. There was almost an immediate understanding, for example, over how parents and community "work" in terms of regulating young women's lives. There was a particular brand of disciplining that parents were using with their daughters, and during the interviews we often laughed at the identical phrases of parental chastisement which usually focused on an unstated effort to protect "women's" sexuality.

The protection of women's sexuality was tied into protecting young women from the "ills" of western society. As a result, all the women in my study knew how they had to behave in order to be accepted as "good" daughters and community members. They were all concerned about their sexual reputations in one way or another and saw this closely connected to family reputation. In other
words, their behaviour as "girls" has an impact on how their family is viewed by the rest of the community. In their experience their reputation and the resulting family reputation, was closely monitored by "community" members, comprised of relatives, family friends and acquaintances. The community then is seen as the "watchdog" of young women's reputations.

What struck me as familiar and noteworthy was the lengths to which the women would go to protect their reputations and the extent to which their lives were experienced as fragmented. This fragmentation meant that the codes of femininity they observed outside the home were completely different from what they observed within the family and community. Their reputations were always ultimately about their sexual reputations, although much of the discourse around reputation was embedded in taken for granted notions of "feminine" codes of behaviour. This meant that its sexual subtext was often implicit.

In the last chapter I looked at how notions of nation and race intersect in positioning young South Asian women in Canada. I argued that dominant readings of Canadian national identity continue to exclude "non-white" from the definition of Canadian. In this chapter I explore the ways in which the South Asian "community" mobilizes certain notions of "tradition," women and culture as a strategy to build, imagine and negotiate an identity within this white dominant context. I will examine the processes by which the protection of culture and adolescent sexuality overlap and become enmeshed in anxieties about South Asian
adolescent girls. For this section I draw on some of the concepts I introduced in Chapter Five. The debates involving women during colonial India are not only an historical example of how women come to represent and maintain cultural boundaries but are an illustration of a process of contestation over cultural difference. There are continuities between this earlier period of colonialism and nationalism and the present diasporic context. In this chapter I argue that a similar struggle over cultural difference is taking place in Canada. The discursive elements of the struggle over "tradition" and "culture" that operated in colonial India are comparable to the construction of the "culture conflict debate" in Canada.

I suggest that issues of "cultural preservation" in the Canadian context resemble discourses around "women and culture" that emerged during the colonial period in India; particular meanings of tradition and culture continue to be mobilized in what can be called a neo-colonial context. In this sense I draw parallels between colonial racism and Canadian racism and argue that the South Asian diaspora mirrors, in significant ways, the Indian nation state. In the diasporic context young women continue to mark boundaries of cultural difference. These boundaries are maintained through particular notions of femininity that regulate certain uses of the body (how it is adorned and what it consumes), freedom of movement (meaning the physical movement of the body is subject to certain spatial and temporal conditions).
Most of the tensions about freedom between parents and children have occurred over the attendance of dances. Dances represent a median where discourses around adolescent sexuality, culture, femininity and East-West contestation over cultural difference intersect. I use "dances" then as a point of exploration, an illustration of how these discourses come together. I show how gender and race work together to regulate and monitor women's sexualities. As I began in the previous chapter, I argue that the contemporary "day dance" discussions about women and sexuality are as much about an East-West battle: about what constitutes South Asian cultural practice and tradition, on one hand, and what is permissible as "Canadian" cultural practice and tradition, on the other. Both "white Canada" and the "South Asian community," in their struggle to assert and maintain cultural boundaries, are enmeshed in discourses about cultural difference that utilize certain notions of women. It is only by identifying the operation and context of these various discourses around femininity and ethnicity that we can begin to understand the complexity of subject positions that are made available to South Asian adolescent girls, and the processes through which they "take up," refuse or negotiate these positions.

Bhangra Dances

The "firebombing" incident that I detailed in Chapter Five served as a catalyst bringing to the forefront a variety of issues in the South Asian community concerning second generation
youth. For Mr. Pandoori, head of the Malton Gurdwara (Sikh temple) these dances were a direct rebellion against what he perceived as "Eastern" values." He viewed day dance goers as wanting to adopt the worst of "Canadian" values, such as,

people drinking on Yonge street, people picking food from the garbage, topless dancers...they [youth] want rights without fulfilling their duties and obligations that go with them (as cited in Hayes, 1992, p.120).

He also explains:

You think a 14-year-old girl just wants to go to dance? That's not true. When Sikh parents open The Globe and Mail or Star or the Sun and they read that in the western World eighty-five percent of students by the age of 18 have had sex, they say my daughter is never going to any goddamn dance, no matter where it is (as cited in Hayes, 1992, p.123):

Aarti, a young woman who was attending a school that was most notorious for its day dance goers, explained in an interview how the crisis over these dances came about:

This is what happened. They did articles left right and center. They first did a special on "indian" t.v. which hit off really well. I mean they did a whole hour-special on day time dance in which they got video footage of people, and these people obviously got caught....The programme said that these kids lie, skip school, they go out with guys, they go everywhere in mini skirts and they go with make up and they all look like whores. You wouldn't believe the stuff they did. This went out in every indian newspaper, about two years ago now [1994]...all indian newspapers, Pakistani Times, India Times, India Today, Markham paper and they stressed [the schools where] there are more indians...It was on local news and stuff and what happened was the parents just went crazy. A lot of people stopped going to day time dances, people got caught like you wouldn't believe and they even got in more trouble, more troubles at home. Like if our parents called the school and said they want to see our [attendance] records, they had to show the records. So people got caught for all sorts of things just because of that stupid thing. The school got in trouble because they didn't take attendance. You know like why wasn't
attendance taken? But then again they [the schools] can get themselves out of it but at home you can’t.

Discourses around adolescent sexuality take on a particular meaning when they intersect with discourses around "cultural protection." The day dance controversy represents a locus of various struggles. South Asian youth have become the battle ground between the family and school in conflicts about authority, accountability and guardianship. Because these dances were held during the day it meant that large numbers of kids, especially from "brown" schools, would skip classes to attend these dances a couple of times a month. It also meant that they could attend these dances without their parents’ knowledge. This was certainly enabling for some South Asian girls, who, because of particular discourses around freedom and culture found it difficult to go out at night. The day dances emerged as a means to accommodate young women and a means to allure young (heterosexual) men. They served as a good marketing technique for dance promoters who were looking for a way to tap into a youth consumer market of music. The central issue in this controversy was about who had the authority to regulate and monitor the daily activities of South Asian youth.

From my own interviews with South Asian girls, social and community workers, it appears that some schools attempted to take a non-interventionist stance in relation to day dances. While "skipping" classes is not tolerated by official school policy, it seems that in the case of South Asian youth, administrators, teachers and truancy officers have tended to overlook unattended
classes. This seems to have happened particularly in the "brown" schools. Through my research I found that this "lax" attitude was interpreted by the young women in several ways. The girls argued that it was because the school authorities understood how "strict" their parents were and young people's need for enjoyment that a different standard around class attendance was applied to South Asian students. School authorities attempted to position themselves on the side of South Asian adolescents in an effort to protect them from "overbearing and "traditional" parents. And from the accounts I have collected, the parents felt that the schools were not fulfilling their responsibility as guardians and protectors of "their teens" from unwanted "outside ills."

My interest here is not to ascertain whether parents are strict and school authorities are lax. I am more concerned with how discourses of "protection" operate in this instance. Thus, what interests me in Aarti's account, for example, is the positioning of South Asian girls. The outrage of community members centers on the possible sexual consequences of day dances for young women. The anxieties are not focused on issues of safety for young women per se, but rather on the erosion of "moral" (read traditional) values and conduct that possible "dangerous" sexual behaviour could bring. It is not male activities that are central here but "mini skirts," "make-up" and "whores," behaviours and appearances associated with women. An underlying subtext in Aarti's account of "the community's" reaction to day dances is that it is actually young women (not
men) who are getting caught. The public sphere not only poses a sexual threat for women, but offers a space where women can possibly engage with their sexuality and threaten categories of appropriate femininity. The remainder of this chapter will examine (internal) discourses around tradition, culture and femininity so as to contextualize Pandoori's perspective.

**Geography of Gender**

In Chapter Four I explored, in the Indian colonial context, the social construction of East-West battle over cultural difference. Both Partha Chatterjee and Ann Stoler have argued in different ways that notions of gender are racialized. From my own research I found similarities between colonial and diasporic discourses around the ways in which boundaries of cultural difference are produced and maintained. Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis argue that the boundary of ethnicity is often dependent on gender (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1989, p.102). Characteristics that have become associated with femininity serve to carve out ethnic identity and what most often distinguishes one ethnic collective from another are "rules relating to sexuality, marriage and family...and a true [my emphasis] member will perform these roles properly" (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1989, p.102). Gender and ethnicity work together in establishing definitions of identity. I argue, based on my research, that notions of cultural authenticity help to maintain regulations around "appropriate" femininity.
While my interviews most often began with an exploration of school environments, I often used these discussions as a means to explore the young women's sense of "ethnic" identities vis-à-vis their sense of belonging, in relation to other cultural groups. In all of the interviews it was often implicit that they had to be different from Canadian women, Canadian standing in for "white." The interviews thus gave me the opportunity to examine notions of "South Asian-ness" and "whiteness." I observed the contestation between East and West in the various discourses that construct "white" and "South Asian" women's sexualities in contrast with one another. I spoke with Salimah, for example, about the various cultural groups in her school and we began to tease out some of the ways in which South Asian women were located differently than white women in relation to sexuality. In a discussion of stereotypical representations, Salimah had the following to say:

S: okay, when i see white girls, i can generalize here. most white girls are more giving, like fast sexually you know. Even though indian girls aren't [fast sexually], well not all, but i'm just saying they're taught not to be. But i don't think that's enforced in, in you know white families. I know of this one girl whose mother bought her the pill,...that would never happen in an indian family.

The East-West dualism operates as an organizing category in her talk and she points to the oppositional relationship between "white" and "brown" women. Here, brown/white stands in for East/West. Here part of what differentiates South Asian and white girls are codes around sexual behaviour and family acceptance of (heterosexual) sexuality. Salimah shows that in order to be seen
as "good" girls, young South Asian women must conform to sexual norms which are not associated with what "white" girls do.

Earlier in this thesis I argued that within modernity, unresolved fears about modern social progress, anxieties about social change and the possibility that unregulated freedom could cause moral and social disintegration have been projected onto both youth and women. I have also shown how "the West" has become associated with modernity, while "the East" is associated with tradition or pre-modernity. The young women in my study suggest that the fears about modern change are manifested in fears about westernization. In the sexualized discourse of East as pure and West as temptress, young South Asian women are often positioned by certain internal (i.e., internal to the South Asian "community") discourses as "sexual" by the mere fact of living in the "modern" (read: West). Salimah has this to say about how diasporic sexuality is viewed by those "back at home."

I'll tell you i've had one comment made about me by this guy whose seen me at a few places. Guys get scared when they start realizing oh this girl's kind of cool and she might know a few people and stuff. And he told someone not to hang around with me cause i was a bad influence. And i'm not allowed to turn around and say what the hell did you say that for and you don't know crap about my life....just because i wasn't what he wanted me to be, that typical Pakistani girl. Cause he came from Pakistan but he now lived here and was in an American school so he wasn't like very Pakistani but he knew about things. [There's] definitely a double standard. Cause i want to meet a really nice sweet guy kind of thing but once you get them, they don't want the modern girl, they don't want that girl who could be smart or anything. They want that girl who's going to do everything for them, whose going to be that typical indian girl. You know and that's not what Canada's producing at the moment, i'm not lying. That's another thing, the pakistani cricket team was here and one of
the guys met this girl and phoned her and said, "oh i want to get with you and this and that." And she’s like, "what do you think i am, just cause i’m from Canada i’m a slut? Just cause i’m from Canada, i’m not your typical one, so you can turn around and do anything with me?" That’s what a lot of indian girls are getting slack for, just cause they’re from Canada, they’re modernized and they’re not what people want them to be [emphasis added].

Salimah begins with commenting on how men are threatened by women’s independence and popularity. In the text, the "typical" Pakistani girl fits colonial notions of South Asian womanhood: servitude, docility and chastity. In contrast, a "typical" Canadian woman is seen as sexually active and is associated with "modernity." Modern is defined as both intelligent and sexually promiscuous. Also, there is a subtext of cultural authenticity: living in Canada makes one less Pakistani than living "back home."

I have quoted this passage at length because it points to several important themes. The text indicates that the discourse around sexuality is not just about white/brown relationality. Even within the category of "brown" some forms of sexual behaviour are seen as more "authentic" than others. I would like to return to Yuval-Davis’ claim about gender and ethnic identity in this regard. From Salimah’s account we can see that the definition of South Asian is contingent on the degree to which it is associated with the non-West. The non-West is not just geographically defined, however, it is also contingent upon certain sexual codes. According to this framework, women become the territory upon which to construct East as pure and West as
degenerate. This moral discourse views the modern/West as a sexual threat to notions of "South Asian" femininity and thereby constructs women on a "modern" terrain as sexually available to men. (Note women are both "the" terrain of contestation over meaning and definition of East/West as well as "on" the terrain [the modern/western] of contestation.) The East-West contestation is a sexual one where the modern is associated with sexual promiscuity, while tradition is marked by self-sacrifice, chastity and purity. Salimah’s passage maps out "Canada" as a modern terrain. This terrain is gendered and this "gendered" construction is one in which a South Asian girl’s mere residency in the "modern" positions her as a sexual object.

Most of the young women I interviewed mentioned on how their parents often referenced "back home" as a standard of measure. Statements such as "in Pakistan" or "in East Africa" or "in India, women don’t behave like that", or the threat of being sent "back" operated as methods of control over women’s behaviour. While Salimah shows how young women’s sexuality is relational -- white/modern/West in opposition to "back home" -- in the next passage Aarti shows how the "myth of back home" works in regulating young women’s sexualities. Aarti explains how she deconstructed the "myth of back home," by discovering points of contradiction. She addresses this myth in relation to upper-class youth culture in India:

I went to boarding school in India for six months...And I go back there every year and I know, I mean Indian girls are far worse than we are I mean Indian students, right now, they are horrible I mean it’s a whole
generation of chaos over there...They've moved on so rapidly that, I mean, we seem primitive to them. I mean girls go out left, right and centre. Where they go out? To clubs and you name it. The only happening thing right now is big clubs and nice hotels and whatever. They go out for coffee they come home late nights, even. I'm talking about even in the most decent homes they go out, they go out guys and girls. I mean you should see new year's, it's a blast there... But the really funny thing is that when I go back it's like freedom like you wouldn't believe. I get freedom like you wouldn't believe and I enjoy it that's why I like india a lot cause I get freedom like you wouldn't...

Aarti explodes the myth associated with "back home" by explaining that the worst fears about women and the "West" are actually occurring in the "East." The association of strictness and sexual propriety with the "homeland" is displaced by her account of experiencing more freedom in India itself than she does here in the Toronto diasporic community. This raises the question about what are the effects and investments in maintaining the myth. Maintaining the myth, I would argue, serves as a means to hold on to a notion of protection, "purity," and propriety associated with the East. Albeit this protection from modernity is all-the-way-back-home but it serves as a standard to aspire to. This myth also justifies the regulation and protection of women on diasporic terrain. It gives permission for the reproduction of "indian" (from India) in Canada.

(Mis-)Uses of the Body

Leslie Roman (1988) argues that the body is a primary site for constructing notions of femininity. Roman shows how bodily consumption and adornment are tied into meanings around sexual reputation. She views bodily control as an expression of social
control. As a mechanism of social control, "dirt" and concepts of bodily pollution not only have associations to notions of health, but are also indicative of prevailing cultural norms around order and propriety. Individuals who transgress dominant notions of order and propriety are seen as vulgar and bad (Douglas (1984) [1966]). Roman (1988) applies this theoretical framework to her study of girls in a Catholic high school. For example, she argues that smoking for women is associated with a host of "low" virtues such as alcoholism and "provocative" dress. It suggests a "looser construction of the body; a body freed to its desires, so to speak, as well as a rejection of the 'little girl,' the niceness, the willingness to get along, the softness," that often characterizes dominant notions of femininity (Roman, 1988, p.134). In her study of girls at a Catholic high school she found that the "'price' of freedom of the body -- freedom to be at ease in public arenas, to wear comfortable and casual clothes, to smoke cigarettes -- was the loss of a good reputation" (Roman, 1988, p.136).

From my research I found that maintaining a notion of "difference" in relation to "white" Canadians is contingent on notions of "appropriate" femininity. Like most young girls, South Asian teenagers are regulated by "community" sanctions if their conduct does not conform to expected feminine behaviour. The dictates of feminine behaviour are communicated by their parents, relatives and the larger South Asian community. Regulations and sanctions, I argue, are strategies of identification and a means
by which "community" is imagined and produced. It is through the sanctioning of those who transgress the boundaries that communities are constituted as bounded entities. It is by observing specific norms of conduct that "we" come to identity with "each other" and see ourselves as different from "others."

Most of the women I interviewed defined normative feminine behaviour as things they were not supposed to do, such as drinking, smoking, taking drugs and dating boys. They included among the list of what they were expected to do as studying hard, going to family and community gatherings and helping with "domestic" duties. For South Asian women, how they negotiate their "femininities," in addition to affecting their sexual reputations, also indicates their degree of allegiance to an "ethnic" collectivity. In a discussion with Rupinder, for example, she spoke extensively about how her recent behaviour of "talking back" to her parents in reference to the "unreasonable" restrictions they were placing on her not only raised concerns about her rebelliousness but also about the extent to which she was "South Asian." In relation to her parents, Rupinder explains:

R: when you say, "well you don't let me do what i want to do so why should i do what you want me to do," they're like "well we're indian, we're not white."

I: what do you think they mean by that, what do they see as indian and what do they see as white

R: i guess indian being wholesome and not being able to talk back to your parents, do whatever they say and just go to school and home and home to school and work and have no social life and being white i guess they see people being as like sluts and rebels and just a lot of rebellionism i guess.
According to the last passage, rebellionism is defined as challenging parental authority. This discourse of authority, however, draws on notions of "Indian" and "white", as well as on notions of generational differences. The dictates around appropriate femininity are maintained through labelling transgressions as "western" (and by implication as white). Challenging parental restrictions makes Rupinder "white."

Crossing the boundaries of "appropriate" behaviour not only signifies a gender transgression but also a "cultural" one. "Whiteness" represents unfeminine behaviour in the South Asian context. A "real indian" girl would not talk back to her parents and would not want to go out. Rupinder's desire for self-determination puts into question her cultural allegiance.

Nina, like all the other girls, spoke to me at length about conflicts with her parents which she defined as very much having to do with both her gender and "culture." She explained that much of her life outside of the home was hidden from her parents and that they did not understand or accept many of the things that she wanted to do:

> N: Like if you want to drink, indian girls can't drink, indian girls can't smoke, indian girls can't do this, you can't date. My parents think well you know if you go out so much if you're going to clubs and stuff it looks so bad on you. Like i know friends whose parents think well you know if you go to a club nobody's going to marry you because you're always going out all the time and you're always doing this and that.

While earlier I selected a portion of transcript from a conversation with Salimah to show how the threat of modernity and westernization is quite literally associated with inhabiting the
West, in the preceding passage Nina shows how the East/West dualism is embedded in certain codes of "feminine" behaviour that regulate bodily consumption and social (possibly sexual) affiliations. It also demonstrates that a woman's failure to comply with appropriate codes of femininity indicates an unscrupulous sexual reputation that will eventually inhibit her marriage marketability. Bodily consumption with respect to smoking and/or drinking, for example, not only signals a loss of a good sexual reputation but also threatens the boundary of South Asian itself. Young girls' femininities are part of a process that merges the regulation of sexuality with the very fact of "South Asian-ness." Nina explains how restrictions on freedom of movement and bodily expression are synonymous with being South Asian. Her ethnic identity depends on complying with these restrictions around femininity. She points directly to the interconnectedness of femininity and ethnicity: "Indian girls can't drink, Indian girls can't smoke." Notions of "South Asian-ness" and femininity are integral to each other so that transgressing the norms of one category simultaneously destabilizes the other. To further substantiate this point, I would like to draw on another portion of the interview where Nina explains that:

they [friends] know that i'm indian...They're aware that i am indian cause they i mean i feel like i constantly have to explain to them why i am indian, because of the way my parents are. i have to explain that i can't do this with you i can't do this with you, Why? Because my parents are indian and that's why i can't.
Here Nina shows that the restriction of social activities by parents becomes part of what actually defines South Asian. Interestingly, she argues that it is because of her parents' culture that she cannot participate in certain social practices. Her sense of belonging to the category "Indian" rests on her parents' association with it. By locating her parents as "Indian," and the source of the problem, it is her parents' inflexibility, their refusal to change and accommodate, and not the issue of race and racism, that becomes the focus.

Going Out

All of the girls I interviewed explained that most of the conflicts with their parents revolved around their freedom in general and going out in particular. They felt that they lacked freedom. What is of interest to me is not so much whether or not they have freedom, but how discourses about freedom are constructed and how the girls themselves understand freedom or their lack of. The following portion of interview with Nina further substantiates how difference is constructed and used in order to regulate freedom of movement in the public sphere.

N: the big thing I'd say [regarding] conflicts between my parents and me were always about going out, about going out late at night...It's just the whole thing of the western culture that [they say] "we're not like them, why do you want to be like them"...

I: Why do you think that they [parents] don't want you to go out, is it just because...

N: A big reason is that they don't want me drinking. I think the big thing is the guys. They don't want me meeting them and that's what my mom said. Like lately we've been arguing a lot about going out and stuff and she goes if you're going to these like dances, clubs or
whatever you're going to meet guys and everything. And she doesn't realize that that's never where I meet guys....like people come up to me in gurdwara [Sikh temple]. Like some guy started phoning from gurdwara. I told her you think just because I'm out of your sight means something bad is going to happen.

Nina relays the message that her parents present to her about being different and the importance of maintaining that difference. She also exposes how she interprets parental warnings as being about the dangers of the public sphere. The public sphere, especially when it is associated with "white" western society, becomes a dangerous space for South Asian women. South Asian spaces are portrayed as "innocent" while the public realm of white/Canadian/western becomes a place of impurity. Nina, however, addresses the mythology of this construction. While she does not argue that the non-South Asian spaces that she visits are completely safe, she does point to the fact that she is not free of the "feared" interactions with boys. South Asian spaces are not as innocent as their (parental or "community) construction suggests. This is another example of mythology functioning as a means to justify regulations around women's freedom of movement outside of "community" gaze and protection.

Angela McRobbie argues that because dance is "a popular leisure activity where the female body has been allowed to break free of the constraints of modesty, it has aroused anxiety about sexual play" (McRobbie, 1991, p.193). Salimah explained to me that the first time she went to a Bhangra dance she was exhilarated because it was the first time she had danced to Bhangra music outside her home in such a large space. She also
explained that for her dancing was something that became a private act after she entered puberty:

When I was younger and we used to go out to family things we use to do Bhangra in the house. But he [my father] started saying, "no, you are not allowed to do it in front of men," so I was not allowed to do it in front of men....Because I was getting older and he didn't want me dancing in front of men he changed his mind and saw that I shouldn't be dancing in front of them.

While in the next chapter I will explore how "Bhangra" music and dances stand in opposition to dominant white culture in the struggle for cultural space, here I will elaborate on how these dances assert girls' resistance to parental attempts to control their sexuality. As Salimah explains:

Most of the girls go to the dances to find guys, Indian guys cause that's the only place to see them, that's the only place where they can do what they want, where they can act the way they feel without their parents lurking over them, watching them.

Anxieties about going out to clubs and staying out late recall Mary Louise Adams' (1994) exploration of post-war discourses around female sexuality that I introduced in Chapter Three. Trespassing normative "feminine" codes, in many instances, was deemed criminal behaviour and often focused on women's mobility and conduct in the public sphere. Roman and Adams show how discourses around the body and delinquency help construct (appropriate) notions of femininity, which in turn, contribute to the regulation of women's sexualities. Boundaries of femininity reflect either a "good-girl" (sexual) reputation or a "bad-girl" one. I have shown thus far that issues of bodily consumption and physical movement outside the home are, for the women in my
study, not only, as Roman argues, tied into notions of appropriate femininity, but also ethnic/cultural boundaries. Discourses of gender, adolescent sexuality and ethnicity work together in regulating young South Asian women's lives. For young South Asian women transgressing rules of appropriate femininity not only reflects whether the women are good or bad girls but is also indicative of the degree of loyalty to their cultural identity. Staying out late, for example, is reflective of a lack of parental control and the possibility that young women, unbound by adult surveillance, could indulge in "indecent" sexual behaviour. "Staying out late" also threatens the boundary of appropriate South Asian feminine behaviour.

**Lying and Manipulating Femininity -- Adornment**

All of the girls I interviewed admitted that they lied to their parents. While most teenagers do not share everything with their parents, I was struck by how instrumental lying is in maintaining the next to impossible status of the good "South Asian" girl. In her interview, Aarti argued for the "necessity" of lying:

My whole life is based on a lie and my parents probably know that...the big thing I'd say [regarding] conflicts between my parents and me were always about going out, about going out late at night...It's just the whole thing of the western culture that [they say] "we're not like them, why do you want to be like them...."

Similarly, Salimah told me she "had to lie" although she had mixed feelings about it. She explained that her parents viewed her as an innocent, "good" daughter and that it was very important for her to maintain this image:
S: I lie to my parents a lot and if I started thinking that I feel bad about lying then there wouldn’t be much to my life. It’s kind of like living, doing what you have to do. I do feel bad about lying but I want to keep my parents happy. If I didn’t lie I wouldn’t get anywhere. And I do feel bad about lying that much but I’d feel more bad if...I want to keep my parents happy. I really do. I really look for their approval.

For the women I interviewed, "lying" is not only used as a method to negotiate their freedom, but also as a means of upholding the good girl image in the eyes of their parents and the larger South Asian community. They also, however, had to negotiate another set of expectations around adolescence in relation to their peers. Amongst their peers, they often lied about lying. In other words, they found that friends who were able to participate more freely in the social world of peers often did not understand the necessity of lying. It is for this reason, many of the girls were selective about sharing this information. Lying, it seemed, conformed only too well to the stereotype of the "South Asian" girl they wished to avoid. For example, in a discussion with Nina, she explained that she could not be open with her white friends about the extent to which she lied to her parents:

it is easier to turn to them [South Asian friends] than to my other friends sometimes when they don’t understand and I, I feel like I’m being put down, like my own character is being put down... They go "why can’t you argue with your parents?" And I tell them that I try to. But I feel like they’re putting me down... They go "but why don’t you be stronger?" and they don’t realize that I’m trying to be really, really strong and they don’t understand that and I get really defensive...they go "oh but if I was your parents’ daughter, they die, they wouldn’t last" and I go "if you were my parents’ daughter then you wouldn’t be like the way you are now."
In relation to her peers, "lying" represents being seen as not rebellious enough. Acquiescing to authority, for Nina's peers, is equivalent to docility and does not measure up to the carefree, heroic rebellious image of the westernized teenager. And yet, in relation to parents, telling the truth risks the loss of a "good" reputation.

While lying helps young women have some control over their own "freedom," it also helps them negotiate their reputations. They are able to have some control over their reputations at home and school by lying. While the emotional cost of "living lies" is extremely high for these young women, for most of these women honesty would involve paying an even higher price -- they would risk exclusion from the definition of South Asian.

Although most girls crossed over the boundaries of "proper" femininity, many of them did not feel that they were "bad" girls. Yet, they knew that in the eyes of their parents they would be seen as disobedient or "immoral" and thereby "un-indian."

Defining South Asian femininity as synonymous with the restrictions around self-determination that I have spoken about leaves very little room for a self-definition of South Asian that describes the reality of the young women's lived experiences. I found that young women were able to negotiate their freedom and sexual reputations through the use of clothing. Lying, in this case, takes the form of masking and manipulating femininity. Salimah describes her relationship to clothing in the following passage:
They [parents] don’t mind me wearing normal clothes and everything. The only thing they don’t like is ripped jeans anything that is tight. I’m not allowed to wear shorts, all that kind of stuff. One story it was in the summer, i was in shorts and all of a sudden i see my dad at the end of the driveway and i started waving to my dad [instinctively] and he started driving by and so i jumped into a bush and i changed and my friend’s just watching me and watching my dad driving by and i changed in the bush, in the mud and everything and i got up and she said, "ahh, he’s gone", and i’m like, "oh shit, oh well".[laughter].

The regulation of women’s bodies through social sanctions and controls, such as the bodily controls that Roman speaks about has been documented in both sociological as well as anthropological research (Ardener, 1978; Ortner and Whitehead, 1981; Schur, 1984; Smart and Smart, 1978). Feminist scholars have also illustrated that women who challenge the norms of appropriate feminine behaviour are often open to social disapproval through the "sexualization" of their behaviour. For example, researcher L.S. Smith (1978) has argued that girls who transgress the norms of femininity through delinquent behaviour are portrayed by adults in the legal system as sexually promiscuous.

In a study of working-class girls in England, Susan Lees (1986) has shown that girls walk a tight rope in order to negotiate their reputations. In her study of "good" girls and "bad" girls (slags and drags), she argues that girls negotiate their femininity through clothing. Lees shows that good girls must negotiate the next to impossible line between adhering to the ideals of beauty and attractiveness without appearing "too sexual." In my study I found that the sexualization (and thereby regulation) of women’s behaviour is accomplished through
arguments about cultural preservation. For example, in an interview with two sisters, Tina and Pam, we talked at length about their parents and the issue of freedom. They described their parents as less strict than most. They explained that because their parents were separated they had more access to freedom than most South Asian girls. They lived with their mother who was "more reasonable" and "tolerant." In talking about sexual reputations, they pointed to how "dress" conveys certain meanings around modern and traditional, good and bad girls. The following excerpt reveals some of the contradictory discourses that position young South Asian women:

T: Well ok you have your modern indian girl and the traditional... Okay if you see like the traditional indian girl, they're more like okay study well, do what your parents say, and there's lots of them. I'm talking the traditional indian girl.

P: Okay there's this girl..we went to square one day, i saw her walking into the mall with her father, plain face okay? When we saw her in the mall later on, she left her father and she was wearing bright red lipstick and make up and everything and i bet she like washes her face by the time she goes and sees her dad again and goes home like nothing happened. And i see this girl go to dances and...

T: ahh, she's pretty ahh promiscuous.

The sisters point to how girls manipulate their femininity through fashion in order to suit the dictates of a particular context. For the young girl in the description, the mall represents a public space where she negotiates contradictory codes of femininity. The change of dress represents an active change in the codes of femininity in order to comply to the various discourses around adolescent girlhood. In this context
she may be observed by school peers. Her femininity is something she accentuates through make-up in order to conform to western codes of femininity which emphasize certain ideals around beauty and attractiveness. At the same time, the presence of her father indicates the presence of another code, that of modesty and chastity. According to this code, her femininity must be presented in a way that does not accentuate her sexuality. This account is similar to Salimah's description of changing clothes in the bushes. The fear around "getting caught" by her father translates into getting caught for wearing clothes that transgress the boundaries of appropriate femininity. The trouble is, of course, that "appropriate" femininity is defined differently in "other" social spaces to which young South Asian women like Salimah also wish to belong.

I would like to continue on this issue of sexual reputation, dress and behaviour by providing more of the interview transcript with Tina and Pam:

T: and i don't even have respect for girls who do that [wear something provocative] especially being indian because being indian you're not suppose to do that. Like my dad right, he doesn't say anything, he doesn't say much about anything but with clothes and stuff if he really doesn't like what we're wearing he'll be like you know, "why are you wearing that, take it off. You know you're not suppose to wear things like that."

I: like do you sometimes feel embarrassed wearing certain things in front of your dad.

T: yeah, i don't, yeah, we change later that's what we do.

[later in the interview...]:

T: well not every, like okay indian, indian values for
a girl ok, not boys, boys can do whatever they want right? But the girls, the girls first of all they have to dress properly, second of all they have to speak properly, they have to do well in school.

I: what is dressing properly?

T: respectfully, conservatively like not totally, completely wild or anything like that and

P: and you know they have to act, it's also the way they act and keep their reputation good and I think it's important for a girl because when time comes for her to get married, then you know she has to have a good name.

The above examples show how the two sisters negotiate the good/bad girl framework through masking parts of their own identity. The contradictions inherent in attempting to negotiate two sets of expectations around femininity can be seen in the discrepancy between their own behaviour and the judgement they place on other girls for the very same behaviour. They describe the woman in the mall as someone who is promiscuous because, in addition to wearing make-up, she also visits forbidden public spaces, such as dances. They tie in their discussion about proper feminine behaviour with a comment about cultural boundaries: "being indian, you're not supposed to do that." Later on in the interview they reveal the double standard between permissible feminine and masculine behaviour. They too, however, admit to changing their clothes for their father. The traditional/typical indian woman they define as studious, compliant, respectful and conservative. Their association to the typical/traditional while including them within the category of "good" and "respectable," excludes them from expected "adolescent" behaviour: rebellious
and defiant. Several times during the interview, they made it a point to emphasize that they were not "your typical Indian girl." In their emphasis, they sought to differentiate themselves from the stereotypical representations of "Indian" womanhood.

Several other important themes emerge in their conversation. Firstly, we see that being a "good" South Asian girl has to do with dressing properly. Secondly, we see that dressing properly has to do with managing "sexuality." The sisters and the mall woman both negotiate and blur the line between good girls and bad girls and resist the definition of the "typical Indian" girl in their day-to-day practices. And thirdly, from their conversation, we see that managing sexuality is central to marriage marketability.

Sexuality has been central in the discourses around adolescence. This aspect of adolescent development has emerged as a means of protecting the institutions of heterosexuality, marriage and the family. Christine Griffin argues that medical and psychological discourses reflect the uniquely sexualized nature of adolescence as a construct. She maintains that historical analyses demonstrate that sexuality has been established as "a social institution in which heterosexuality was defined as normal, compulsory and a mark of maturity, resting on the representation of femininity and masculinity as complimentary opposites" (Griffin, 1993, p. 160). From the excerpts above we can see how notions of sexuality are tied into concerns about securing heterosexual relationships. Reputations affect future
access to the institution of marriage. South Asian girls who do not conform to these regulations are not only open to "sexualization" in the sense that L.S. Smith (1978) describes, but are also seen as walking outside the definition of "South Asian." The discourse of the good "South Asian" girl is, of course, similar to most prescriptive discourses about "good girls" -- listening to your parents and doing well in school -- yet part of the message here about feminine regulation is hidden under a message of cultural preservation. In some cases young women saw the institution of marriage as an escape from parental regulation. Aarti, when asked what advice she would give to South Asian girls about how to deal with the lack of freedom in their lives, said the following:

For all the experiences that i have been through for being sixteen... the one thing i can say is that, and this is truthfully, i really think that either if you have the guts and if you had everything set up for you I would run away...i would never run away to the streets or anything but like if you have another home to go to or so forth or plan to get married.

Interestingly enough, in an interview a year later, Aarti confided that due to pressure to get married to a boy she had originally liked but then began to dislike, she ran away from home a week before the wedding. She explained to me that her prospective husband was pressuring her to give up her hobby as a modern dancer after marriage. The events in her own life led her to question the idea of marriage as an escape from parental control.
Discussion and Conclusion

Thus far I have shown how gender is mobilized as an ethnic marker. Notions of womanhood and femininity are enmeshed in discourses of culture and cultural difference. From my interviews with young South Asian women in Toronto, I conclude that the inclusion into the community of "South Asian" depends on girls conducting themselves according to certain codes of femininity. Following these codes makes one an "authentic" member of the collective, while transgressing them nullifies this membership. Parental discourses of authority with respect to young South Asian women are "culturalized." The regulation of young women’s everyday lives are justified in terms of the need to protect "cultural" difference. The message that seems to circumscribe their experiences is that "good" girls are South Asian and South Asian girls conform to the dictates of parents and community about behaviour, dress and sexual morality.

What is less obvious, however, is that cultural preservation is a gendered construction and that women are positioned as the protectors and guardians of "culture." Negotiating the "sexual"/"asexual" dichotomy, then, becomes about negotiating "cultures"; difference is used as a means of ensuring normative standards around sexual behaviour. References to "whiteness" operate as a means to maintain boundaries of appropriate South Asian femininity. I have looked at some of the discourses around sexuality, cultural difference and authenticity in order to contextualize Pandoori’s (Punjabi community leader and head of
the Malton Gurdwara) references to young women, dances and rebellion. It is because young women's sexualities come to mark the difference between East and West that their participation in the public space of dances has been viewed as a defiance to, and rejection of, South Asian identity. This assumed defiance threatens to erode the boundaries of cultural preservation and accordingly the preservation of the "community" itself.

Diasporic communities operate in much the same way as a nation state in that they too articulate and maintain a sense of boundaries. In diaspora, women continue to represent boundaries of cultural difference. South Asian women are enmeshed in discourses that present modernity as a threat of erosion to "authentic" cultural practices. They have become the symbol and test of the tensions between modernity and tradition. Women's sexualities continue to constitute the terrain upon which the battle between East and West is contested, in which colonial discourses of women as tradition and culture and representations of East and West are forged.

In Chapter Five I showed how, in the colonial period, nationalist discourses used certain symbols of women in order to distinguish an "Indian" identity from a British, western one. Partha Chatterjee argues that nationalist representations of womanhood prioritized certain codes of femininity over others. He claims that colonial discourses about identity asserted that there was an essential identity of the East, and that it could be found in the "distinctive, superior spiritual" culture and that
women came to represent these qualities. I have shown that similar to the colonial discourses that constructed a particular narrative around the identity of the Indian nation state, the South Asian diaspora relies on notions of femininity to construct its identity as an ethnic collective. The representation of white women as "sexually loose" can be contrasted to discourses of South Asian women as self-sacrificing, chaste and pure. Colonial notions of South Asian femininity, characterized by chastity, domesticity and docility persist as a standard of measure that actually defines the boundaries of what it means to be South Asian. While Chatterjee argues that nationalist discourses during the colonial period sought to mark a distinction between modernization and westernization, in the diasporic context forging this distinction is less consequential. Modernization within the West is in essence westernization. Within the diasporic context, then, the need to protect women from the "modern/western" is heightened because of the proximity to the "modern/western." The modern/West is not just a theoretical threat or a relationship that comes out of global international economic and political ties. For the "South Asian community," residing in the lap of the West brings new dimensions to the fears associated with modern change.

Resolving angst about modern change in the West has been partially accomplished by prolonging the period of "youthhood." So long as the individual ultimately grows into the "responsible citizen," preparing for the tasks of adulthood allows for a
period of uncertainty and rebelliousness. Defiance of adulthood is manifested for youth in terms of challenging and defying authority. For young women this takes place on the sexual terrain: manipulating their femininities and transgressing expected codes of behaviour. In its narrative of womanhood, the South Asian community draws on Indian nationalist constructions of femininity which are in direct opposition to discourses around teens in the West. While young white girls may defy social norms around "growing up" through dress and "sexual deviance," for young South Asian girls rebellion against the "responsible adult-citizen" narrative is also seen as a defiance of cultural identity and a disloyalty to ethnic membership.

Women's bodies, where they move, how they are adorned and what they consume are indicators of sexual reputation. I have also shown in earlier chapters that in colonial discourses, spiritual representations of women resolved the sexual threat of modernity by desexualizing femininity. According to this spiritual construction, women are to be void of sexual desire and pleasure. The desexualization of South Asian women in the Canadian context not only serves as an (internal) mechanism to diminish the threat of modernity, but also (externally) as a vehicle by which the "desire" of white women is kept central. In this sense "desexualization" intersects with discourses and representations of the "non-white ethnic" woman as undesirable, asexual and passive. South Asian as "pure" and "chaste" translates into an "asexual" notion of sexuality in the context
of white dominant culture and helps to maintain the boundaries around a particular notion of white womanhood. White/Canadian/Western emerges as a more superior modern and liberated identity for women.

South Asian girls in Canada have to negotiate contradictory messages about their sexuality. On the one hand, they "get slack" because they are "modernized;" not being "typical" makes them open to assumptions about their sexual availability. On the other hand, being South Asian in Canada automatically sets them up as sexually unavailable in relation to dominant white culture. According to the latter, the "typical" South Asian girl is a patriarchal construction of docility and passivity. Her subjectivity is depersonalized and disregarded by a discursive construction that locates her as a victim within a cultural problematic only. The dynamic of gender becomes invisible behind this discourse of "culture."

In this chapter I have explored how diasporic narratives of "South Asian-ness" rely on certain notions of women, culture and tradition. While these narratives regulate and limit the lives of young South Asian women, I would like to place them within the wider context of Canadian racism. I would argue that an allegiance to certain authentic notions of "tradition" and culture are also a means by which to articulate a standpoint against a racist and assimilationist white Canadian society. In this sense diaspora is a complex and overlapping space: it disrupts some normative categories while simultaneously
reproducing others. In the context of negative or absent representations, notions of South Asian cultural authenticity also serve as a powerful site of resistance. The discourse of "South Asian-ness" I have discussed here must be seen within the context of its intersections with discourses of race, multiculturalism, difference and inequality. As Jasbir Paur writes:

The list of calls of authenticity, depending upon situational and discursive social space, is endless and specifically impacted by competing relational white/black, East/West, traditional/modern discourses embedded in second-generation constructions....Hence, I am not allowed to say or represent anything against my culture, because doing so implies internalized racism; I am not allowed to say anything in support of it, because doing so signals, in the context of western supremacy, that I am deluding myself, that I am subjugated and oppressed by my heritage (Paur, 1994b, p.85).

Paur reminds us of the gap of omission that second generation South Asian women struggle to negotiate and make visible in their articulation of self.

In the last two chapters I have explored the various ways in which young South Asian women are positioned, constructed and represented (externally) through discourses of race, nation, culture and community. In the next chapter I will look at the terrain of popular culture in order to explore the ways in which second generation youth are constructing their own meaning of "culture" and identity. I examine whether these expressions are able to escape dominant narratives of gender, ethnicity, nation and culture.
1. For example some women had access to older siblings whom they could go out with or would "cover" for them, while other women had neither a supportive sibling nor access to friends or relatives whom they could rely on as a network of support or as a means of access to a public space, such as a dance or club.

2. While Mr. Pandoori is one voice within the South Asian community his perspective is representative of the conservative element within the South Asian community. He is also an influential leader within the Punjabi community, especially among Peel community residents.

3. While diasporic communities operate in similar ways to the "nation-state" there are of course important differences. The latter has access to significant resources, such as institutions of law, education, enforcement agencies (police and military), while diasporic communities have relatively very little beyond "identities" and "cultural" markers.

4. I will be exploring further the complexity of narratives of South Asian-ness in relation to the context of racism in the concluding chapter of this thesis.
Chapter Eight: A-Patch of "Indian": Music, Fashion and Dances

Stuart Hall argues that the early stages of political theorizing and writing in terms of ethnic/cultural difference came in the form of a "singular and unifying framework" as a means of articulating a resistance to a "predominantly white aesthetic" (Hall, 1992, p.252). The second moment, which Hall claims we are currently in the process of articulating, represents a shift away from this unifying framework (of "us" and "them") to an acknowledgement of the multiplicity of subject positions, experiences and "ethnic" identities. This diversity allows for the possibility of acknowledging the intersections between race, gender, class and sexuality. Hall refers to this trend as a new politics of representation which "has to do with an awareness of the black experience as a diaspora experience, and the consequences which this carries for the process of unsettling, recombination, hybridization and 'cut-and-mix..." (Hall, 1992, p.259). Hall calls this formation "new ethnicities."

In this chapter I explore the emerging popular cultural forms of South Asian music and style. I argue that this terrain of popular culture represents both the possibility of articulating a "new ethnicity" in Halls's sense of the term, as well as a limitation: possibility, because the terrain of popular culture grants women the prospect of negotiating subject positions that assert their racial identity and resist colonial notions of "tradition" and "culture"; limitation, because this
terrain is problematic for its reproduction of universalistic notions of community. While the eruption of South Asian music in the West has helped to create a brown signifier for second generation youth, this signifier tends to fall within a unifying framework because it remains a predominantly Punjabi, Sikh or Hindi/Hindu one. I argue that while this music provides a space of resistance it also reproduces nationalist notions of identity and obscures the dynamics of gender.

Several scholars have attempted to de-mythologize the homogeneity associated with South Asian diaspora (Dhaliwal, 1994; Grewal, 1994; Paur, 1994b). For example, Jasbir Paur argues that in order to resist hegemonic notions of diasporic identity, we must pay attention to "class positionings, immigration histories, nation-state formations, nationalisms, and racisms [all of which] enable and disable different configurations of home, of belonging of being" (Paur, 1994b, p.97). Inderpal Grewal reminds us that diaspora exists in the space between there and here and must be conceptualized in relation to transnational class interests and global restructuring (Grewal, 1994). She argues that ties to back home are also about elite investments, interests and alliances. And finally, Amarpal K. Dhaliwal argues that while diaspora works to subvert hegemonic notions of "nation" it does not "automatically" or always do so (Dhaliwal, 1994, p.17). In the South Asian case, Dhaliwal argues that "South Asian diaspora constitute[s] diaspora in nationalist terms by privileging India as nation" and a Hindu notion of India, at that (Dhaliwal, 1994,
p.18). In this chapter I will use Bhangra dances and popular culture as a means to explore some of the connections that Grewal, Dhaliwal and Paur speak about.

Looking for identity

Hall (1992) argues that living in diaspora means both a constant reference to "back home," as well as a contestation over national identity. In the context of this discussion, contestation articulates itself in the constant query over what it means to be Canadian. For second generation immigrants the problematic of "Canadian" is often manifested in an overlapping between inclusion and exclusion in the community and definition of Canadian. I, for example, while having for the most part "grown up" in Canada, have never relinquished my "Indian" citizenship. India does not recognize dual citizenship. Not exercising my right to Canadian citizenship in some ways has grown out of not being included in the "image" of the community of Canadians. I was never assumed to be Canadian and I never felt Canadian (whatever I imagined that would be). Similarly, Chandra Mohanty explains her contradictory relationship to "home" in her refusal to relinquish her Indian passport. This refusal has opened up questions and reflections about "home" and belonging:

What is home? The place where I was born? Where I grew up? Where my parents live? Where I live and work as an adult? Where I locate my community - my people? Who are "my people"? Is home a geographical space, an historical space, and emotional, sensory space (Mohanty, 1994, p.352)?
On the issue of an "Indian" identity, Mohanty writes, "Obviously I was not South Asian in India - I was Indian. What else could one be but 'Indian' at a time when a successful national independence struggle had given birth to a socialist democratic nation-state" (Mohanty, 1994, p.352). She explains that her succession of labels have included "Indian," "foreign student," "student of colour," "resident alien" and "expatriot Indian citizen" (Mohanty, 1994).

In the past few years, unravelling the concept of "home" and problematizing my association to "back home," has made me rethink my connection to "Canadian." Part of this has come out of visits to India where a glorified notion of home and community has been supplanted with the reality of disturbing class disparities and an increasing Hindu fundamentalism. Added to this social and political awareness has been the personal experience of disconnection as an "outsider," a foreign-born ex-patriot "indian" living in Canada. At the same time, acknowledging my diasporic location has opened up the possibility of the right to claim a Canadian identity.

As I have previously alluded to, the East-West battle over cultural difference is manifested and (re-)produced in the Canadian-Indian dichotomy. For second generation South Asians living in Canada, this binary is emblematic of a series of misnomers. Mohanty, as a first-generation migrant to the United States, writes that in relation to the "home question," she is still unsatisfied with her own response (Mohanty, 1994, p.352).
For second generation South Asians, even more so than their fore-
migrants who can claim an identity based on at least some notion 
of birth-right and "nationality" coinciding with geographical 
location, the question of naming is onerous. The difficulty of 
identification is even more arduous for those whose route may 
have begun from the subcontinent (in generations past) but whose 
contemporary migratory route to North America is via Africa or 
the Caribbean. Neither Canadian nor South Asian adequately 
describes our identity. In the following conversation, Nisha 
_attempts to explore her association to "Canadian:"

I: Back to the identity. So if someone asked, "what are 
you?" What would you say?

N: I'd say i'm Ismaili Muslim. I wouldn't be ashamed to 
say it, like a lot of people think i'm Spanish, 
Portuguese or something. They look at me and don't know 
what i am. But i tell them, i go yeah, i'm Ismaili 
Muslim and they ask me where i'm from [and] i say East 
Africa. Like i'm not ashamed to say it, like not at 
all.

I: Do you see yourself as Canadian, Ismaili Muslim, 
East African?

N: If someone said where you are from i'd say East 
Africa. I wouldn't say Canada. Even though i'm born 
here i'd say East Africa cause that's like where we're 
from and if they asked the religion i'd say Ismaili.

I: So would you under any circumstances call yourself 
Canadian or do you feel that doesn't really describe 
who or what you are?

N: I don't. I think if i was like in india or 
something. Like when i was in india i said, "yeah, i'm 
Canadian." But if i'm here i wouldn't say yeah i'm 
Canadian cause to me like everybody's Canadian but like 
there's different parts of being a Canadian. Like i'm a 
Canadian but i'm from East Africa. That wouldn't help 
them much. Like when i went to india, about a month
ago, people would ask, "where you from?" And i'd say, "yeah i'm from Canada, i'm Canadian," and that would help them more see who i am.

Nisha in some ways reverses Mohanty's problematic of naming. Similar to Mohanty's claims about the contextualization of identity, Nisha shows that "being Canadian" is a relational notion. Because it is a "raced" category, being Canadian for her only makes sense outside of Canada, in much the same way that being South Asian for Mohanty makes sense only outside of India. Nisha points to the complexity of her identification. The term Canadian does not reflect "the different parts" of who she takes herself to be. Its definition is not inclusive of "Ismaili Muslim East-African." There is a recognition of her "difference" and the need to be specific about her "Canadian" identity, and she explains that "Canadian" only has a sense of meaning for her as a form of self-identification when she is in a context like India.

While "Canadian" is constantly contested for second generation South Asian youth, so is "indian." The following excerpt comes out of a discussion with Rupinder around the definition "indian." While she does not relinquish her "indian" identity altogether, her attempt to hold on to it creates contradictory subject positions:

R: Well when i answer this question i might be contradicting myself but it's just, well being indian i guess it just goes back to what i said about how your parents bring you up. And if you go by their beliefs or rules...like i believe in a lot of things that my parents say but i don't, like you've got to compromise. Like being indian is, see it's hard to explain, like being traditional but not being too traditional like you've got to bend your back sometimes. You've got to know who you are but where you're living.
I: So what do you mean by traditional?

R: Well, being religious. But not to the point like.... being traditional. Knowing what your roots are i guess and where you’re from and being able to do your paht [prayers] and your prayers and just knowing your customs and knowing your mother tongue too. Cause if you’re talking to your aunts and uncles they’re going to think you’re stupid you know. Is that deep enough?

I: Just say someone came to you who didn’t know Punjabi or Hindi and wasn’t religious but still said they were indian what would you say to that?

R: I’d say yah you’re indian cause i guess your skin colour. But no one, even if you’re in India, i don’t think anyone is a pure indian, indian, indian, you know what i mean? Again it just goes back to, yeah, i’d say you’re indian but i guess i’d consider them obviously first generation...And just how much you’re influenced by western society that makes you....I’d still consider them indian. Being indian isn’t all just being religious, you know what i mean, cause i consider myself a religious person but i don’t show it. Like i’m not going to try to prove something just to make my point like if i know i am, i am. And if i do what i’m suppose to be doing the way i was taught to do it, then i know i’m doing it and i guess it’s just for me to know.

Rupinder moves from a definition of "indian" that equates it with "tradition," to a sense of tradition that acknowledges her diasporic location, to a definition rooted in the knowledge of language and observance of religious rituals to, in the final instance, where she takes herself to be the autonomous subject who fashions her "indian" identity. She positions herself as traditional but then quickly realizes that her cultural practices are different from those of her parents, her parents’ setting the standard for what "indian," religious and "traditional" mean. Earlier in the interview, for example, Rupinder explained that she was religious but not a vegetarian like her mother. She then
retracts the statement that equates traditionalism with religion. Her dilemma becomes one of identifying herself as "indian," equating this identity with tradition and then realizing that she falls outside of the very definition that she has created.

The contradictions here in part reflect the inadequacy of binary categories in accounting for her subject position. Rupinder ends up negotiating in and between them in order to locate a different notion of tradition, modern and "indian."

In Chapter Six I argued that the kind of femininity that has come to represent ethnic identity in the South Asian context leaves very little room for a self identity that adequately describes the complex reality for young women living in Canada. Notions of womanhood are enmeshed in a discourse of cultural difference that defines culture as fixed and unchanging.

According to this construction, change or modification in "normative" cultural practices precludes an allegiance to South Asian identity. Recently, many second generation South Asian youth have been challenging this notion of cultural authenticity through the production of music and dances. Expressions of popular culture produced by South Asians, especially in the U.K. and Toronto, have helped to negotiate a brown signifier in a Canadian and British context that is predominantly saturated with a white aesthetic. For example, in the following conversation both Tina and Pam explain the absence of brown in the public sphere:

I: How would you compare going to one of those [Bhangra] dances to a rock n' roll bar downtown?
P: Now if we were to go to a bar, we wouldn’t go to a white bar, ’cause we wouldn’t get noticed. See the problem is no matter what, we are brown ok. We do not fit in with white people....i don’t think i find myself comfortable in a bar, like a white bar instead of like a brown dance. I mean what’s the point in going to a club where you don’t know anybody and you feel like an outsider when you can go to a place where you walk in and people will say hi to you when you say hi to them and you enjoy yourself, you know like good friends you know.

In many ways the second generation diasporic population is invisible and unidentifiable in relation to existing definitional categories of Canadian. Their representational quest is about strategies of self-identification that account for the complexity, rather than homogeneity, of human identity. The terrain of popular culture is one place where the negotiation of specificity is taking place.

Music, Dance and Fashion

(Autobiographical Reflection)

The Dance. I remember in the early eighties, at age fifteen, planning for weeks. A whole series of obstacles to overcome. Working like bees buzzing on the telephone line, networking and planning. Chipping away. Convincing slowly, mothers and fathers to let us go. Some of us lie, euphemistically referring to a “birthday party.”

The night finally arrives. We go. (Some of our parents do not know where we have gone.) The dull surroundings are overcome by sparkling bits of anticipation. In the background plays the ‘then’ hit of Michael Jackson or disco and funk, (which now, fifteen years later, referred to as “old school,” is making a come-back). We take over an old basement of a recreational, school or community hall. Someone serves pop. Samosas and alcohol if we are lucky. The boys sit on one side of the room, the girls on the other. The room is full of us. All South Asian teenagers.

Except for the community hall and the music, in the mid-nineties, most of it seems the same. Crowded, loud tunes, and lots of young people hanging out. These days the venue is a double-storey club. And in the background is the now latest hit of Michael Jackson but with it you will hear the most recent Hindi-film sound track
mingled in. Punjabi folk, Hindi-film all mixed to the back beats of reggae or hip-hop, house, or r & b. The dance gesticulations, however, are different from the ones in the eighties. Young men climb the shoulders of others. Young women dance in bunches - swirling their arms and bodies like Hindi-film heroines.

I remember being in Ferozepur at age seven (1970). Sitting on the lap of an unfamiliar relative, dizzy. Watching my grandmother twirl with other grand aunts in a circle, arms in the air. My Mataji, the one with the most energy, dancing in the middle of the ring surrounded by the other women.

I see traces of what I saw twenty three years ago in a small town on the indo-pakistani border, in the movements of the young women in the big clubs of Toronto.

In the past five years, the reinvention of Bhangra music has hit the Canadian market with a tremendous magnitude. Music buffs and other cultural observers have now termed this phenomenon a Bhangra explosion. While "black" music, such as hip-hop and reggae, has recently captured the attention of cultural theorists, the emergence of Bhangra, to date, remains a relatively unexamined phenomenon, especially in Canada. The public visibility of Bhangra dances and music goes hand in hand with the public visibility of what some may refer to as a South Asian youth culture, its distinct fashion and style. This particular cultural production in some ways has mirrored the Bhangra explosion in England that began a decade ago and, as I demonstrated in the last chapter, has captured the attention of both the South Asian community and the white mainstream.

Leading the way of music into the mainstream has been Apache Indian, who in 1990 released his single, "Movie over India" and most recently, "Make Way for the Indian" (Island Records, 1995). While earlier U.K. groups, such as Alaap, Premi and Apna Sangeet
consisted of first generation migrants singing about displacement and alienation, the collection of music in Toronto, dominated by disc jockeys and the art of remixing rather than an ensemble of musicians, conveys a message about placement. Their dj names, for instance Asian Empire, Asian Boyz Club, and DJ Guru, suggest an in-your-face racial presence. Cassette and CD titles sometimes reference the sub-continent, as in Bollywood or Bombay Dance and include names like The Empire Strikes Back, Stardust: An Asian Scandal, Judgement Night and One Nation equals Justice. If you look closely at the bottom of one of these cassettes you just might find the emblem 'Made in Brameladesh' (as in Brameleal). In reference to regions of greater Metropolitan Toronto, in the context of this generation you may also hear an occasional Brownton for Brampton and Singhdale for Springdale. Along with the music has also come what some have referred to as "gangs:" PM (Punjabi mafia), PWA (Pakis with attitude) and Khanda Queens.

The music, like the generation, is not easily classifiable. Not "pure" anything -- not quite "black" nor "white" nor "brown." Bhangra has recently incorporated the influence by black musical sounds and at times mimics its trademark -- MC Hammer becomes MC Rootz and Naughty by Nature recasts itself as Punjabi by Nature. This fusion has also included western pop, jazz, house music, rap and r&b.

A subtext to this scene of music and fashion is, of course, a valiant celebration of racial identity. Most young South Asians have participated in this new fusion of music which speaks more
directly to their sensibility as "hybrid" than the music of their parents' generation. McRobbie (1994) views fusion as a testimony to "generational consciousness" inscribed in rewriting "the classics from the viewpoint of youth" (McRobbie, 1994, p.183). The musical form has captured the attention of South Asian community members, many of whose dislike of the fusion stems from a dislike of tampering with a notion of "authenticity." The trend in fusion focuses on the remixing of "classic" Hindi film and Punjabi folk songs.

Rather than viewing pop culture conventionally as an example of misdirected "masses" mechanically following popular trends, cultural theorists have explored popular cultural forms in terms of symbolic meaning, identity formation and representation. Paul Willis (1990) argues that symbolic work is not something specific to the "official" world of art alone but is part of the daily practice of all individuals who through signs and symbols "establish their presence, identity and meaning" (Willis, 1990, p. 1). Willis claims that young people as a group are most indicative of the dynamics of symbolic activity because it is at this age "where people are formed most self-consciously through their own symbolic and other activities . . . It is also the stage where people begin to construct themselves through nuance and complexity, through difference as well as similarity" (Willis, 1990, p.8).

I differ slightly with Willis in that I feel individuals continue to self-consciously construct themselves symbolically
throughout their life cycle. The difference in age, however, becomes important in terms of the symbolic resources and materials available during different stages of the life span. To take up different subject positions as workers, mothers or activists, we draw on the different symbols associated with these roles. Also important are ideological discourses pertaining to these various subject positions. "Youth," and especially young women, are positioned as vulnerable and in need of protection by adults. Their access and use of symbols therefore is within this context of adult supervision and surveillance.

Willis argues that the use of symbols for minority youth is not only employed to establish a sense of individuality but also to assert a racial identity. Pulling on their own cultural resources and histories is "a source of much pride to most of them and one fundamental means through which they explore what distinguishes them from white youth. This is necessary not only for the development of their own identities, but also necessary as an affirmation and assertion against present racism" (Willis, 1990, p.8). As I have shown in earlier chapters, racism operates through messages that say "being real Canadian is being white."

Fashion style, along with music, has become an important marker of identity for South Asian youth. In the following portion of transcript, Salimah explains the complexity of negotiating between African and South Asian "ethnic" symbols:

S: Well i've noticed that indian guys, most of them dress hip-hoppy. They all wear hats, a lot of them have go-tees. And a lot of them, all the Sikhs, all wear karas, like silver bracelets and most of the Hindus
will wear something around their necks. Like they want people to know this is who i am. Or Muslims like me, wear the allah sign, but i've been wearing this since i was a kid though. Or they will wear like things drawn on their jackets. Like there's one guy who has Pure Punjab written on the back of his jacket. Like a lot of indians do do that just to identify them especially in the indian crowd they want people to know i am indian, you know, that i'm not, you know.

I: What about the girls?

S: The girls, most of the girls dress, like the younger ones dress a certain style, like wide pants and nice suede jackets or plaid jackets, and nose rings. They all have nose rings, to let people know they're indian. But most of the indian girls wear clubby kind of stuff, they're just dressing cliquey or houser kind of.

There is fusion here between urban African-Canadian themes and South Asian ones. Salimah reveals how religious symbols help to mark out ethnic identity. For young women, nose piercing is a way of calling attention to their ethnic/racial identity. While it has also been associated with the (white) punk rock movement, the nose ring for South Asian women in a western context indicates a link to South Asian heritage. With respect to the latter, it is also about a gendered performance of ethnicity in a white racist context. In my own life time I have witnessed changes in the symbolism of the nose ring. In the Punjabi language it is referred to as koka, nath or long and I first remember it on the face of my grandmother. For my mother's generation of middle-class educated Punjabi women, the nose ring represents a "backward" (un-modern) practice. Growing up in the midst of the dawn of modern India meant that a modern woman should not wear one. The absence of this accessory helped to distinguish a (middle-class, educated) modern femininity from a
traditional one. When I began to wear one it was the focus of much angst on the part of my mother. To her it was an act of rebellion. For me it was an act of (cultural) assertion. A way of marking difference in the Canadian context that acknowledged and reclaimed to myself and others the idea that being different from "white" was not necessarily a negative classification.

The terrain of fashion and appearance for South Asian girls is a contested one because it oscillates between multiple meanings and contexts. For example, in the following passage, Parminder describes the difficulty in negotiating her own identity:

...he (father) said well are you going to come home with me or stay at the dance? And at that time i had the khanda on my jacket [khanda is the symbol of the Sikhs] and he told me to take it off, you know. But i can’t take it off because it doesn’t come off. But you know i’m proud to be a Sikh but there’s other things like as you can see my bangs are cut. But you know religion is something totally different than your nationality. Like my father was saying that Sikhism is more religious and that a true Sikh you know they pray and their lifestyle is much more different. You know Punjabi should be more appropriate because that’s what you are, you know, Punjabi not Sikh, like i guess Christians and Catholics, which is true. But you know i’m proud to be indian and everything but to me what i do, because i cut my hair and you know i have a nose ring it doesn’t mean that i’m trying to put my religion down. But it does seem like i am. It just means that that’s the way i feel comfortable. And its not because you know other kids are teasing me. You know in junior high a lot of kids have teased me about "your hair," oh you know "your hair is so long, chop it off." You know sometimes i felt bad but then other times i thought oh they’re just jealous. And now a days i get a lot of compliments and stuff [about my hair].

While in the last chapter I spoke about bodily adornments as a feature of the regulation of (gendered) ethnicity, here I would
like to explore the use of the body as an articulation of "ethnic" self-identification. At the same time, women's bodies become a site of contestation between different "cultural" codes. From the above portion of transcript we are able to see how the wearing of the khanda places Parminder in the midst of a struggle over meaning. In the eyes of her father, the khanda is a religious text alone and is not meant for public display in a context that is non-religious. His argument rests on a notion of authenticity and essential meaning. Placing the khanda symbol on a jacket transgresses a religious boundary. Here the struggle is between her father's context and the context of a society which is composed of predominantly white Christian symbols. In relation to the latter, wearing the "khanda" emphasizes difference from white dominant culture and is a prideful assertion of Punjabi Sikh identity. Parminder articulates her own meanings and subject position as she negotiates between a white context and says, "I am proud" and another where she says "just because I apply this symbol in a non-religious context does not mean I am not respectful of where it comes from."

Parminder also explains that cutting her bangs is not a result of shame. While in the past she was teased about her long hair (long hair being one of the tenets of Sikh tradition), she now chooses to modify her hair in a way that mixes religious representation with her own brand of femininity. Parminder's text also indicates the contradictions and contestation between religious and "ethnic" identities. While the two are almost
inseparable in the instance of Sikh identity (there are few examples of non-Punjabi Sikhs except for the denomination of white Sikhs in parts of North America), she attempts to forge a distinction between her ethnic and religious identities. She explores the idea of a non-religious identity that does not, in her mind, foreclose her affiliation to "Punjabi."

South Asian dances, like fashion, also serve as a means of asserting racial identity and claiming cultural space. In the following excerpt, Salimah describes the pleasure of dancing to South Asian music:

S: I have so much fun dancing to Bhangra. I can’t even explain this one feeling inside that you’re dancing and nobody else understands what you are saying...it’s just this feeling of pride. Its just the same I guess for Jamaican people when they hear reggae. Bhangra, I just cannot get enough of it. I love dancing to it...I mean in English it’s fine and everything but when you hear an Indian song its just like yeah I want to get down to it and Bhangra just makes you do it, i mean you just go crazy to it.

Part of the feeling of pride comes from the act of exclusion, which in the context of white dominant culture says, "this is something you can’t understand." The reversal of exclusion provides a sense of power. Thus this space is not about segregation alone, but also an act of celebration, a moment of "cultural" self-identification, a marking out of our social territory.

Similarly, In the following quotation, Aarti explains why she likes Bhangra music:

Yeah, you can relate to it better. I mean i call myself a freak child sometimes because i’m extra-ordinary indian than i am any other way. I mean i love indian
music, Indian movies and I know everything, you know the stars and everything. I follow Indian movies I don't follow English movies so I'm really, really Indian. For me to hear that [kind of music] relates to me more than me hearing Western music because I wouldn't know the difference from the next one so I can relate to Indian music more (laughter).

Aarti shows her reference point to be "brown" rather than "white." She reverses the stereotype of ethnic difference that treats non-white ethnicity as homogeneous. For her it is "white" (music) that seems all the same. She places her affiliation to Bhangra music in a wider context of South Asian signifiers, which to her largely consists of "Indian" pop icons. The authenticity of her "Indian" identity rests on the consumption of popular culture. She argues that listening to "Indian" music and movies makes her more "Indian."

The dances, I found, were an act of "marking out" space. The young women's taking up of space, which they saw as act of empowerment, was directly related to the issue of racial exclusion. Tina explained that one feels "very comfortable and very like popular and powerful" as one of the reasons for liking Bhangra dances. Part of what makes the "brown" spaces more desirable are their contrast to "white" spaces which many of the young women experienced as unfamiliar and uncomfortable. The level of comfort is seen as contingent upon knowing people and feeling accepted. It is the context of white dominant culture and these girls' exclusion from it that makes "brown" dances a relatively more comfortable space. I am using the word "relatively" quite deliberately here because "brown" spaces were
also fraught with tension, at times, for these young girls.

**Reproduction of Homogeneous Identity**

Much of what I have described in terms of the eruption of "Bhangra" music and dance evokes the sentiment of (racialized) celebration and assertion. In this sense it seems like Stuart Hall’s first moment of political consciousness in that it can obviously be read as a reaction to a predominantly white aesthetic. It can also be understood, however, as Hall’s second moment of political consciousness in that it seemingly breaks with a homogeneous reading of South Asian identity. It calls attention to the diversity of subject positions, thereby accounting for diasporic locations which reflect the "cut’n’mix": mixing in "back home" references while simultaneously challenging Canadian national identity by drawing on western popular music and African-Canadian "traditions." Its mere public visibility as well as its unsettling of stereotypical representations of "South Asian-ness," by incorporating "Canadian" sensibilities, challenges both the definition of "Canadian" and South Asian.

Using Hall’s notion of "new ethnicity," Ali Rattansi refers to the music of Apache Indian as an illustration of post-modern rap. He argues that Apache Indian breaks essentialist notions of (South Asian) identity by pulling on African diasporic sounds and by challenging the cultural practices of his own community. Rattansi substantiates his claims by referencing three songs:

- in songs like ‘Arranged Marriage,’ ‘Sharabi’ (alcoholic) and ‘Caste System’ [Apache Indian] challenges cultural practices among the British South Asian communities which subordinate women, valorize
hard-drinking and displays of masculinity, and reinforce boundaries of caste, class and ethnicity (Rattansi, Ali, 1994, p.77).

In many ways Apache Indian has all the trappings of a post-modern rapper. He combines Punjabi, Patwah and English and sings to a reggae back-beat which sometimes merges, briefly, with a segment of "indian" classical tabla (drums), or the Punjabi dhol (drum). He positions himself as an "educator" (in "Come Follow Me") and his songs often start with a revelatory beckoning to an audience that is often multiple: South Asian youth or community members, white or black depending on the content of the message. He is one of the few South Asian artists who refers to marginalized segments of the South Asian community -- such as the Sri Lankan population ("Tamil Posse" in the song "No Problem") -- as well as to a representation that is inclusive of all the religious groups that comprise the diaspora. His songs often begin with a salutation in the various languages to the Sikh, Hindu and Muslim communities. Apache Indian also touches on issues that are often publically ignored. In "Aids Warning," he addresses young South Asian men in a message that advocates "safe sex" (and monogamy) rather than the usual rhetoric of abstinence. In "Drink Problems" he makes direct correlations between male alcoholism, the neglect of family responsibilities and the mistreatment of women.

In "Arranged Marriage," a plea for an understanding of this tradition, Apache Indian summons his audience (presumably a non-Asian one) to learn about the workings of an arranged union. While it is true that he attempts to break stereotypical
representations by enlightening his audience about the process of arranged marriage, he also reproduces certain normative notions of womanhood. He plays into archetypal female images in his desire and search for the perfect female. She amounts to a woman who is pretty, like a "princess" (Verse 2), knows "Punjabi," has the "right figure," is adorned with "indian" eye-liner and who is wearing "traditional" Punjabi dress (Verse 3). This perfect woman will also serve him (Verse 4), look after him and make him roti (Verse 5).

"Bhangra," the music and the dances, constitute a cultural production and space that is male dominated. In this sense the youth culture that surrounds it remains largely reflective of a male/masculine aesthetic. Pragna Patel argues that:

> youth activity generates a culture which appears autonomous from the rest of the community. Yet, as the experiences of women indicate, that culture is a mirror reflection of values sanctioned in the family and the community at large (Southall Black Sisters, 1990, as cited in Gita Sahgal, 1992, p.180).

The young women that I interviewed described the contradictory nature of this cultural space. While many of them like the music and dances for their inclusion of racial/cultural location, their sexualities continue to be monitored and regulated in this space. For example, Sarah explains that the dances constitute a space that she is afraid to be associated with:

S: I’m really scared. I’ve had so many chances and i have a ride home, a ride there but i would never do it.

I: What makes you scared of it?

S: It’s just rumours you get right. You go to one club and you get what, forty rumours. Because i haven’t even
been to a club and i've got so many rumours otherwise and that right?

I: Oh about your reputation?
S: Yeah, but it's all lies right so...

Tina elaborates on the kind of reputation women who go to these clubs develop:

T: There are a lot of guys like if they see a girl -- this is not every guy, some guys, you know like the ones that want a long term relationship -- they'd never have a long-term relationship with somebody that they met at a club cause they think she's like a slut. You know she goes out at night....

The dances are largely promoted and organized by male DJ's who constantly use techniques, such as "day dances" or "Ladies Free," to attract women to the space for the predominantly male clientele that attend them. As Tina points out, however, the women who do frequent these clubs acquire the stigma of being (too) "sexual." The movement of women in the public sphere "at night" conveys assumptions about the "looseness" of their sexuality. In this sense, this space reproduces dominant notions about South Asian femininity. "Good" South Asian girls are suppose to follow the dictates of modesty and chastity.

In addition to sanctions and normative modes of feminine conduct, young women also confront various forms of sexual harassment in these spaces. In the following paragraph, Salimah reveals the workings of this kind of male-female dynamic:

S: [Me and my friends] were walking by a club and these guys are like calling out to us. It's embarrassing like i don't find it flattering at all. I'm the kind of person who doesn't put up with shit though, like what guys do. Cause i've had guys come up to me and go hey baby i'd like to rub my thing. Fuck off, i don't need
to put up with shit like that, i think it's disgusting.

South Asian (male) youth gangs sometimes use their collective power to control and threaten women in these spaces. When violence erupts, it is usually between men as an expression of male contestation over female "territory" (as in over women's bodies). Sometimes, however, women themselves become the targets of sexual violence. In a conversation with Pam and Tina about gangs and dances they describe the following incident:

T: What happened was, there were no bouncers there so all the Punjabi guys lost control and from what i heard guys were going around grabbing girls and stuff like that and girls were like crying cause they didn't know what to do. You know like they had no control and that's the scary part, when a girl does not have control. But the thing is that nobody blamed the girl or the guy. They just go, "oh well they got the power to do it so they can do it."

I: So no one questioned it or said that obviously something's wrong?

P: Nothing, it happened once. The fact that they had control over that dance cause basically they were PM [Punjabi Mafia] guys and they can do it and get away with it and nobody can stop them. Like nobody could even say anything to them otherwise they get punched out.

T: If PM is ever involved, they usually get blamed for everything.

P: Because it usually is them.

T: There's nothing anybody can do about it, cause that's what they do. I mean i dated a guy that was part of that group and he's not anymore and they're like, they mean business, you know. If they really want to hurt somebody, they can kill somebody. Absolutely seriously, they can kill somebody. And that's the scary part of it because they represent...nobody. I don't think white people look at it as if oh they're Punjabi's or they're Sikhs or whatever. They're indians
you know, so we all get a bad name even if you're Muslim even if you're, whatever you are.

P: You're brown, that's the colour of your skin and that's what goes you know. That's why i don't like going to Punjabi things cause they, they put our name down for no reason and i don't want to be looked at like that.

T: That's the thing about Mississauga to top it all off. Cause my dad lives there and every single indian person in Mississauga is Punjabi, Sikh. You know [we] really don't fit in at all.

This conversation suggests a variety of interlocking themes. Firstly, it suggests that there is a connection between the use of male violence and the control of women in the public sphere. Secondly, it mobilizes certain monolithic assumptions of male Punjabi identity, which reproduces dominant stereotypical images of the Sikh community. Male violence, according to this construction, becomes the principality of Punjabi/Sikh men. Thirdly, Pam and Tina touch on the ways in which violence in the South Asian community is viewed by the dominant white society. Ethnicity in the Canadian multicultural context constructs each ethnic group into homogenous entities. These are not "just any guys," these guys come to represent all South Asian men and are seen as reflective of South Asian culture as a whole. And finally, Pam and Tina describe another kind of exclusion that is rooted in religious and ethnic difference. Pam and Tina are not included in a definition of South Asian that speaks largely to a Punjabi/Sikh aesthetic, both musically and spatially. Tina explained to me that she had made a decision to no longer attend these dances "because i don't look Punjabi, you know? And they
know that. And they’re not exactly too welcoming..."

Similarly, in another interview, Nina explained to me that there is a popular preference for a Punjabi Sikh identity among South Asian youth:

N: My cousin was telling me that she asked this one girl, "are you Sikh or something?" and she said, "no, i wish." she’s like Hindu and she [the girl] says, "are you?" and she [my cousin] goes "yes." And she [the girl] goes "oh my god! My god can i see your kara? Can i wear one?"

Nina reveals the desire for a Punjabi/Sikh identity and the symbols, such as the kara [silver bracelet], associated with Sikh identity. Continuing on this theme, in the context of a conversation about cultural esteem, Nina told me a story about a young woman who attempted to hide her "indian" identity because of the shame associated with it. I include this portion of conversation, not for what it conveys about internalized racism and a desire for "whiteness" but for the way in which "indian" is constructed -- certain notions of "indian" displace others.

N: i asked one girl, "what are you?" And she goes, "oh i don’t want to say." And i go, "are you indian?" And she goes, "i don’t want to say." And i go, "why, you’re not Guyanese or something?" And she goes, "oh please!" And i go, "i guess you’re indian then so why are you so afraid to say it?" And even in my yearbook she goes [wrote] you’re the first person that i told that i am indian, in tiny tiny letters. And its not like she looks white, she’s darker than i am. She looks totally indian and i go well, it’s not like you can hide it.

In relation to a predominantly white context, here an indo-Caribbean identity emerges as even less desirable than an "indian" one from the sub-continent.
This kind of reaction to "indians" from outside the subcontinent and those who are "external" to the Hindi or Punjabi speaking community has also been reflected in my experience as a radio host for a South Asian music programme for the past four years (1992-1996). While the show focuses on music spanning the entire South Asian diaspora and includes both the classical "traditional" variety as well as the more recent fusion music, the listenership is dominated by Hindi and Punjabi speaking South Asians from India. There is a lot of resistance to Sri Lankan Tamil and to indo-Caribbean music from these listeners. In an informal interview with DJ Jithen for this project, one of Toronto's most popular South Asian DJ's, he claimed that while he is renowned in the Toronto scene, because he is Gujurati he is constantly aware that his acceptance in this Punjabi dominated context is tenuous at best. He began his career with the onset of "Bhangra" dances and now has branched out to play r&b, old-school and funk. However "when the PM (Punjabi mafia) rolls into a club and demand that I play a Bhangra set or announce their arrival, I know that I better to keep the peace."

Although many of the remixers and Dj's focus on remixing Hindi-film and Punjabi music, they themselves do not have diasporic Punjabi or Hindi roots. It is because of the market value, that this variety of music sells, that they continue to produce it. While those who fall outside of the Punjabi and Hindi speaking belt will listen to Bhangra and Hindi-film mixes, the reverse is not true. There is very little openness on the part of
Punjabi and Hindi speaking South Asians to listen to that "other" kind of music, despite the fact that Bhangra and Hindi-film music occupied this very same status of "otherness" not too long ago in the Canadian context. Within the category "brown" some "ethnicities" are seen as more authentic than others. The discourse of "South Asian-ness" that operates here privileges Hindi and Punjabi speaking South Asians from the sub-continent over "others."

Ethnic and Religious Difference

Through my research, I found a connection between developments "back home" and in Canada with respect to tension between the Hindu and Muslim communities. I interviewed three young women attending the same school, all of whom mentioned that one of the most significant fights of the year, involving a sizable portion of the school’s population, was between Hindus and Sikhs. These young women did not know each other and all described the fight in different ways. For example, Reema, a young Hindu woman, did not see the outbreak of violence as having anything to do with religious tensions, but more as an act of male bravado and machismo, "a bunch of boys getting out of hand." Another girl (Hindu) saw the incident as a reaction to what she saw as Muslim favoritism in the school. Aarti explained that

A:...We have so many Muslims in our school, that it’s incredible. I mean they have everything they have whole groups of people who during their special time they actually get off school early Fridays just because they pray in school. They have a huge group, like clubs, so there’s a Muslim club sort of thing where you get off Fridays early for jumma namaz [prayers] so they can pray.
I: Do they pray in the school?

A: Yeah, they have a place where they pray, they celebrate Eid. But we also celebrate Diwali too but you know we don’t go through those dramatic things, like to get off school early and so forth.

Aarti saw the outbreak of violence in the school as a response to what she and others understood as Muslim favoritism within the school. In contrast, a third young woman (Muslim), Ayesha, saw the fight as directly related to the communal violence occurring in India. The incident at the school happened around the time of the demolition of a historic mosque in Ayodhya (India) by members of the Hindu community who claimed that it was the birth place of an ancient (mythological) Hindu deity. Ayesha describes the fight among the South Asian males in her school as a result of mounting religious tension:

A: Yeah, i think so it was mainly because of the, the fights in India and how the Hindus and the Sikhs were against the Muslims and ahh i guess there were tensions building up in school because we’re all different religions. Like half of the school’s like Muslim and half of the brown population i’d say is Muslim and Sikh. So obviously there was going to be some tension between the two so that’s how it all started.

Ayesha’s account of the same incident is based on the idea of reaction to the communal divisions in India. When I provided her with the other perspective, that some people in the school had suggested that there was a reaction on the part of students to what they saw as Muslim privilege, she responded:

A: I don’t think it’s really because of that, that the Muslims are favored. I don’t think people were looking at it in that way but because of all the fighting everywhere else, like everybody was fighting, all the religions were just fighting against each other. And i
think obviously you’re going to be on your religion’s side. Yeah, obviously you’re going to be influenced by what you are and people were going on their own religion’s side and that’s just how everything just came together.

One of the most striking observations that came from all the young women in my study was around the use of space in their schools. I would like to turn my attention to this issue in order to show its connection to the organizing of religious and ethnic difference. Aarti, for example, says the following about her "multicultural" school context:

...what our school is split up into is ahm, racially. Like within the south Asian community the Muslims are with the Muslims, the Sikhs are with the Sikhs and the Hindus are with the Hindus...so we basically we're segregated that way. West indians, they stay separate, blacks stay separate and actually the whole entire school is set up in cliques. Everybody has their designated position: the back of the stairs, that’s all the black area; next to it, the far right corner, is all the West Indians and; on the far left corner is all the indians and in the cafeteria is the Chinese, and in the parking lot is the white people. This is exactly how our school is set up.

Part of the use of space and why people congregate in specific areas with specific people has to do with familiarity. Aarti indicates that notions of familiarity are racialized and work to mark out "us and "them." She shows how particular groups take up space to mark out and consolidate their group (racialized) identity. Here, the very act of taking up and marking space as a racialized territory, as well as the existence of culturally diverse groups, is seen as evidence of multiculturalism. Her description of segregation was not unique. All the women that I interviewed described a similar organization of space. Through
these accounts I began to think about how the notion of
difference was being understood. Was "difference" in the context
of Canadian multiculturalism producing a kind of segregation and
separatism?

In Chapter Six I suggested that the young women who attended
predominantly white schools had a different relationship to
cultural esteem than those attending "brown" schools. In many
ways the celebration of racial identity and cultural esteem
appears higher among those attending "brown" schools than those
in high schools with a predominantly white population. The issue
of "brown" schools and the kind of celebration and assertion of
racial identity that is being demonstrated has far reaching
implications in terms of the debates around separate schooling.

Recently in Toronto both the Muslim and Sikh communities
have been fighting for the right for (government funded) separate
public schooling. The demand for separate public schools is
not unique to Canada but has also had a long history in countries
like the U.K. The movement for separate schooling, in some sense,
can be understood as a response to existing educational curricula
which are unable to be inclusive of the cultural and religious
needs, as some members of the community define them (Dwyer,
1993). Members of the Muslim and now the Sikh community have
argued their case on the grounds of universality, claiming that
the same right that has allowed for separate Catholic schools
should be extended to other faiths.

While this is seemingly legitimate and progressive demand,
the demand for separate schooling has brought with it contradictory alliances. Muslim separate schooling, for example, has also been supported by those outside the Muslim community who argue for a need to return to "traditional" social and moral values (Dwyer, 1993). The racial subtext to their demand comes out of a perspective that views multicultural schooling and the "mixing" of students as threatening to the boundaries around white ethnic identity. Some members within the Muslim community have argued against separate schooling claiming that opting out of the public "multicultural" school model could disadvantage ethnic minorities, who will not be properly prepared or equipped to compete in mainstream society. This perspective constructs multicultural education as a means of assimilation (Dwyer, 1993).

Political Contestation and Centrality of Hindu/Hindi and Punjabi/Sikh Identities

Thus far I have touched on the idea of internal contestation within the signifier "brown." I understand the indo-centricity and the current popularity of Punjabi Sikh identity not as "inherent" or a "natural" prerogative of these particular ethnic communities, but as part of an historical process that has allowed these parts of the South Asian community the "historical" privilege that comes with the development and access to cultural resources. As I mentioned previously in this thesis Sikh Punjabis were among the first South Asians to migrate and settle in Canada. Vancouver and Toronto are hosts to the majority of Canada's Sikh population. This part of the South Asian community has been able to develop, partly due to numbers, a
cohesive infrastructure and sense of community. Similarly, the Hindu/Hindi speaking community has also had a long history in Toronto. In Chapter Four, I explored how discourses of Indian nationalism were predicated on the assumption of Hindu middle class universality. The centrality of Hindu/Hindi as an identity that dominates in the Canadian context is similar to its prevalence within the Indian nation-state.

As I have argued previously, in moments of political contestation, markers around ethnic identity become paramount. While it is beyond the scope of this research to make any substantive conclusions I would like to suggest that the Khalistani movement for a separate Sikh state has in part informed the trend of cultural celebration and nationalism among Punjabi youth in Canada. Similarly, developments in the subcontinent in favour of Hindu-fundamentalists in India have affected a sense of pride in Hindu identity among youth in Toronto and heightened the need for a more visible Muslim identity. The resurgence of symbols in a show of national pride around Sikh identity, such as the kara (silver bracelet which has become popular among second generation youth), the Om (Hindi symbol) and the Allah (Muslim symbol) are cultural resources, if you will, mobilized in part and in response to contestation over ethnic/religious identity. These "cultural" texts, indicating religious identity, are now commonly found among second generation South Asian youth. Most of the young women I interviewed were accessorized with their respective markers as
most of them attended "brown" schools.

I have intimated that the assertion of racial/ethnic pride among South Asian youth is connected to contestation for political space within the category brown. The Hindu, Sikh and Muslim communities have all mobilized their own discourses around community cohesion. The reassertion of religious identity becomes instrumental to these discourses. Parts of the Hindu community in the West have direct links to right-wing Hindu fundamentalist organizations in India by being influenced by, and in turn supporting, influencing and maintaining these factions in the subcontinent through funding and political support. This also holds true for the Sikh community. Young Punjabi Sikh youth are able to draw on a narrative of cultural and racial pride because in some ways it already exists for them as a trajectory in the form of a nationalist sentiment seeking to assert itself in a struggle with the Indian nation state for an independent Sikh state.

Grewal, writing for the American context, argues that:

ties to India are being actively maintained by the middle-class and upper-class professionals who constitute a substantial portion of Indian immigrants....what has changed now in India is the opening of doors to outside investment, the need created for the rupee to be traded on the international market, and the emergence of a wealthy professional class of Indians in the US (Grewal, 1994, p. 56).

Grewal reveals another motive for the return to "tradition" and a loyalty to "backhome." While the immigration trajectory is different in the Canadian context, Grewal's analysis can certainly be applicable to the 1960's flow of South Asian
professionals to Canada who continue to maintain an influential stronghold within the South Asian community.  

There are links, I would suggest, between the rise of Punjabi Sikh nationalism, Hindu fundamentalism and the (re-) invention of tradition and assertion of cultural markers in the Canadian context. "Culture" as a source of identity in the context of "minority" and/or "oppositional" discourses (as in, "as minorities we need a separate independent 'state' or 'space'" viz-a-viz a dominant group) mobilizes ethnic resources, (in this case cultural texts) such as the nose ring, the kara or the veil, as a means of articulating its presence and drawing boundaries of cultural difference viz-a-viz a dominant group. There has been a resurgence of communal tension within the South Asian subcontinent between Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims within the last fifteen years. The (re)assertion of ethnic boundaries for various political purposes within the subcontinent itself is, I suggest, connected to the kinds of cultural assertion we can see among South Asian youth in Toronto.  

Vinay Lal (1995) argues that ethnic strife within the category South Asian is tied into discursive tensions between East and West, modern and pre-modern, masculine and feminine. The nation-state, in many ways a masculine construction, has been about a show of prowess and bravado, a contest between nations in an effort to prove the ability to deal with the ruthlessness of the modern world. Lal argues that the ethnic strife between the Hindu and Sikh identities, for example, has been about
transforming what is seen to be a national identity that has, in the past, capitulated to the feminine by not asserting a hard line around protecting its boundaries, to an identity based on rigid perimeters. (Lal uses masculine metaphors, such as the ones I have used here -- rigid and hard -- purposefully).

Sikh nationalism is seen to threaten the Indian nation state. This discourse of peril draws on notions of demasculination -- the idea that the Indian nation state is not able to control and manage with prowess "terrorist" and separatist activities within its borders. In turn, Sikh separatists have pulled on masculine notions of identity by attempting to construct Hindus as the "feminine" other to Sikh militarism (Lal, 1995). Anand Pathwarthan (1994) in his controversial film, "Father, Son and the Holy War," argues for a similar connection between masculinity and discourses of Hindu fundamentalism. He shows how factions of the Hindu-right wing, in an attempt to inflate its own superiority, have constructed "Muslim" men as the feminine other by playing on the subtext of (Muslim) penile circumcision and (Hindu, male) virility.15

Some scholars have argued that fundamentalist discourses have become even more rigid and conservative in the West (Lal, 1995). Lal connects this kind of nationalism to discourses around race and modernity. He argues that living in the lap of the West, where assimilationism is a reality, heightens anxieties around the solidity and cohesiveness of "ethnic" boundaries. I think Grewal captures the connection between transnational class
interests, and minority discourse both within and outside the sub-continent quite powerfully when she writes:

...the exclusionary process of Americanization reveals the power of cosmopolitan modernity combined with right-wing structures within Indian nationalism: minorities and women are seen in terms of stereotypes by which they can be controlled and their political power circumscribed (Grewal, 1994, p.62).

In this sense the exclusionary narrative of "Indian-ness" intersects with and serves well: alliances between middle-class elites in the West and in India; colonial discourses of "tradition" and women; and neo-colonial discourses of assimilationism.

I would like to extend Lal's arguments around masculinity and nationalism to the context of youth subculture in Toronto. The scene of fusion music continues to be male dominated and mobilizes the idea of masculine posturing and bravado in an effort to assert a cultural/racial presence. The existence of male gangs, violence and sexual harassment at dances is testimony to this posturing. The presence of Bhangra music and dance, while providing a brown signifier, reproduces a notion of "common" South Asian identity that is dominated by Punjabi/Sikh and Hindi/Hindu. This cultural space is also one that emulates dominant discourses of femininity and ultimately constructs women as passive.

Conclusion

"Tampering" with colonial notions of authenticity has in some ways expanded the definition of South Asian to include other "cultural" artifacts. The fusion of music and style, drawing on
Afro-Canadian themes and "white" Canadian references, pushes the boundaries and definition of South Asian music and identity. The notion of "tradition" as fixed and unchanging is substituted for a seemingly more fluid one that defines tradition as reflective of practice and interpretation. The space of Bhangra dances and fusion music has begun to open up the possibility for negotiating a brown signifier in a predominantly white context.

While the claim for separate schooling appears to be in line with an anti-racist perspective in its acknowledgement of exclusion based on "difference," it is also aligned with discourses of nationalism that are based on protective, essentialist notions of identity. Similarly, I have shown that while South Asian youth subculture has provided a space for the articulation and celebration of racial/cultural identities that have been excluded within a context where white/anglo dominates as a cultural aesthetic, this resistance has fallen into nationalistic reproductions of identity. This new articulation breaks with certain colonial notions of cultural authenticity by applying a more fluid notion of tradition: it reads, "you don't have to be static to claim an identity that is South Asian."

However, in a celebration of culture, South Asian youth have asserted a singular and narrowly defined aesthetic that is not inclusive of other points of South Asian identity. In this sense, the community of second generation youth in the West continues to reproduce colonial notions of community and nation.

The "diaspora," like the nation-states in the South Asian
sub-continent, is constructing a narrative about itself that relies on monolithic self-representations rather than symbols that speak to contradiction, fragmentation, heterogeneity and diversity. In an effort to construct a cohesive identity and representation in a hostile environment, the "diaspora" mobilizes monolithic notions of femininity and ethnicity. The cultural production of music persists in being male dominated and young women's sexualities continue to be regulated and monitored within the space of "Bhangra" dances.

The debate around separate schooling revolves around tensions between inclusion and exclusion. While I am unable to draw any conclusions, quantitatively, about the correlation between "brown" schools and the experience of "high" cultural esteem, the observation about the difference between "brown" and "white" schools with respect to the experiences of young South Asian women serves as an entry point to an exploration of identity politics. While the "Bhangra" scene and "brown" or religious separate schools indeed offer points of inclusion, the act of segregation alone cannot accommodate all differences within the category "brown." While segregation serves as a way of reclaiming and speaking to exclusions based on racial or religious differences, it is problematic in that it neglects to account for all the differences within the category South Asian, such as the lack of visibility of gender and particular ethnicities. In this respect, discourses of (Canadian) multiculturalism that construct "ethnic" identities as internally
homogeneous are intersecting, coinciding and collaborating, if you will, with colonial nationalist discourses of community. The result is the production of a space and cultural identity that reproduces certain features of a universal "indian" identity and shuts out and obscures points of marginality and heterogeneity. The fusion of South Asian music and style reflects both a singular oppositional aesthetic as well as the cut-and-mix that Hall's "new ethnicities" are an example of. The narrative of identity for diasporic youth is multiple. It is both subversive and status quo. While it breaks with static notions of traditional authenticity it represents a form of cultural resistance that is fashioned around a narrative of nationalism and masculinity.
1. Stuart Hall (1992) uses the expression "black" in the British sense of the term. Black is used as a political term referring to all "people of colour."

2. Certain voting rights, for example are only reserved for Canadian Citizens (Permanent Residents or those with Landed Immigrant status cannot vote in Federal and most provincial elections). Landed or Permanent status is not as "permanent" as the term implies. For example, those who "commit" certain criminal and civil crimes or those deemed to be a danger to the public or those who leave the country for more than six months are subject to having their status revoked. Also, certain government jobs and grants are reserved for Canadian citizens only. (See, Multiculturalism and Citizenship Act: A Guide for Canadians (1990)).

3. Although "bhangra" in its original sense of the term refers to traditional Punjabi folk music, now most of the South Asian music, whether it has traces of "bhangra" or not, is commonly being referred to in the mainstream media as bhangra.


5. See Discography for more detail.


7. I have been host and producer to the show "Masala Mixx" since 1992 at CKLN, a community radio station, based at Ryerson College, Toronto.

8. Interview with DJ Jithen, July 26, 1996.

9. For more information regarding the demolition of the Babri Masjid, see: Thakur, Ramesh (1993), "Ayodhya and the Politics of India's Secularism: A Double Standards Discourse."

10. While Muslim separate schools do exist in Toronto, they are privately funded.

11. For a comprehensive look at the Sikh community in Ontario, see Bali, Judith and Manohar Singh Lal (eds.) (1993), Sikhs in Ontario.

12. Ibid.

13. While I am suggesting a parallel position of dominance between Hindu and Sikh communities in Canada, I do so with caution. Punjabi Sikhs within India do not have the same access to structural power as Hindus do, and therefore in some ways comprise a "minority."
am suggesting that Hindu/Hindi speaking and Sikh/Punjabi speaking South Asians in Canada dominate as a cultural group in relation to South Asians from other diasporic communities, such as the Caribbean, other parts of the sub-continent, from other linguistic and religious backgrounds.


15. See for example India-West (9 June 1995) and (23 June 1995) for the connection between Hindu fundamentalism in the United States and India.

16. I would like to point out that the mid-1970's wave of immigration to Canada is significantly different from the 1960's wave of professional migrants from the South Asian sub-continent. At this time the labour needs of Canada changed. There was an increasing need for semi-skilled labour. This shift, of course, greatly affected the class profile of South Asian migrants to Canada (Bolaria and Li, 1986). While most of the parents of the young women in my study are 1970's migrants, I am unable to draw any substantive conclusions regarding class and notions of "tradition" in the same way that Grewal has suggested for U.S. 1960's migrants. My sample is too small for any speculation regarding transnational class alliances and the implications for 1970's wave of South Asian immigrants or any similarities or differences in notions of "tradition" or ties to the sub-continent.

17. Here I am referring to: the mid-1980s -- the massacre at the Sikh temple in Amritsar, Punjab and the struggle for an independent Khalistani (Sikh) state; the early-1990s -- the demolition of the Babri masjid (mosque) by Hindu fundamentalists because of its mythological link to the birth place of a Hindu god and the (continuing) communal violence between Hindu and Muslim communities in parts of India.

18. For the masculine-feminine contestation in relation to British and Indian nationalisms, see Mrinalini Sinha (1995), Colonial Masculinity. She argues that British superiority was accomplished through discourses that posited British men as masculine in relation to "bengali babu."
Chapter Nine: Conclusion

This thesis began with an examination of some of the theories that attempt to make sense of the process of migration. One such theory, stressing assimilation and acculturation, assumes that in order to acquire (and regain) a sense of national identity immigrants should (want to) conform to the values, aesthetics and institutional structures of the dominant group. According to this perspective, second generation immigrant youth are often portrayed as being caught at a crossroads between their parents' culture and the culture of the dominant society in which they reside. Any resulting conflict between youth and parents is explained with reference to the parents' retention of the values of "backhome" and their resistance to adopting the cultural values of the "host" community, and to youths' desire to adopt the values of the "new" society. In this framework racism and prejudice are seen as an outcome of ethnic minorities' refusal to integrate with mainstream Canadian society (A Minority Report, Toronto Star, 1985).

Young South Asian women have been of particular concern, both among members of the South Asian community and the mainstream Canadian society. While the former have attempted to protect young women from the "ills" of modern western society, the latter have pointed to the strictness of immigrant parents in relation to their daughters. South Asian teenage girls have often been viewed as victims of "excessive" parental control, who are unable to enjoy the liberties presumed to characterize Canadian
society. What I set out to understand was how and why the issue of generational clash has come to be seen as an "ethnic" phenomenon. While there is, admittedly, conflict between the generations across cultural, ethnic and racial communities, the conflict between immigrant parents and youth is made more visible than, for example, generational conflict within "white" Canadian families. The strife in South Asian families, between parents and daughters in particular, is interpreted as indicators of particular characteristics of South Asian tradition and culture.

Existing research and representation in Canada have ignored either race or gender as categories informing and organizing the experiences of young South Asian women. Rather than reproducing these omissions, I sought to understand the contradictions, conflicts and complexities of young women's lives, without replicating stereotypical notions of "culture" or overlooking the dynamics of gender. I wanted to explore how this discourse about generational conflict was racialized. At the same time I set out to understand how and why young women were experiencing control and restriction in their lives. Rather than making essentialist claims about South Asian tradition and custom, I sought to unpack how women have come to be positioned as responsible for the preservation of "ethnic" boundaries and associated with certain notions of culture. While most existing research on young South Asian women explores, examines and assesses their experiences, young women rarely speak for themselves. This research has explored the ways in which young women negotiate, resist and
contest the normative discourses that position their subjectivities.

I understand the strictness of South Asian parents as a culmination of several modern protective discourses and practices around community, culture, nation, tradition and "woman." The chain of signifiers -- youth, women and racial "other," -- the crossroads at which young South Asian women find themselves, are enmeshed in a series of protective discourses. There are similarities in the ways in which modern discourses constitute and position these three categories. Youth, women and racial "other" are constructed as subjects in need of guidance, protection, supervision and/or development.

While I did find that the level of conflict was high between South Asian women and their parents, I have suggested that it is the effect of modernity and coloniality and the sets of discourses they have produced that have positioned women in a highly restricted and regulated terrain. I have attempted to deconstruct the notion of "culture" and suggested, in the context of this discussion, that the "culture conflict" is articulated on a discursive terrain of the values of pre-modernity and modernity. The issue of generational conflict between youth and parents, far from being an "ethnic" phenomenon, is a contradiction inherent in modernity. The clash between youth and adults and the characterization of youth as a period of storm and stress in the lifecycle have been historical themes since the eighteenth century and have taken particular forms in varying
social, political and historical contexts. The "generational" clash has much to do with registering social ambivalence and anxiety toward social change. In Canada in the 1950s this anxiety took the form of white middle class panics over juvenile delinquency (Adams, 1994). For the South Asian community, the threat of modernity, however, has taken on different significances because of the overlapping discourses of race, cultural difference and inequality it has been historically intermeshed with. Modernity and social change for the "ethnic" other have come to have particular meanings both because of the way the "ethnic" has been positioned and because of the way the "non-white other" has negotiated this positioning.

In suggesting that the issue of culture clash is situated between the values of modernity and premodernity, I am not assuming that the significance or meanings attached to the categories modern and tradition are the same for every ethnic/racial group, or that the conflicts for South Asian youth are no different from those of "white" youth. Rather, the issue of generational clash, between the values of a pre-modern society and a modern one, is, for South Asian youth, embedded in racialized discourses of cultural difference. The East-West contest over cultural difference can be traced back historically to the colonial period and has continued to manifest itself in various ways in neo-colonial North America since the turn of the century.
Ace and Race and the "Non-White" Ethnic

In chapter Four I began with an exploration of the concepts of age and race. I suggested that twentieth century moral panics around youth and immigration, far from being unrelated anxieties, were about the changing place of "white" centrality in a new industrializing capitalist social order, which required "foreign" labour in order to sustain itself. While there was promise of truth and progress, the changes brought about by the modern projects of industrialization, urbanization and consumer capitalism also aroused concern about the success of (middle class) social advancement in the western world. At one level the ambivalence toward modern social change was about the costs of progress and prosperity. The upcoming generation became the gauge by which to measure the successes and failures of modern social progress.

Angst about how non-white immigration would affect the moral, social and cultural fibre of the west became most obvious in debates about racial purity at the turn of the century. Although the need for "imported" labour was important to the expansion of the British empire and the building of its colonies, exclusion and segregation of South Asian and other immigrant populations from mainstream society was accomplished through arguments about adjustability and cultural compatibility. Here there were contradictions between the needs of colonial capitalism and the desire to maintain white cultural hegemony. Indeed an historical review of South Asians in Canada reveals a
trajectory of ambivalence on the part of British Canadian settlers. Implicit in the "acceptance" of new Canadians was the condition that they not be too different in values, aesthetics and sensibilities from their white anglo British counterparts. The result, at the turn of the century, in Canada, as Buchignani and Indra conclude, was "a compromising immigration policy that tempered common ethnic and racial biases with practical economic considerations" (Buchignani and Indra, 1985, p.4).

White angst over its own racial boundaries is a theme that traces from the colonial period to the post-war era. During crises of authority, British colonialists in India, for example, mobilized several protective measures to ensure an image of "civility." As Sharpe (1993) and Stoler (1991) show, in different ways, this was accomplished through a construction of white community identity in relation to an "other." Circulating notions of "barbarity," "uncivilized" "backward" and "rapist" linked to the "other" serve as a means to secure a relative identity that could, at the very least, appear more cultivated in relation to its "native" counterpart. Pajaczkowska and Young (1992) explore such practices of representation as a strategy of maintaining white centrality. They argue that white identity is rooted in a history of representation that has favoured denial and disavowal of its own subjectivity as ruthless and aggressive. This, in part, is accomplished through the invention of representations of the colonial "other" as dirty, violent or licentious. White identity, Pajaczkowska and Young argue, is an illusory identity
Based in the fear of loss of individuality which is projected onto the "other" in order to leave intact white, middle class male identity as one of safety, power, control, independence and contentment. The illusory identity needs narratives constantly to reaffirm its fictitious centrality (Pajaczkowska and Young, 1992, p.204).

Keeping in mind that the centrality of whiteness and the west relies on the construction of the "other," it is possible to see that discourses about immigrant culture conflict in Canada help to position and protect the fiction of white/western superiority.

I have suggested that the moral panics around juvenile delinquency for white middle class youth in the 1950's were part of a process in which normative notions of Canadian-ness came to be racialized. I have also argued that the arrival of "non-white" immigrants to Canada and more specifically to parts of greater Metropolitan Toronto, created conditions in which certain discourses about "white" superiority were mobilized. The centrality of "white" is maintained through consistent representations of non-white ethnicity as unsafe, inferior, or uncivilized.

Gender and Narratives of "Indian-ness" and Community Identity

Joseph Levenson argues that nationalism emerged out of a process in which communities had to prove their capacity for self determination in relation to an outside force (Levenson, 1965). Historian Duara Prasenjit sees history as a constant negotiation between universality and particularity. He argues that history has often been about differentiating the self from an "other"
Both Prasenjit and Levenson suggest that narratives of community identity are mobilized in relation to a perceived outside threat. Building on this notion I have shown that diasporic South Asian identity relies on historically constituted notions of womanhood. Such notions are mobilized as a strategy to negotiate, construct and maintain national boundaries in an assimilationist context. This oppositional voice has roots in a colonial discourse of women and cultural difference. The emergence of the Indian nationalist movement was connected to their having to prove ability to self-govern in relation to British colonial occupation. Using Prasenjit and Levenson's notions of nationalism and community identity as relative concepts, I have shown that women have often been used as the marker for distinguishing "self" from "other." In an effort to seek legitimation in relation to British colonial rule, Indian nationalists, for example, mobilized notions of female chastity, modesty and sacrifice, in order to differentiate East from West.

Joan Landes and Partha Chatterjee have shown, in different ways how pre-modernity has come to represent both innocence and purity as well as the "backward" and the "irrational." The attempt to negotiate innocence, while overcoming the backward, has taken place on the terrain of women. Landes argues that modern discourses construct women as in need of protection (Landes, 1994; Chatterjee, 1993). While being allowed to enjoy some of the freedoms of the modern world, such as education and paid employment, "woman's innocence" was to be maintained by
keeping the values of the old in the private sphere of home and family. Chatterjee makes a powerful argument with respect to how women, in the context of colonial India, also became enmeshed in discourses about (racialized) cultural difference. Not only was keeping women innocent a means to resolve some of the fears associated with modernity, but during the nationalist struggle for independence women became an important signifier in East-West contestation over political and moral hegemony. They came to signify nation and "Indian-ness." Consolidating power for Indian nationalists relied on justifying self rule to the British by following "modern" notions of progress and prosperity, while simultaneously avoiding compromising the integrity of what needed to be seen as a distinct identity in the eyes of the Indian populace. This integrity could be preserved by forging a distinction between westernization and modernization.

Far from being a strategy that only the British utilized, Indian nationalists, then, also played this kind of one-upmanship by constructing its own narrative of cultural superiority. This is precisely why these discourses of nation and community are considered colonial, which Mani defines as an epistemology that came to be shared by both colonialists and the indigenous elite (Mani, 1990b, p.90). Because the British focused on the status of Indian women as a sign of relative inferiority, Indian nationalists in turn constructed their "cultural" retaliation by using 'women' as a symbol of moral superiority in order to justify self-rule. The woman question became a leverage in
regaining political self-determination by appealing to notions of cultural authenticity. Women became paramount in discourses of East and West in India.

Vinay Lal (1995) argues that the South Asian diaspora, although fragmented is attempting to hold itself together through constructing a narrative that pulls on discourses of tradition and culture that are very similar to those promoted by Indian nation state. He claims that even in diaspora, modernism circumscribes much of the discussion around "Indian" identity. Rather than being able to break out of a modern discourse of cultural difference that is eurocentric and binary, diasporic discourse has reified and maintained certain notions of women in order to reassert the legitimacy of its cultural boundaries. Both Lal and Ali Rattansi have argued that the particular representation of woman as chaste and pure in the diasporic context has helped to construct moral "superiority" in the context of a hostile western world that is caught up in anxieties over its own disintegrating family moral social fabric. Rattansi discusses the ambivalence around the image of the British Asian woman. He references an article in one of Britain’s mainstream newspapers in which Asians are applauded for embodying, more successfully than "whites," the celebrated aspects of the traditional family. Rattansi argues that there is an implicit admiration for the 'family values' of Asians, with the anxiety of being 'taken over' as well as overtaken by a population not granted the status of really belonging - they are still described as Pakistani and Bangladesh households who happen to be 'here' (Rattansi, 1994, p.68).
Inderpal Grewal argues that discourses that represent South Asian girls as repressed or victims of a backward culture are essential to maintaining notions of freedom and democracy in the west. She claims that

[the discourse of freedom is essential to the consolidation and ongoing construction of Western state power structures, especially today with the increase in new technologies for the collection of information on citizens and noncitizens and the corresponding redefinitions of issues of privacy and personal freedoms (Grewal, 1994, p.59).]

In arguing that the South Asian diaspora emulates features of the Indian nation state, both in its exclusion of identities and in its notions of womanhood and community, I do not want to reproduce the very erasures that I am critiquing by displacing already marginalized communities. I am not suggesting, for example, that Pakistan, Bangladesh and other parts of the sub-continent do not mobilize their own particular iconography, symbols, and formulae of the womanhood-nation construction. I am arguing that the discourse of Indian nationalism has tended to dominate much of the diaspora. Evidence of this can be seen, for example, in the constant displacement of "other" South Asians: Indians from India have to be reminded that there are "indians" from other places, such as the Caribbean and Fiji. In my own research, testimony to this brand of indo-centrism was found in young women's self-identifications as "Indian" over Pakistani, East-African or South Asian.
Contextualizing Narratives of Exclusion

I have shown that both dominant and minority groups draw on notions of woman in order to secure community boundaries in relation to "others." While I touched on some of the ways that cultural difference became an important battle-ground in the pursuit of British superiority and sovereignty in the colonial era, I have also shown that during the early twentieth century difference took the form of debates over racial purity and cultural compatibility in the Western world in Canada. South Asians continued to occupy a status similar to the one they occupied within "India." This east-west contestation, far from being confined to the colonial period, continues to manifest itself in the contemporary context of Canada. In this diasporic context, South Asians continue to be positioned as marginal "others." This status means that they are in constant battle over obtaining recognition of the right to community and cultural determination in a context that privileges assimilationism to white anglo conformity. While this parallel is worth making there are also differences between diasporic and Indian nationalist and nation-state narratives of "indian-ness."

I would argue that living in the west, in diaspora, has in many ways threatened the distinction between westernization and modernization that, as Chatterjee (1993) argued, was a central component to nationalist discourses. More than in the sub-continent itself, notions of identity, culture and tradition seem static and historically dated. Lai claims that this is partly due
to the fact that the anxiety about westernization and cultural dilution is a contemporary reality and not just a relic of the past. This in part explains why South Asian communities are charged with being more "traditional" or conservative than those within the sub-continent. The anxiety over loss of identity is very real in the face of Canadian assimilationism.

I have argued in this thesis that young South Asian women are doubly displaced, by dominant hegemonic and minority oppositional narratives of identity. These narratives deny either their gendered or their racialized experiences. I have also argued that both dominant and oppositional narratives reproduce modernist epistemology in relation to identity constructs. While this research has been about deconstructing the culture conflict debate to show how it is rooted in certain (a)historical notions of cultural difference, tradition and modernity, it has also been about exploring narratives about identity itself. Looking at modern notions of the individual has revealed some of the ways in which the assumption of human identity as a cohesive and unitary category came about. The idea of unity and coherence is, in many ways, a reaction and a way to manage some of the tremendous changes brought about by processes of modernization. The idea of the individual as stable and coherent has worked to assuage some of the anxieties around the ambivalence of modern social "progress" and the effects it has had on the relationship and responsibilities of the individual to society.
Throughout this thesis I have shown how narratives of national identity, based on this idea of cohesion, have been exclusionary. In the case of Canadian national identity the definition of "Canadian-ness" is enmeshed in dominant norms which exclude the identities that do not fit the cultural standard of "white/anglo." With respect to colonial India, the nationalist discourse that emerged during the movement for independence was steeped in a middle-class and hindu-centric aesthetic. In the South Asian diaspora in Toronto, both the adult community and the second generation youth who are attempting to articulate an oppositional aesthetic, have reproduced narratives of community identity based on exclusion and relied on static notions of identity. The narrative of diasporic South Asian identity in Canada is both oppositional to and supportive of the status quo. While discourses of "tradition" and cultural authenticity often resist assimilationism and normative (racialized) notions of Canadian-ness, they also reproduce fixed notions of "tradition" and position women as cultural preservers.

Zakia Pathak and Rajeswari Sundar Rajan (1993) argue that discourses of protection can confer upon the protector the right to interfere in areas hitherto out of bounds or the authority to speak for the silent victim; or it can serve as a camouflage for power politics. An alliance is formed between protector and protected against a common opponent from whom danger is perceived and protection sought, and this alliance tends to efface the will to power exercised by the protector. Thus the term conceals the opposition between protector and protected, a hierarchical opposition that assigns higher value to the first term: strong/weak, man/woman, majority/minority, state/individual (Pathak and Rajan,
I have suggested that young South Asian women are positioned in different ways as in need of protection, either by their "own" communities or by white Canadian mainstream society. While the concern over conflict between immigrant parents and their daughters, and the question of "excessive" restriction versus liberty, is seemingly about a clash of values between Canadian and the South Asian community over the issue of parenting, it is also about a clash between the boundaries of Canadian and South Asian cultural values, aesthetics and identities and about jurisdiction. Who has the authority over immigrant children: their parents or the "mainstream" Canadian society? Both communities have different stakes in the "growing up" of young south Asian women: as women they are responsible to their community as reproducers and transmitters of "cultural" values (Anthias and Yuval Davis, 1993; Moghadam, 1994); as young South Asians they are future citizens of Canada and are seen as responsible to the aesthetics and values of a "Canadian" society. As future citizens, if they do not acculturate appropriately, they could tamper with the very social and moral fabric of a Canadian identity based on "white" sensibilities and values.

In the case of second generation South Asians, the category "woman" can be read as a narrative of displacement. They are positioned by discourses that displace either their gender or racial identities. Notions of "tradition" and "culture" have worked to obscure the power relations of gender dynamics.
Furthermore, racialized discourses of cultural difference have positioned women in ways that make the inequality of racial difference invisible. This displacement produces a fragmentary reality. Accordingly, young women's subjectivities are always partial and shifting depending upon the social context. I have argued that part of this fragmentation arises from the contradictions inherent in modern discourses of "tradition" and "culture." My discussion of Indian nationalist discourses during British rule demonstrated how colonial notions of "tradition" and "culture" were treated as fixed and stationary categories. Any change in "tradition" was seen to threaten the definition of "culture" itself. Because of women's (colonial) historical relationship to tradition, their negotiation of culture in the present not only threatens the stability of the category South Asian but also destabilizes notions of appropriate femininity. Their femininity is interconnected with their sexual behaviour and their sexual behaviour is symbolic of the reputation of the collective.

In chapter one I showed how "white/anglo" as the Canadian cultural norm has become implicit as a standard of measure, partly through public discourses of multiculturalism. These discourses lend credibility to the idea of a tolerant Canadian society. It is within this normative backdrop of tolerance, of having to continually justify "cultural practices" that women have emerged as important markers for South Asian ethnic identity and symbols of the right to community self-determination in the
Canadian context.

The Canadian model of multiculturalism was meant as an alternative to the model of assimilationism. While multiculturalism in theory allows for the recognition of "ethnic" collectives that are different from the dominant culture, my research (and that of others) has shown that the attempts at inclusion are still based on a narrative of nationhood that privileges unity over difference. This unity is steeped in assumptions about "white" anglo conformity. I have used the articulations of young South Asian women around the notions of race, culture, belonging and multiculturalism to trace the points of inclusion and exclusion into the "community" of Canadians.

I have shown that the contradiction between unity and diversity is inherent in the official Canadian multicultural policy and manifests itself among second generation South Asian women as an ambivalence around the signifier Canadian. I have argued that this ambivalence is partially a diasporic reaction to exclusion and inadequacy of the categories Canadian and South Asian. Rather than seeing second generation young women as confused, I see their "condition" of ambivalence as a product of the intersections of conflicting discourses around gender, race, ethnicity, tradition and culture. Their ambivalence, however, is also an articulation of a third position around subjectivity. This position defies the fixity and synonymity of race, ethnicity, culture and nation and speaks instead to the fluidity of these categories of identity. While this makes a case for what
is now a common theoretical position around the "social constructedness" and fluidity of identity as a category. I have also problematized this ambivalence by disclaiming it as an exemplary model of "new ethnicity" or post-modern identity, in Hall and Rattansi's, respective senses (Hall, 1992; Rattansi, 1995). Fluidity and fusion also encompass inclusion and exclusion. The "production" and celebration of brown signifiers (in the form of bhangra music and dances) within a predominantly "white" context also reproduce fixed and exclusionary boundaries. Some South Asians (namely those who show signs of cultural assimilation and/or have certain ties to the South Asian sub-continent, preferably northern Indian and hindi or punjabi speaking) are seen as more "normal" and "typical" than others.

I have argued that both dominant hegemonic and minority oppositional discourses of Indian identity are rooted in modern notions of (cohesive) identity. I am not suggesting a relativist positioning on cultural difference or East-West contestation. I am reminded that many of us living in diaspora celebrate certain notions of tradition and culture even when they are not oppositional in all respects. My first memories of hearing bhangra music in a downtown Toronto club are testimony to this kind of "reconstruction" and celebration of "tradition." I was awestruck by the memory of sounds of old Hindi film tracks that I grew up listening to at home or in the homes of my parents' friends. During my teenage years, my relationship to this music was far from harmonious. The music represented the kind of
environment that separated me from my (white) friends, the kind of sound that, if I could, I would erase from every corner of the house, along with all other kinds of cultural markers that reminded me of my difference, "backwardness," and "inferiority." But it was also part of my psyche, my memory bank, my background noise, enmeshed in imprints of recollection of home, family and childhood. When I heard the same music about four years ago in a club crowded with "mis-timers" like me, those having grown up without any South Asian signifiers, this music brought with it an inner stir I cannot quite describe. This place was saturated with people like me and there was an indescribable solace in numbers, a silent celebration and anguish for all the years when this overt merrymaking was not possible. Part of this celebration also came from the intermix of sounds, sounds that were also part of my psyche: western pop, disco, r&b. For a moment all the separate parts and fragments of self seemed to merge. Despite all the problems with this music - the racial exclusion, the sexist lyrics - most second generation-ers continue to gravitate toward and defend its presence. This, I would argue, is testimony to the power of absence and the kinds of investments we have in forging a self-articulation of identity. It is also part of the contradiction of diasporic identity: we often find ourselves struggling against an absence, even within an oppositional presence.

Oppositional voices are not examples of resistance on all fronts. Even within opposition narratives of identity continue to
compartamentalize and inferiorize. The resistance to racism, for example, in the refusal to accept the taxonomy of difference, can also be, simultaneously, about complicity. In Chapter Six I spoke about forms of resistance to racism, suggesting that the conventional readings of denial or internalized racism are also instances of opposition.

Much of the struggle of the young women I interviewed is about negotiating a "white" making of the nation and a diasporic one. In both instances their own voices are displaced. This constant negotiation brings with it contradictions: both complicity and opposition. In this sense, bhangra music can be read as both oppositional and normative. It is oppositional in the face of absent representation of "brown-ness" within a predominantly white context of popular culture. Nationalist celebrations of "brown-ness" in a context in where "blackness" is at the bottom of the racial hierarchy, however, also engender suspicions of complicity. In this sense a distinct celebration of South Asian "ethnic" identity is possibly implicit in maintaining a distinctness from "blackness." Jasbir Puar (1994b) argues that "whiteness" is seductive because it promises a better life, one that is "higher up" on the social and economic ladder of success. Maintaining a distinction from a Black African Canadian identity, can become a strategy of being closer to this "whiteness." In this sense, even claims to "Canadian-ness," as in South Asian Canadian, can be read as a desire for (relative) racial anonymity (read: whiteness). As I illustrated in Chapter Six, the
complicity with whiteness is also found within the category brown, in the distinction between "refs," "fobs" and second generation-ers whose dress, style and accents are more closely aligned with "white" norms.

Given the historical association of "blackness," in the West, to histories of colonization, slavery and disfranchisement, are young South Asian narratives oppositional and/or complicit? Are they forging alliances and/or reproducing forms of racial segregation and inequality in the name of celebration and diversity? On another note, what would such alliances look like? Identifying with black African signifiers can also be read as another form of displacement and complicity, a form of appropriation. The terrain of fusion music has brought some of the tensions to the forefront. I would argue that Canadian diasporic identity in these senses is contradictory. One cannot interpret the music scene in Toronto as demonstrative of a transparent desire to maintain a distinction from black African signifiers. The increasing use of reggae, hip hop and r&b would deny a simplistic reading of bhangra as a "purist" or "nationalistic" identity. On the other hand, references to black musical styles do not necessarily mean an alliance with, or even a recognition of, the struggles of black youth in an anti-black society. In my own reading of South Asian music production in Toronto, I would argue that the referencing of black musical sub-culture is due in part to the alliance between consumerism and youth styles. Hip-hop has now become marketable. Young cultural
producers are able to cash in on this popularity by "mixing in."

While a political voice of opposition (to racism) can be found both within South Asian popular culture and in its referencing of black musical and fashion styles (especially the political voice of hip hop and dance hall), this referencing seems to be done in muted ways. There is little overt discussion of opposition, even though the music itself stands in opposition to white sensibilities. There is no explicit alliance to a spoken politics of resistance, one that is not just about content (as in Bhangra is political just because of its mere presence in a white society), but about substance. While there is an intermixing or emulating of black musical groups, and the use of seemingly radical terminology, as in the Empire Strikes Back or Asian Empire, there seems to be little acknowledgement about historical or contemporary subversive implications. Is this a way of maintaining a distinctness from what is stereotypically seen as black radical-ness, militancy and insurgency -- as in "we’re not that militant and can better fit the model minority trajectory and more deserving of ‘white’ Canadian approval as immigrants"? Or is it that consumer and class alliances have diluted a radical political voice for both black and South Asian cultural producers? (What sells is not what is radical).

As South Asians in Canada we lack a political narrative and an awareness of our historical resistance in this country. I did not become aware that South Asians have been part of the national body of this country since the turn of the century or that there
has been a history of resistance on the part of these migrant communities until I began my own research in relation to this thesis. I wonder, what would a South Asian diasporic voice, a political one, look like, had most of us second generation-ers been connected to these voices of struggle and resistance, had we been taught this knowledge as part of Canadian history in school? Perhaps part of what continues to complicate the relationship between an African diasporic identity and a South Asian one is the lack of knowledge, the historical disconnection, the lack of discursive tools to note the parallel struggles, the political plight, and some of the similarities and differences between us as communities. And finally on the issue of musical fusion, I wonder is there a kind of African-South Asian dialogue in the midst of formation here that is not yet nameable, a kind of "new" ethnicity? While these issues are beyond the scope of this thesis, I leave them as questions that need further exploration.

While in this thesis I discussed how race organizes young women’s peer relationships, what I would now like to do is contextualize these relationships within the larger social context of school and knowledge production. The South Asian Teachers Organization in Toronto has recently begun to address some of the structural gaps within the school system with respect to South Asian students. For example, in the Peel Board of Education, Canada’s largest school board, out of 90,000 students there are approximately 30,000 students of South Asian descent. While one-third of the student population is South Asian, this
board only employs 22 teachers of South Asian descent.\textsuperscript{3} While I do not want to reduce issues of inclusion to representation alone, this statistic is indicative of a serious structural gap. While "brown" schools indicate a somewhat positive development in terms of numbers of students and the kinds of celebration of diversity these numbers allow, these "sub-culture" schools and students must be seen within a larger social context of structural inequality. In Chapter Six I also mentioned that while schools are becoming increasingly diverse in terms of their student body in certain parts of metropolitan Toronto, the school curriculum is unreflective of diversity. Research (Carby 1982; Olivier 1986; Amos and Parmar, 1987; Comer, 1988; Fine, 1991) has shown a correlation between these structural exclusions and "differential outcomes for students based on race, ethnicity, gender and class" (Dei, 1996, p.77). Dei argues that the eurocentric model of schooling for minority youth leads to an absence of identification with the process of schooling and a limitation of possibility. Without role models or knowledge about our own cultural accomplishments, there is a lack of identification with the idea of success and accomplishment, in a society that evaluates human productivity according to these notions. Dei writes:

The danger of Eurocentricity is that it is the only centre; it is presented as the only valid knowledge form through the constant devaluation and delegitimation of other forms of ideas. It is this process which is systematic in formal education. It is a structural process whereby minority youths' language and culture are devalued (Dei, 1996, p.82).
The effects of this kind of exclusion and absence are unquantifiable. We cannot even begin to comprehend the psychic and emotional effects of this absence. This absence, I argue, is what makes a diasporic identity very different from a colonial one. While I made parallels between colonial racism, Canadian racism and narratives of identity, I would like to emphasize the significance of this difference. Alcoff, referencing Lewis Gordon, argues that in an anti-black world "blackness signifies absence, the absence of identity in the full sense of self, a perspective or standpoint with its own self-referential point of view" (Alcoff, 1996, p.10). The difference between colonial racism and Canadian racism is that diasporic South Asians, for example, do not comprise the racial majority. We do not have the resources or access to power and elite structures in the same way as South Asians living within the context of a South Asian nation-state do. As second generation South Asians in Canada we do not grow up seeing ourselves within the power structures. The absence of representation, both structurally and psychically, has a tremendous impact on the formation of identities. While I have argued that young women's negotiation of self traverses several geographical, historical and political domains, I suggest that their identities are fluid, shifting and flexible, thereby contesting the hegemonic modernist framework of identity. I would like to point out the extreme emotional costs of this negotiation and fluidity. There is a tremendous cost of fragmentation in a context that privileges unity and cohesiveness. The effects of
this fragmentation -- the constant hiding of selves, the constant "shame" of self -- on aspects of self-esteem, still remain untheorized. As Paur writes, what are the emotional costs of immigration, what is the impact on "racialized gender spaces of self-esteem, social esteem, mental health...Do we really have any idea of the toll of immigration" (Paur, 1994b, p.97)?

Closing Notes.

As a young child I would watch voyeuristically from the point of view of smallness my father buried behind the shadows of books and papers. And on some days I peered up from his lap into a spill of words, debates and philosophizing with colleagues. Not quite understanding his talk about the past, about marches and civil disobedience, I watched his eyes illuminate, eyebrows arching during discussions about Indian independence from British rule -- a significance that I cannot even begin to understand, a generation removed and having grown up in the West. My father spoke nostalgically about his days on the campus of Delhi University in the then famous "Coffee House," where heated exchanges between students occurred about the model on which this new India should base itself -- modern secularism, traditional or religious or indigenous? It is here that I first began to learn about the idea of oppression and resistance and the trail of independence movements from the African continent that inspired people like my father. Notwithstanding the celebration of defiance against the British, my father always included as part of this historical narrative that the moment of birth of the
Indian nation state was also a moment of death -- a testimony to the brutality of difference, inequality, division and communal violence.

In the same way his eyes would light up in this witnessing of history, I watched him carry with a sense of urgency and conviction the notion of struggle against racism and the series of "paki" bashings that occurred in Toronto in the mid 1970's. In hushed tones I first learned the meaning of vigilante as my father explained that government and police in-action could lead to desperate measures. There was a need to create our own safety. There were a number of people who were being physically assaulted on the public transport system. My mother, who always wore her saree proudly to the school where she taught, now did so with some hesitation. Organizing together, members of the community strategized around the necessity to create systems of protection.

I first captured the idea of the immigrant narrative -- what it meant to leave home -- and the fear about the modern west after my brother died at a young age in the late 70's. It was then that I heard my grandparents mumbling something about the connection between leaving home, tragedy and the west. After all, my grandparents asked, "what did you get in pursuit of your dreams, in pursuit of opportunity in foreign lands?" My father humble, with lowered eyes, at an understanding about a breach of code that I did not quite comprehend. While this is a personal anecdote, I include it for its subtext of guilt -- the guilt that often comes with the excitement of leaving home, of migration, of
change, or with forced refuge, while others remain. While
migration is an act of courage that I credit to the generation of
people who leave home, I now witness the same strained
relationships of home, loyalty and contract between first
generation parents and their children. As Paur writes, "the
politics of loyalty predominates for the second generation in
terms of loss, because of an inability to conceptualize [I would
add feel or relate to] "home" as previous generations do." (Paur,
1994b, p.85) As second generation South Asians we are unable to
articulate home in the same memory space as our parents can.

I have grown up in the throes of mistrust and suspicion
about the west and modernity and yet the reality and
contradiction lies in the fact that the construction of identity
and home cannot take place outside a relationship to the modern
and the west, especially for diasporic populations. Part of the
protection that we must scrutinize and be critical of is about
the line between protection from harm and resistance to change,
protection as the necessity of creating safety and protection as
regulation, limitation and destruction of possibility. This line
always needs to be kept visible and open to scrutiny.
1. Ali Rattansi references an article in the Daily Mail (29 January 1993) "Britain's traditional family is now Asian."

2. While I realize that no-one can live an "authentic" identity or move outside dominant discourses, what I am suggesting is that oppositional categories provide the illusion of a more totalizing opposition. I have, of course, refuted this in my research.

3. This information is taken from an interview with Gurpreet Malhotra in 1994. At the time he was coordinator of the Dixie-Bloor Neighborhood Centre in the region of Peel. While the statistics may have changed somewhat, there have been no significant changes in the last two years.
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