HYBRID CINEMAS AND GENDER REPRESENTATIONS IN THE SOUTH ASIAN DIASPORA:
THE FILMS OF GURINDER CHADHA AND MIRA NAIR

This dissertation is fully dedicated to my father, my mother and my sister
because when reviewing the following pages for publication after it was academically
presented I realised my eternal gratitude to them

UNIVERSIDAD DE SALAMANCA

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Trabajo de Grado

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Jorge Diego Sánchez

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Vº Bº de la Directora

Dra. Olga Barrios Herrero

Trabajo que para optar al Grado de Salamanca presenta **Jorge Diego Sánchez**, bajo la dirección de la **Dra. Olga Barrios Herrero.**

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CONTENTS

The following pages should be circular. Spherical as the two years I have spent reading, writing and, above all, experiencing something remarkable every single day. Globular as to illustrate what I have learnt, what I have left behind, what has led me to discover myself along the path. Bulbous because it all started as a cumulous of chances and ended up feeling it all rounded. It is so that my life keeps unveiling round to all the people that need to be acknowledged as companions of this journey.

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and indulgent acceptance to my never-ending rejection to plans. When we are together, we just are, and that basically summarises everything.

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To conclude, let me be repetitive and sum up everything by acknowledging that this is all because of my mother and sister's *humanidad*. They have given me all that I am and so they should always stand, as in these acknowledgements, *above* and *below* all.

INTRODUCTION

It is a fact that we currently live in a transnational world where we all are potential migrants, ambiguous and heterogeneous characters of a hybrid identity. It is in this sense that art opens up new spaces that illustrate the territorial and cultural coexistence, offer an interconnection of languages and symbols, evaluate power relations, overturn hegemonic assumptions, challenge gender inequality and foster *another way* to come to terms with the present-day reality. At this contemporary stage, this dissertation gives academic voice to two artists from the South Asian Diaspora in the UK and the US, Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair, two female filmmakers that analyse the historical and political implications of the present moment and acknowledge, from their own cartography of diaspora, the many contradictions that define our world.

It is in this regard that I consider the hybrid cinemas of Chadha and Nair as paradigmatic representations of the modern age and so I propose a convergent study of both as the means to give voice to the cultural and artistic distinctiveness of the South Asian diaspora that is vastly ignored in the current curriculum of the Spanish Academia. In consequence, and following the words by Indian feminist Chandra Talpade Mohanty that "a study of a female voice always unveils a claiming of her own voice and the complex *historical and political* acts that involves the *interrelationship of voices*" (my emphasis 1990: 89-90), the purpose of this dissertation, and its structure in three chapters, is three-fold. So, it firstly contextualises the history of the South Asian Sub-Continent and its diaspora; then it approaches the theoretical notions of *diaspora*, *postcolonial cinemas* and *gender representations* in relation to the South Asian cultural uniqueness; and, it furthermore analyses the specific gender conflicts represented in the selected films by Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair.

Thus, Chapter I accounts for the historical and political misconceptions that are still placed on the South Asian Sub-Continent and its diaspora and that are clear exponents of the current ignorance placed on the world's diversity of cultures. Grounded in the critical theory of the Cultural Studies and relevantly inspired by the critical writings of Richard Dyer's "Teaching the Film Teacher" (1971), Homi K. Bhabha's *Nation and Narration* (1990), Gayatri Ch. Spivak's "Teaching for the Times" (1992), Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan's *Scattered Hegemonies* (1994), bell hooks' *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (1994) or Henry Giroux's "When Hope Is Subversive" (2004), this

chapter aims at providing an account about the history of the Sub-Continent by reviewing colonial and post-colonies stories. Hence, this section grounds the methodological postcolonial[1] approach of this dissertation as it recognises the recurrence of the colonial hegemonic structures that were, and still are, developed by certain countries like the UK or the US over *other* cultures such as the Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi. It is in this sense that I understand that postcolonial art necessarily challenges the hegemony of an imperial influence and so the postcolonial artist offers *another voice* and *another vision* that constantly seeks to disestablish dominant artistic, politic or socio-economic discourses.

Consequently, Chapter I presents the cultural particularity of the South Asian Sub-Continent and its diaspora enhancing an evaluation of the previous colonial British intervention and an approximation to the current economic and socio-political situation of the present day Sub-Continent. As illustrative of this remark, I consider that the following words stated by Che Guevara in a speech delivered to The United Nations in December 1964 are still recurrent in our present age. He claimed that "the final hour of colonialism has struck, and millions of inhabitants of Africa, Asia and Latin America have risen to meet a new life and demand their unrestricted right to self-determination" (1) and so I believe that, as applied to the context of the post-Partition South Asian Diaspora (1947 onwards), Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair's films describe that there is still a long way towards that "new life" Guevara talked about. Under these postcolonial considerations, and deliberately avoiding discourses of victimisation, I have taken into consideration postcolonial *canonical* texts such as Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) and *Black Skins, White Masks* (1986), Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1979) Homi K. Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994), and Gayatri Ch. Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1995) as well as I have been inspired by *other* postcolonial critics and writings such as bell hooks's *Talking Back* (1989), Carol Boyce Davies's *Black Women, Identity and Writing: Migrations of the Subject* (1994), Annia Loomba's *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (1996), Avtar Brah's *Cartographies of Diaspora* (1996) or Virinder S. Kalra *et al.*'s *Diaspora and Hybridity* (2005). Subsequently, the postcolonial optics will enable me to analyse the contradictions, confusions and hybridity of the postcolonial identities depicted by Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair's characters as well as their own personal cartographies of diaspora.

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[1] Some scholars like Bill Aschroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin use the terms *postcolonial* and *post-colonial* with different nuances. The former would address the recurrence of influences still present in the world and the latter would highlight the notion that that time has passed. Nevertheless, I have decided to use *postcolonial* because, although I believe that both meanings are interwoven, postcolonial expresses the necessity of a postcolonial perspective to analyse the current situation of the world.

Chapter II will afterwards enhance a theoretical approach about diaspora and gender theories in postcolonial cinemas that will be applied to define the dynamics of the South Asian cultural idiosyncrasy. The former postcolonial background of this section therefore will present the subversive reading of our contemporary age as an abstract space of coexistence where, in relation to Avtar Brah's concept of "Diaspora Space" (1996), hybrid identities are produced. Likewise, it will be from this theoretical perspective that I will recognise how the transcultural contact performed at this Space leads to the construction of a hybrid identity that articulates the distinctive particularities of the South Asian diaspora together with the contemporary diversity of cultures.

By so doing, it is my intention to evaluate how the definition and production of a so-called postcolonial cinema explores the conflicts that, in terms of race and gender inequality, exist in that Diaspora Space. In this sense, to think about the representational politics of diaspora and its cinematographic representations will lead me to reveal the transnational dynamics of that Space and the lack of a definition that truly reflects the resultant diversity and its conflicts. At this stage, and by offering the term *hybrid cinema*, it is my attempt to focus on the contesting power of filmmaking as cartography of that cultural intersection and depiction of the resultant hybrid identities. Furthermore, I will prove the relevance of hybrid cinemas in the reality of the post-Partition South Asian diaspora, pointing at how Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair's films are true expressions of hybrid films that describe the transcultural flux of identities ignored by preceding definitions.

Hereby, it is also my purpose to acknowledge the subaltern position of women in both the Diaspora Space and the postcolonial cinemas and so I will provide a general approach to the location of the woman in the diaspora as a figure interwoven in what bell hooks called "the interlocking systems of domination—sex, race, class" (1981: 21) as well as in the prejudices and inequalities of cinema. Thus, this section will reflect the gender discrimination that still pervades our twenty-first century by reviewing the position of women filmmakers in the social and economic structures of cinema. Consequently, the analysis of Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair as female filmmakers of hybrid cinemas will allow me to illustrate and exemplify their importance as South Asian women in the diaspora who represent the racial and gender problematic of the whole world.

Accordingly, Chapter III examines the specific gender conflicts found in the selected films by Chadha and Nair. It is in this sense that it focuses on the depiction of the gender burden that circumscribes the notions of educational attainment, arranged marriages

and interracial love relationships of the South Asian woman in the diaspora. Therefore, I will highlight how Chadha and Nair both present characters that subvert the traditional male and white discourse of cinema in order to promote the new opportunities that, for them as women of the world, Diaspora Space offers. At this juncture, this dissertation adopts a feminist[2] perspective because, as it will be asserted throughout the following pages, it aims at establishing equality as the basis for any relationship between men and women. Through this feminist optics, I will offer a hopeful reading of the gender conflicts faced by the migrant woman who inhabits a subaltern position, where she stands under a double patriarchal and racist yoke imposed by both the receiving culture (from the UK and the US) and the South Asian community.

As a result of this conceptualisation, the following pages will prove the feminist recurrence of Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair's selected films through inspiring postcolonial feminist critics and writings such as African American Alice Walker and bell hooks, North American literary critic Susan Friedman or South Asian descendants Valerie Amos, Pratibha Parmar, Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Amrit Wilson. In this regard, Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair will be considered as pioneering female filmmakers with a postcolonial background and a feminist awareness that emerged at a time (early 1990s) when there were hardly any similar figures. Then, the chapter presents how both Chadha and Nair's characters interweave collaborative spaces that, out of the all-inclusive abstract Diaspora Space, make them feel stronger by providing an alternative all-female site from where they nurture and comfort each other towards their final empowerment as South Asian women in the Diaspora Space.

Having contextualised the critical and methodological approach of the following pages, let me state that I will be working with a set of selected movies directed by Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair which I have called *diasporic films*. I have chosen those features[3] which portray postcolonial experiences of the characters that are direct consequence of the constant cultural interaction and social connection among the UK and the US and the South Asian Sub-Continent. Similarly, these films provide an all-inclusive account of the South Asian diaspora because they are solely based on the transcultural conflicts that, in terms of race and gender, are encountered by the hybrid identities represented. It is in this sense that I will be dealing with Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993) and *Bend It like Beckham* (2002)

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[2] I understand *feminist* throughout this dissertation in the line of Spanish feminist Celia Varcárcel who refers to feminism as "that political tradition that aims at attaining an egalitarian and democratic society" (my translation, 123).
[3] A summary of plot and the most illustrative taglines is offered in the section *Summary of Selected Films*.

as representative of the South Asian diaspora and first/second generation born in the UK; Mira Nair's *Mississippi Masala* (1991) and *The Namesake* (2006) as illustrative of the same reality in the US context; and Gurinder Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice* (2004) and Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) as exemplary of how the South Asian diaspora in the UK and the US reciprocally connects back with the Sub-Continent.

To sum up, this dissertation fosters an empowering reading of the South Asian woman in the diaspora as well as a denunciation of the systems of inequality that, grounded in their historical roots, are still imposed to their/our daily routes. The spirit of this work is then that of subverting the misconceptions placed on the South Asian Diaspora and acknowledging the still recurrent consciousness-raising that against gender inequality must be implemented. It is here that Chadha and Nair's hybrid filmmaking opens an artistic and academic space from where women can talk back, speak aloud, be heard and, above all, empower us all.

CHAPTER 1

THE MANY *SOUTH ASIAS*
OF THE MIND

A HISTORICAL CONTEXTUALISATION

> The starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is "knowing thyself" as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory (Gramsci 324).

The South Asian Sub-Continent is characterised by the coexistence of the many cultural traits which co-live in the vastness of its own plural history. Nowadays, political, educational and artistic answers to the South Asian Sub-Continent seem to prevail over questions and, as a consequence, the Sub-Continent is simplistically conceptualised in a mere tautological analysis. In my opinion, the structure of this discourse is ineffective to define a civilisation which, as August Pániker asserts, it is "more interesting to wonder about than to answer to" (my translation, 8). Therefore, I propose a *questioning* approach to avoid the ever-existing writing of stereotypes in the study of the Sub-Continent's[1] cultural identity[2] for, as Sujeta Mehta asserts about the Indian reality, "every cliché has its reality in India, the labels that apply but that do not give an absolute truth" (4). In a way, and quoting Dipesh Chakrabarty's "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for Indian Pasts?" (1996), this *inquiring path* is the only possibility to subvert the "themes of failure, lack and inadequacy that so ubiquitously characterize the 'Indian' history" (1992: 230). It is in this sense that this chapter rephrases Salman Rushdie's famous remark of "the many Indias of the mind" (1999: 192) with *the many South Asias of the mind*, as an attempt to illustrate the diversity of homogenising discourses and misleading interpretations constructed about the South Asian Sub-Continent.

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[1] The first drafts of these pages, as well as the contextualisation of the associated academic work I undertook, were written following a distinction between *India/Indian* and India/India as an attempt to differentiate the Sub-Continent and the Republic of India. Nevertheless, the progressive critical reading and the analysis of the films proved my narrow-minded contextualisation. The metaphorical construction of *India* as a referent of the whole South Asian Sub-Continent (including the Republic of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Burma) proved itself misleading and simplistic as long as I carried out the research process. It is now by reviewing these pages, that I can corroborate how all film directors of the corpus of my work (including Mira Nair, Gurinder Chadha, Pratibha Parmar or Sandhya Suri) never define themselves as Indian but, instead, as Punjabi, Sikh, BrAsian, Indian American or citizens of the world. I therefore believe that any academic and pedagogical approach that truly aims at addressing the post-Partition cultural South Asian identity both from the Sub-Continent and its diaspora must avoid general references to India (which, in fact, it is not born as a demographic entity until Partition in 1947, and so designed merely following British interests), because they normally hide a restrictive Hindu/Hindi reality that does not exist as such beyond imperialistic discourses.

[2] *Cultural Identity* is understood throughout this dissertation within the parameters proposed by Stuart Hall in his article "Cultural Politics and Diaspora" where he points out that "cultural identity […] is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being' […] cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical they undergo constant transformation - subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power" (1992: 225).

Consequently, this first chapter provides a historical contextualisation of the South Asian culture(s) from the premise of what Helen Tiffin calls the "layering effect of history" (71). Hitherto, the chapter promotes an understanding of the history of the Sub-Continent through an inclusive and *multivocal* interpretation, looking at the many singular skeins that are interwoven in the cultural amalgam that defines the richness of a millenary historical *composite* which, with figures like Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair, is still in the making.

Accordingly, the first part of the chapter comprises the many historical events which, all along the Indus and Ganges, have left the sediment of multiple religious beliefs, a plural linguistic diversity and the existence of different structures of social privilege. What I have called Indian Palimpsest[3] is deliberately proposed to avoid the *Orientalist*[4] response given to statements such as Partha Mitter's "[what] does India contain?" (7), replies that are merely based on a colonial dichotomous discourse and a restrictive stereotyping. Here, the preference of the use Indian to South Asian aims at illustrating the historical density and consequent cultural diversity of the South Asian Sub-Continent as departing from Xavier Batalla famous remark, "India contains a lot of Indias" (my translation, 3).

Afterwards, in the second part of the chapter, I will deal with the notion of South *Asianness* beyond its presupposed Indian boundaries, gathering the many experiences of the Indian plurality throughout the particularities of the South Asian diaspora(s). As Benedict Anderson points out that "the biographies of nations and its peoples are never finished" (46) and Ana Agud claims that "India is a country that does not intend to break with anything that happened before […] always willing to bind the present moment with a real presence […] for they do not understand the concept of history but as a fragmented, contradictory myth, both allegorical and symbolical" (my translation[5], 12-18), I believe that a contextualisation of the Sub-Continent's historical complexity is absolutely necessary to understand the plurality and partiality of the films by Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair,

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[3] Palimpsest is defined by Bill Ashcroft *et al.* as "the parchment on which several inscriptions had been made after earlier ones had been erased. The characteristic of the palimpsest is that, despite such erasures, there are always traces of previous inscriptions that have been 'overwritten' " (2000: 174).

[4] When I use the terms *Orientalism* or *Orientalist* in italics throughout these pages I am always referring to the concept sketched by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1972) to address the imposition of a cultural differenciation established by the West in the East. In his own words, the cultural creation of the Orient is always "irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, *different*; then Europe is the other: rational, virtuous, mature, *normal*" (40).

[5] From the original quotation by Ana Agud: "La India es un país poco proclive a romper con cualquier cosa que haya ocurrido en el pasado […] siempre es constante su voluntad de enlazar el presente con una presencia real […] puesto que no conciben el concepto de historia sino como un mito fragmentario y contradictorio, alegórico a la par que simbólico" (12-18).

whose biographies and cartographies prove very relevant to understand the contradiction and discontinuities of their postcolonial identities.

Thence, the third part of the chapter presents the biography and filmography of the two filmmakers as a prior step to furthermore analyse their South Asian distinctiveness. Consequently, if Mira Nair's *Mississippi Masala* (1990) and Gurinder Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993) both display national South Asian identities as well as American and English peculiarities, then the following study of both *inwards* and *outwards* flights of the South Asian culture(s) is indispensable to understand the artistic grandiosity of the two figures chosen who, rather than "decoding" and "interpreting"[6], see culture for what it is, a hybrid[7] composite, identifying the intercultural and gender challenges that still need to be faced.

1-INWARDS FLIGHT TO THE HISTORY OF THE SOUTH ASIAN SUB-CONTINENT

India did never exist as India until the British *created* the concept. Created, in this sense, conveys the following nuances: The British *Orientalised* the image of a vast heterogeneous region, *continentalised*[8] the conception of India and *colonised* the land and minds of many people under a British patron. Thence, the artificiality of the unity of post-Partition India has the risk to domesticate India into stereotypical distortions that reduce the so-called Indian history to tropes such as the discriminatory social relationships based on caste

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[6] Gyan Prakash asserts that "to decode and interpret are the basic accounts of a simplistic anthropological study" (5).

[7] According to Bill Ashcroft *et al.* (2000), hybridity commonly refers to "the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization […] [and it] takes many forms: linguistic, cultural, political, racial, etc" (118). Homi K. Bhabha, in *The Location of Culture* (1994), subscribes the term with his reconception of "culture's hybridity" as the cultural identity that merges into the "contradictory and ambivalent Third Space of enunciation […] the in-between space that carries the international inscription and articulation of the cultural hybridity" (37-8). Besides, the concept of hybridity implies the mutuality and equality of the different cultures, all in contact and in conflict in the postcolonial age of transculturation beyond the colonial and imperialist discourse that have defined hybridity as a mere cross–breeding of two species, as Robert Young states in *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (1995). In my opinion, hybridity is the most appropriate term for the current disposition of cultures and societies because it combines Ashcroft *et al.*'s previously mentioned "postcolonial essence" to the national "in-between" conscience of the "Third Space" Bhabha defines in *The Location of Culture*. Accordingly, I propose that the cultural, linguistic political and racial hybridity that defines our current world trespasses and incorporates its postcolonial theoretical terms as part of current global contact zone where we all live, what Ashcroft *et al.* calls the "cross-pollination of the hybrid" (118), the authentic essence of the so many times called our contemporary age. In other words, the proliferation of a universal diaspora identity understood, quoting Stuart Hall, "diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference (1992: 253).

[8] According to K.N. Chaudhuri, the notion of Asia as a continent responds to the classifying Western will. In his own words, "the conception of Asia as a […] is essentially Western. There is no equivalent word in any Asian language or such a concept in the domain of geographical knowledge" (23).

(*varna**[9]), the notions of honour *(izzat*)* and the power of kinship organisations *(biraderi*)*. Hence, so as to thoroughly understand the peculiarity of the territorial, religious and linguistic variables of the Sub-Continent in the 21st century (Image 1 and Image 2 in *Appendix of Images*) I will be contextualising the historical origin, development and current outcome of the multiplicity and transculturation[10] which defines the South Asian Sub-Continent as the result of what Herman Kulke calls "the dynamics of cultural borrowing" (24).

1.1-*THE INDIAN PALIMPSEST*. A FRACTAL OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORICAL CONFRONTATIONS IN THE SOUTH ASIAN SUB-CONTINENT UNTIL THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BRITISH RAJ

Although the oldest vestiges of the Sub-Continent are the cities of Harappa (1800 BC) and Mohenjo-Daro[11] (1700 BC), the Aryans and the so-called Vedic culture are considered the first civilisation with written record in South Asia. The Aryans arrived at the Indus valley through the territory that currently occupies Iran, carrying an "immense absorbed culture" (Kulke 36) and a great deal of Central Asian Aryan heritage[12]. The Aryan arrival at the South Asian Sub-Continent introduced the permeability of the many contacts that integrate the historical strata along the Indus and Ganges, for there was not a fixed and straight pattern of migration and thus, as Pravan K. Varma points out, "the Aryans left a huge cultural, linguistic and religious/philosophical legacy" (my translation, 21).

Hence, the Aryans instituted the first social differentiation in the Sub-Continent when, due to the loss of the semi nomadic agricultural and pastoral activity, the work division started. This meant the emergence of the *varna** structure, later to be transformed into the caste system by the Mughals, the Raj and the *Hindutva** nationalism. The *Vedas* (the Aryan revered texts describing the procedures for sacred rituals) portrayed the polytheist shrine of the Aryan civilisation that was dedicated to the forces of nature and,

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[9] In the *Glossary of Terms* of this work, longer definitions for relevant non-English terms (in italics and with the symbol *) are provided.
[10] Transculturation is understood throughout this dissertation following Mara Louis Pratt's definition in her inspiring *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992), where she defines transculturation as "a phenomenon of the contact zone […] the social space where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relationships of dominance and subordination" (4).
[11] Both settlements were accidentally discovered by British officers working on the construction of the Indian railway in 1920. British historians determined that both settlements were simple Mesopotamic heritages, an option later rejected by scholars such as Herman Kulke, Burton Stein and Enrique Gallud-Jardiel who recognised them as original *Indian* indigenous civilisations.
[12] There is an interesting debate about the precedence of the Aryan presence in the Sub-Continent. Scholars such as Edwin Bryant claim that the Aryans came from the Eurasian plain. Nevertheless, Indian post-Partition nationalism proclaims that the Aryans came from within the own Sub-Continent.

among others, the figures of Prajapati (creator of the Universe) and Vishnu (the god of Protection). Nevertheless, the *Veda*s did not respond to any religious or philosophical credo, but to a mixture of both disciplines.

The *varna** of the Brahmans would transmit the Vedas doctrine, positioning the Aryan diffusion of culture at the origin of the social control involved in the dogmas of revealed knowledge (*apauruseya**). At this point, Buddhism[13] and Jainism[14], with their understanding of human existence as a part of an interconnected whole *(pratiya samutpada*)*, would praise the necessity of the self-knowledge development (*sramana**) as opposed to that *revealed* doctrine. Their challenge to the Vedic notions of physical, psychological and spiritual doctrine (*dharma**) would denounce the *varnas** structure throughout a dialogue based on the permeability of the three discourse (Vedic, Buddhist and Jainist) especially in the Punjab[15], where the Buddhist and Jainist peregrinations became the base of trade and the source of cultural and linguistic intercourse among the many Aryan communities of the times. Thence, the Aryan settlement hosted, as Herman Kulke points out, "the beginning of a heterogeneous flux of contacts and dialect accommodations" (12) which would soon turn into internal disputes among the Aryan regions.

With this heterogeneous cultural background, Alexander the Great would arrive at the Punjab around 327 BC from Central Asia to find the Aryan inconsistencies and promote the expansion of Greek political administration and cultural influence over the Sub-Continent under the Greek conquest. For instance, the Greek structures of social community and economy alongside the Hellenistic literary forms would illustrate the two classical epics of the tradition South Asian civilisation, *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*[16].

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[13] Buddha appropriated the Vedic concepts of *samsara* and *dharma* to illustrate the notions of individual liberation (*mokhsa**) and the understanding of the notions of cause and effect (karma and nirvana) as the means to escape from the spiritual suffering (*dukha**). Therefore, Siddharta Gautama's *dharma* was based on a plural and inclusive understanding of human existence as a part of an interconnected whole (*pratiya samutpada**) from which the individual had a possibility to break free, on condition of a heterogeneous respectful consideration for any of the heterogeneous components involved.

[14] Like Buddhism, Jainism recognised no god and proclaimed the necessity to break with the material world and the concept of suffering (*dukha*)*. Nevertheless, their scission from the Brahmanical doctrinal transmission (*apauruseya**) soon derived into radical notions of non-violence (*ahimsa**) and non-possessiveness (*aparigraha*)*.

[15] The Punjab is a region in the North-West of the South Asian Sub-Continent. Due to this geographical situation, the Punjab is one of the most historically dense areas of India, for it was the middle-passage used, for instance, by the Aryans and the Muslims. Besides, the Buddhist and Jainist traditions organised their first pilgrimages over the Punjab land (to arrive at the Himalaya), so the flux and transculturation of peoples around the area has a millenary tradition. Also connected to this religious diversity, the Punjabi region around the city of Amristar was the main territory for Khalistan (the attempt to create a Sikh estate). The main languages spoken in the current province of Punjab are Hindi, English, Punjabi and Urdu. Under these premises, it is very important to remember the fact that both Mira Nair and Gurinder Chadha's Indian backgrounds are traced in the Punjab and its historical palimpsest.

[16] Fernando Wulff Alonso's *Grecia en India. El repertorio griego del Mahabharata* studies how *The Iliad* is the primary narrative source of both Indian epics. Wulff also highlights the great amount of significant Greek historical sediments that can be found along the Sub-Continent in terms of dialect nuances and artistic conceptions.

Furthermore, the inner regional cohesion provided by Alexander the Great would be used, in the following years, by Mauryan Emperor Ashoka (269 to 231 BC) to establish, as Enrique Gallud-Jardiel points out, "coexistence, assimilation and tolerance as the base of his empire across the Sub-Continent" (my translation, 45).

Thus, the religious and social organisation of the Sub-Continent was in a continuous process of remaking its own history. As to illustrate this constancy, the Aryan Brahmanism also initiated a transformation after the conversion of Emperor Ashoka to Buddhism. The teachings from the *Vedas* were *mixed* with elements from the *Ramayana* and the principal Aryan deity became a figure composed by three earthly manifestations, where gods Shiva and Vishnu were defined as two possible avatars of Brahma[17]. At the same time, the Brahmans strengthened the influence of their power and toughened the *varnas** system "as a social totality" (Stein 146) because they could feel the progressive arrival of the Muslim world at the Sub-Continent since the times of Alexander the Great, and so they aimed at forming a counterpart Aryan identity to survive the Muslim expansion.

Accordingly, from the 8th to the 12th century, the history of the Sub-Continent is unveiled throughout the many histories of contact[18] among the remnants of the Aryan settlement, the Greek Classical patterns and the impact of the arrival of Islam. However, British historians such as James Mill (1773-1836) obviated this cultural coexistence in the three fold historical division of the Sub-Continent provided by the British: Aryan and Classical Period (4th BC up to the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in 1206), Muslim Empire (1206- 1765) and British takeover (17th century onwards). As defined by this division, the British occupancy clearly tried to reduce the presence of Islam in the Sub-Continent to an isolated moment, ignoring the also-existent Arab enrichment of Europe through the Eurasian plain, introducing the decimal system (*tarikh-i-hind**) and the knowledge about alternative medicine and holistic therapies (*ayurveda**), alongside texts such as *Panchatantra*. Thence, if the Arab empire was, as Pániker asserts, "a universal civilisation" (my translation, 231), part of its power departed from the Indus and the Ganges. In this sense, the initial and progressive introduction of the Muslim world in the Punjab is still erroneously reduced to the economic greed and violent arrival of Muhammad

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[17] Image of this deity split composed by three avatars is attached in the Image 3 of the *Appendix of Images.*

[18] Besides, there was an important religious coexistence from the 8th to the 11th century between the Arab World, the Brahmanical doctrine and Buddhism. Ashoka recognised the three doctrines as *zimmis* (respected *revealed* faiths such as Christianity and Judaism). At the same time, Islam was trying to isolate Zoroastrism, the Persian community who had arrived and settled in India from Persia after Muslim prosecution. Sooni Taraporevala (screenplaywriter for Mira Nair's *Salaam Bombay* and *Mississippi Masala*) adapted Rohinton Mistry's Governor Prize winner novel *Such a Long Journey* (1991), a very powerful depiction of the current challenges faced by the Zoroastrian community in contemporary Mumbai.

de Ghazni and the Mukkhals[19] (in the significant year 1000 AD), who radicalised the Islam differentiation[20] and preceded the unification of the Muslim power under the cultural opulence of the Mughal Empire. Mira Nair's *Kamasutra* (1999) is settled in this historical period and illustrates the wealthy and cultural pomposity gathered around the Mughals.

Although the Muslim Empire in the Sub-Continent started to fragment through its main religious foundations because of the struggle between Shi'as and Sunnis[21], Al-Hind (Arab denomination for the Islamised valleys along the Indus and Ganges) left an implausible Persian speaking layer in the Indian history. The Taj Mahal, built by the Muslim emperor Shah Jahan during 1631-1654, shines the most, illuminating the paradox of seeing a Muslim palace as the main symbol for the Republic of India, representing the irony of living between many worlds, as we see in Mira Nair's *The Namesake* (2006) with the Gaunguli familiar visit to the monument.

1.2- THE JEWEL OF THE CROWN: THE COLONIAL ENCOUNTER AS THE END OF THE INTEGRATING DIVERSITY AND THE BEGINNING OF A CATEGORISING SOCIETY

The British East Indies Company arrived in the Sub-Continent in the year 1600 to take advantage of the internal fights of the Muslim system of government (based on economic taxes) and so control the port of Kolkata. The British Company soon established alliances with the still surviving Hindu kingdoms administered by the Maharathas in order to counteract their plans for the Sub-Continent: the absolute control of the land resources and

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[19] The Mukkhals were Africans and Turkish black slaves recruited for military purposes and will found the Delhi sultanate in 1206-1526.

[20] Al-Beruni (973-1038), a Muslim chronicle writer in India stated:

> The Hindus believe that there is no religion like theirs, no science like theirs. They are by nature niggardly in communicating that which they know, and they take the greatest possible care to withhold it from men of another caste among their own people, still much more, of course, from any foreigner. […] If they travelled and mixed with each other nations, they would soon change their mind, for their ancestors were not as narrow-minded as the present generation is (22).

The vigency of this discourse in the contemporary political scenario is doubtless. The current debate of the British National Party (BNP) as in February 2010, when the conservative right-wing oriented British part is set to change their rules and allow membership to the representative of the Sikh community in the UK, Rajinder Singh, is settled in the pillars of the demonization of Islam by the other religions in the Sub-Continent. The heading of <u>The Guardian</u>'s quoted article clearly summarises the Islamophic oppositional nature of the speech "Every Hindu and Sikh should be praising the BNP" (Kleeman 21), followed by Singh's testimony about how Islam caused the Partition slaughter meanwhile the British interference was a matter of "running away". The danger of this opinion clearly unveils the complexity of the cultural identity of the Sub-Continent and the contemporary connivance of cultures that should be expanded in further pages.

[21] After the death of Mahoma, the Sunnis (term which means *example* and *illustration of the words and the action* and that represent 80-90% of the Islam believers) recognized that the succession after Mahoma died should correspond to a member of His tribe, the Quraish. The Chi'es (meaning *descendant of Shiat Ali*, Mahoma's cousin and brother-in-law) proclaim that Mohama's successor should be a noble man of the community, regardless of skin colour or occupation.

the mental rule of the British canon. So as to do so, the British occupation guaranteed the mental surrender of the many religious and linguistic *South Asias* to the reducing dichotomy British/non-British, which affected every realm of social and individual life: British soon became synonymous with power and coloniser meanwhile *Indians* referred to the colonised non-British *other(s)*[22]. In this sense, the British Raj fostered the distinction of the non-British as the main foundation for the British Empire. It is in this sense that the following section reflects on the process through which the British rolled the Sub-Continent flat and turned it to "India" and their "Jewel of the Crown" by a three-fold process: the establishment of a religious dichotomy, the expansion of English as the Lingua Franca and the colonial reinforcement of the discriminatory social structures. In view of this British triple control unveiled over the Sub-Continent, I intend to encourage a subtle reflection about our contemporary age based on the fact that, before the 19th century, India was an economic and cultural magnet and, after the British takeover, India had succumbed to itself.

Therefore, if the Raj was based on the creation of a British/non-British difference, the imposition of a religious dichotomy soon proved itself the most powerful weapon to place a category from where establish the interlocking structures of power for a colonial Empire. Thus, the religious map of the Sub-Continent was reduced to a mere dichotomy: the great Hinduism[23] and the horrendous Islam. Hinduism was misleadingly identified with the illuminating and exotic legend of the past Indo-Aryan civilisation, what Henry Maine called in 1875, in his lecture "The Effects of Observation of India on Modern Europe": "[The] very family of mankind to which we belong […] turned to barbarism after the Muslim arrival" (28). According to Maine, Hinduism was the religion of "every man", while Islam represented the "darkness and violence of the world" (32). With the destruction of the religious diversity and the creation of a restrictive separation, the British had fulfilled what Karl Marx called the "British double mission of India". In his own words, "England had to fulfil a double vision in India, the first was destructive and the second regenerating: to annihilate the Asian society and to establish the basis for an Occidental order" (44). The discourse is a clear example of the contemporary enhancement and *Orientalisation* of Hindu iconography as opposed to the *demonisation* of Islam in the cultural background created after the 9/11th (2001), 3/11th (2004) and 7/07th (2005) terrorist attacks in New York, Madrid and London.

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[22] As previously cited, Edward Said defines the qualities of the O*rientalised other* figure are those of "irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, *different*" as opposed to that of the European self "rational, virtuous, mature, normal" (my emphasis, 40).
[23] Buddhism, Jainism and even Sikhism were reduced by the British to *other manifestations* of Hinduism.

Following Marx's terms, the second stage of the colonial conquest fostered the institution of English as the lingua franca imposed by the British Empire dominance over the Sub-Continent. Likewise, if "language is place" (101) as asserted by Makarand Paranjape, British India was dominated by the strictest accent of metropolitan London since that linguistic standard of English became the language of diplomacy and bureaucracy. The Empire needed officers (bankers, merchants…) for its development and so, members of high-class society of the Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta[24] (capitals of the richest Provinces of the Sub-Continent Punjab, Maharastra and Bengal) were soon instructed in English to become *accommodated* (a word that should be exchanged for *domesticated*) to the British society. As a result, the vernacular languages identified those who did not speak English and therefore could not speak to the institutions. Under these terms, Sir William Jones's Asiatic Society of Calcutta[25] was a propagandistic attempt to master the vernacular languages of the Sub-Continent besides making sure that the *discovery of India* would be narrated within the European ideological discourse of reductive *Orientalism*.

Moreover, as the vernacular languages defined the lowest classes of the British Indian society, England strengthened the social inequalities across the Sub-Continent as the centre of its power. The richer were richer, the poorer were poorer and the metropolis was always wealthier. Since the very first arrival at the Sub-Continent, British officers claimed that, as British historian Thomas R. Metcalf cites, "difference had to be visible" (116). The British sought information about the chieftains and the resources of every village and city and soon realised that the Aryan *varnas** was a structure around which they could re-order[26] the Indian life. As Augusto Pániker corroborates, the extremely unequal and discriminatory chaste system (the simplification developed by the British administration out of the *varnas**) is a consequence of the colonial influence: "[Chaste], with the negative and terrible nuances we know it in the 21st century is the consequence of the encounter between the Indian society and the British Empire" (my translation[27], 48).

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[24] The reader should notice that, in former references, I used the Bengali name of Kolkata and now I use the English imposed name to the cities of Mumbay (Bombay) and Kolkata (Calcutta). I will use the British standardisation of the names in this section to reinforce that I am dealing with the period of colonial occupancy and domination. In net section, and as I will point out, I will subvert this option and will choose the original name of the city before the arrival of the Company.

[25] A philological foundation established in 1856 to study the closed relationships among Sanskrit, Greek, Latin and Celtic Languages. The Society produced grammars for Bengali (Nathaniel Halhed) and Hindi (John Gilchrist).

[26] The Empire's image thence clearly followed the traditional colonial notions of East/West, Europe/orient summarised by Edward Said in *Orientalism*, as "the oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, *different*; […] Europe is the other: rational, virtuous, mature, *normal*" (40).

[27] Translated from Pániker's following original quotation: "El sistema de castas, con los negativos y tremendos matices por los que es conocido en el siglo XXI es consecuencia directa del encuentro de la sociedad India con el Imperio Británico" (48).

In consequence, the colonial reinvention of the *varnas** system led to a radicalisation of the social inequity and to an encouragement of the British/non-British social disparity as the main discriminatory variable of the new colonial structure imposed over the Sub-Continent lands and minds. For instance, peasants from rural and traditional settlements lost their property over British trade and so, by becoming unemployed, they could be appointed to construct the railways that would cross the Sub-Continent so that merchandises would arrive faster at British harbours. Therefore, British India was *feeding* the prosperity of the British Industrial Revolution. Meanwhile, the British Empire had conceptualised India according to its economic purposes and thus the British Parliament strengthened the differences between extremely poor rural areas and flourishing (in an English fashion) cities such as Bombay, Delhi or Calcutta. Catastrophes such as the 1860s Bengal famine reinforced the differences and proved that the *future* of British Indian society followed British fancy.

Not only did the British conceptualise the difference between Great Britain and the Sub-Continent in terms of history, language and religion, but also through gender. The classic myth of the *coloniser* as a masculine force and the *colonised* as a female weak figure was immensely recurrent in the creation of British India. Hence, the British Empire defined its intervention in the Sub-Continent as an attempt to *rescue*[28] the classical values and prosperity of Ancient India, guaranteeing that Indian women could obtain the neglected freedom both by religious stereotypes (temple prostitutes or women constrained to the veil) and chauvinist commands (women had to stay at home and bring up the children). By so doing, the British strengthened the *Oriental* differentiation of the Sub-Continent and it inhabitants

It is in this sense that the British occupancy toughened gender differentiation and so they sketched images of Indian women only as servants and victims through the passing of laws such as the "Abolition of the Sati" (1829), the "Hindu Widow Remarriage Act" (1856) and "The Age Consent Age"[29] (1891). British diplomats like Kenneth Balltchet proclaimed that prostitution was "a hereditary chaste" (14) and that an Indian woman was the perfect

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[28] The British Empire proclaimed that the values and grandiosity of Aryan India had to be returned back to the Indians. This discourse, as Herman Kulke notes (1988) of the English colonisation of the Indian mind, a clear example of the empire's attempt to dismember the particularities of the Sub-Continent to its mere difference: India and Indian should be synonymous with dark, poor and underdeveloped while British meant the prodigious splendour of a developed and advanced society that attempted to take India back to a British construction, that of the brilliant Aryan India.

[29] Indian scholars Lata Mani and Mrinalini Sinha reinforce my statement. Mani, in her article "Contentious Traditions: the Debate on Sati in Colonial India", defends that the passing of those laws were "a further step to demonize the Indian society and domesticate [again this word comes up] Indian women" (98). Accordingly, Sinha proclaims that "there were not any liberal intentions but the desire to emphasise the uncivilised and unmanly practises of the Bengalis" (34).

exotic servant for British officer's wife as he stated that "the pure-self sacrificing evangelical version of the Angel of the House of the Victorian times" (99). If Indians were non-British, then Indian women were non-British women condemned to a double subaltern position[30], another turn of the screw for the British appalling endeavour to dismember the Sub-Continent's society and so guarantee the British colonial profit. As a result, the British fostered a psychological destruction of the Sub-Continent's possibilities, enhancing the vision that India had no hope of survival but for being under the British control. Consequently, the 1947 Indian Partition was advocated to a dramatic venture.

1.3-THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY AS A POSTCOLONIAL ABSTRACTION: THE *PARTITION* OF THE RELIGIOUS, LINGUISTIC AND SOCIAL DISTINCTIVENESS

The Partition of India (1947) left two nations (India and Pakistan) paradoxically split and combined[31] according to religious principles. Factually, Indians and Pakistanis were forced to create a national identity[32] and reduce their millenary inner psyches to the creation of a

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[30] Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci firstly used the term subaltern to refer to those structures and peoples that were no active benefiters from a hegemonic structure of power. The School of Subaltern Studies (SSS) was founded in the early 1980s by Ranajit Guha as an attempt to explain how the British occupancy was the main cause of the political turmoil and critical socio-economic prospects of the Sub-Continent. Guha's *The Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency* (1983) , a testimony of the British occupancy in the Sub-Continent from 1783 to 1900 told by the South Asian peasants will for subversion, initiated the subversive tone of a School that includes scholars that inspire these pages. Some figures are Touraj Atabaki, Homi K. Bhabha, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Partha Chatterjee, Sudipta Kaviraj, Gyan Prakash, Edward Said and Susie Tharu and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. I personally consider that Spivak's definition of what Subaltern is one of the most enhancing remarks in postcolonial theory. In her own words,

> [Subaltern] is not just a classy word for oppressed, for Other, for somebody who's not getting a piece of the pie […] In postcolonial terms, everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern - a space of difference. Now who would say that's just the oppressed? The working class is oppressed. It's not subaltern [...]. Many people want to claim subalternity. They are the least interesting and the most dangerous. I mean, just by being a discriminated-against minority on the university campus, they don't need the word 'subaltern' […] [they] should see what the mechanics of the discrimination are. They're within the hegemonic discourse wanting a piece of the pie and not being allowed, so let them speak, use the hegemonic discourse. They should not call themselves subaltern (1995a: 25).

[31] I use the verbs *split* and *combine* because the territorial setting of boundaries answered to the dramatist d lack of political consensus involved in the two verbs. Indian and Pakistani *inhabitants* were divided and later agglutinated in two countries only due to their religion. On the contrary, and as it has been seen, neither India nor Pakistan existed as an only-religion based country.

[32] By nation and nationalism as an imaginary construction, I am echoing Benedict Anderson's *Imaginary Communities*, where he conceptualises nation as a mere imaginative and abstract concept created by a community, not as an existing entity. Also, I believe that the definition given by North American historian Boyd S. Shafer in "Ten Beliefs and Conditions for a National Culture" (1955) enlightens the psychological realm of the word *nation*. In Shafer's own words, the concept of nation unveils "[a] certain level of territorial boundaries […] a bunch of common cultural traits […] the dependency upon shared social and economic institutions […] the existent will for an independent government, a certain belief in a common historical origin, devotion for the values of the new nation in the making, pried and nostalgia for common tragedies, knowledge about other nationalisms, hostility to those other nationalisms that are menace for the own nationalist pillars and the hope for the glorious national future" (7-8). Following these theoretical considerations, I particularly find stimulating Homi K. Bhabha's essay "DissemiNation: The Limits of the Modern Nation" (1989) where

free nation constructed on the basis of a political re-structured and de-personalised double otherness promoted only from the United Kingdom's axis. Consequently, Partition was established as the last step of the British Empire's destruction over the Sub-Continent, as it was afterwards illustrated by the fact that the British abandoned the South Asian Sub-Continent knowing that the possibilities of prosperity of the region were very uncertain. The same happened with the previous existent cultural diversity because, as Agustín Pániker declares, "after Partition, an ever existent tradition of pluralism, heteroglossia and interfecundation has been anguishing in the World of modern Indian ever changing political relationships" (my translation[33], 452). At this point, it is my belief that any current socio-politic and media reference to the Republic of India or Pakistan should involve a process of critical reflection about their postcolonial reality and the possible new colonial writings that may be based on that previous imperial double otherness that was imposed.

Subsequently, as previously asserted, the British Partition of India acknowledged the creation of the Republic of India and the Republic of Pakistan to radicalise the violent confrontation of the religious Hindu/Muslim[34] dichotomy. The religious polarisation of the Sub-Continent could be summarized in the anecdote told in Augusto Pániker's *Índika*, describing Gandhi's visit to Delhi in November 1947 (two months after Partition) when Gandhi was perplexed at the fact of not seeing a Muslim person in Chadni Chowk, Delhi's city centre and previously the heart of Hindu/Muslim osmosis of languages, festivals and clothes. Nevertheless, the dissection of the Sub-Continent had already attended the political scission of The National Congress Party by mere religious reasons and so, in 1906, Ali Jinnah[35] headed the Muslim separation from the National Congress Party with the creation of The Muslim League. The Muslim political religious break took place in the beginning of the twentieth century, when the British officers were fostering (with an imperialist

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he addresses the abstractness of nation by deconstructing the nation's strategies of cultural identification and the discourse used to approach the nation's identity. According to Bhabha's theoretical terms, a nation is made but out of its dissemination, an idea that will be very helpful in the contextualisation of the South Asian diaspora.

[33] Pániker original quotation says: "Tras la Partición, la siempre constante presencia de pluralismo, heteroglosia y la interfecundación característica del Sub-Continente se ha ido extinguiendo bajo el Mundo de la constantemente cambiante democracia política de la República de India" (452).

[34] Although explaining the main ideological differences among Hindus and Muslims in a footnote is merely impossible, the principal divergences of both religions at this restrictive level of post-Partition religious dichotomy can be summarized as follow: Hinduism is a polytheist religion which considers life as constant cycle of reincarnations (*samsara**) and praises the cow as the holy animal. Islam does not recognise the notion of shrine and, instead, promotes the ascetics to follow Mahoma and the teachings of the Koran while condemning the pig as an animal of complete pollution.

[35] Ali Jinnah was the founder of the Muslim League and so he is considered the founder of Pakistan. His birthday is a national holyday for he played an important role in the 1946 British Cabinet Mission to India, the precursor of the 1947 Partition, where he gained a seat for himself and the so-called Muslim rights of the independent state of Pakistan.

endeavour) the Hindu passion of rescuing cows[36] from Muslim slaughterhouses. As a reaction to what the Muslim Indians thought an Indian-British alliance against Islam, The Muslim League would soon radicalise their religious thought and political action to claim that, as Jinnah writes to Gandhi in 1944, "Muslims and Hindus are two different nations from any definitory paradigm" (Jinnah qtd. in Wolpert 32).

Besides, with a world on the verge of the breakout of the Second World War (WWII), Partition meant that the old Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) would support India while the US would hold up Pakistan. However, neither of them would try to solve the problems which arose as a consequence of the 1947 Partition: the upheavals of Kashmir[37] and the calamities suffered by East Pakistan[38] before turning into Bangladesh. With this background, current Western stereotypes about the Sub-Continent such as the Hindu ascetic, the Muslim chauvinist domination illustrated by the so called derogating veil, the democratic chaos of the Republic of India or the terrorist attacks suffered in Mumbay[39] in January 2009 are, as formerly stated, the still present testimony of the inheritance of previous colonial times. Thence, in order to understand the historical process of our so-called global world and with the purpose of demystifying the cultural stereotypes about the Sub-Continent, Nair and Chadha's films prove themselves more than necessary.

In addition to the religious upheavals of the territorial division, Partition also strengthened the categorisation of the Sub-Continent into a plural linguistic and social scenario. Accordingly, the colonial and postcolonial pluri-linguistic reality of the Sub-Continent was reduced to a subordinating classification: two official languages (Hindi and English) and the recognition of twenty-two dialects (as the Eight Constitution of the Republic of India, 2006, presently proclaims). Although the British Empire established

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[36] On the other hand, Islam demonised the pig. Nowadays, the struggle still continues, as we can see with the recent controversy surrounding Sarah Maple's painting *Haram* (2007), condemned by the Muslim community for representing a woman dressed with the hijab embracing a pig, the evil animal for Islam. (See Image 4 in the *Appendix of Images*).

[37] Kashmir was the name given to the northwestern part of the Indian Sub-Continent in the 14th century, when it established itself as one of the wealthiest princely states of India. After Partition, the region was divided into three sub-provinces to accommodate the region according to their triple majority of religious believes: the Hindu Indian provinces of Jammu and Ladakh (the fertile valley of the area), the Muslim Pakistani province of Azad Kashmir and the Buddhist Chinese administration based in Kanjut and Aksai Chain.

[38] The 1970 elections in Pakistan resolved the victory of the two rival parties: the Awami League wins in East Pakistan (Bengali speaking) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) West Pakistan (Urdu speaking). Nevertheless, East Pakistan ignored the victory of the Awami League, illegalised the party and prosecuted the East Pakistan intellectuals. The East Pakistani survivors would found the Mukti Bahini, a radical organisation which gathered help from India through Indira Gandhi. Nixon and Kissinger ignored the problem and continued their diplomatic support to Pakistan. Nowadays, The US political speech situates Pakistan as the third most dangerous country in the world.

[39] As a part of the Hindu nationalist re-making of the Republic of India (*Hindutva**), cities such as Calcutta, Madras or Bombay shifted their names in order to get closer to the Sanskrit roots. Thus, Calcutta turned into Kolkata, Madras to Chennai (a name which bears the French influence in the area back from the 17th c.) and Bombay to Mumbay.

English as the lingua franca, the British metropolis respected Urdu[40] while still dealing with the devaluated Muslim kingdoms during the first years of the British occupation. In this controversial setting, Hindi had become a colonial instrument to foster the differences in the violent atmosphere of social confrontation that surrounded the Hindu/Muslim divergence and there was a great rejection towards Urdu speakers. In an increasing violent atmosphere, Urdu would then be categorised as official language by both the British Empire and the traditional Hindu high classes to avoid the worsening of the situation. Sheldon Pollock, in his *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia,* gathers instance of the prejudiced statements that illustrate the discriminatory endeavour of the linguistic reality. Some of these examples include references to usual quotations like: "Urdu made documents illegible", "Urdu encouraged forgery" and "Urdu encouraged the use of Persian-Arab words" (24).

Furthermore, it should be said that post-Partition India not only speaks in English, Hindi or Urdu, but in Bengali, Marathi, Tamil or Punjabi (among many). For instance, the popular Hindi films (erroneously gathered under the label of *Bollywood**) use a non-Sanskritisated version of Hindi. Equally, South Asian teenagers are brought up in an atmosphere of *Hinglish*, the linguistic hybridisation of English and Hindi as a result of the digitalization of popular culture (DVDs, VCRs…) and the contact with and from the South Asian communities in the diaspora. In this sense, films like Gurinder Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993) and Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* (2001), alongside with the late 2009 Oscar triumphant Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), illustrate the Hinglish tendency and guarantee its understanding in the Sub-Continent as well as in the diaspora. In this sense, the appearance of a debate about Indian English also echoes the discourses of dominance and oppression to anticipate the postcolonial discussion about the *mixture* or *hybridity* created from the colonial intervention (theoretically accounted in Chapter II of this dissertation). Nevertheless, I would like to introduce the idea that Indian English exemplifies what Barbadian writer E. K. Brathwaithe calls, when he talks about the use of English in the Caribbean, a "national language"[41] (314): a permeated *reconfiguration* of a

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[40] Hindi and Urdu are both dialects from the Khari Bholi, the original dialect from Sanskrit in the Western Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. They are, as Michael C. Saphiro points ou*t*, both are "standardised forms of the same language and can be either understood in a spoken level" (305). Their differences appear in the written form: Hindi adapted Devengari and Sanskrit vocabulary and Urdu took Arab, Turkish and Persian script. Saphiro states that Hindi and Urdu are languages clearly composed out of the interassimilation of many languages, "linguistic diasystems" (307) as Spanish-Ladino or Dutch-Afrikaans.

[41] Although Brathwaite refers to the linguistic creolisation of the Caribbean, I think that the term and the Caribbean reality are perfect images of the Indian postcoloniality: a great diversity of cultures, the arrival/departure of the British colonial empire and the coexistence of many distinctiveness and languages.

language infused by the autochthonous adoption of the many historical layers of the Sub-Continent. Indian writer Raja Rao sketches this idea in her foreword to *Kanthapura*[42]:

> [The] telling has not been easy. One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word 'alien' yet English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up – like Sanskrit or Persian was before – but not of our emotional make-up. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our language and in English. We cannot like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians (vii).

In my opinion, only by bearing in mind all this cultural and historical background can the reality of the Sub-Continent be understood.

Consequently, the current postcolonial situation in the Sub-Continent needs to confront its own traditional heterogeneity and social contrasts to recognise the still existent colonial roles, and so overcome extremely Hindu nationalist depersonalisation and encounter its historical palimpsest. Likewise, post-Partition India, Pakistan and Sri-Lanka should been categorised beyond dreams of being a "superpower"[43] or being embroidered in the discourse of the global world. Hereby, a description about the diversity found in the South Asian diaspora(s) is essential to contextualise the many realities hidden behind the adjectives South Asian and Indian and the challenges that, both from the Sub-Continent and its diaspora, are still to be faced. At this point, the realities behind the works by Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair are but a clear illustration of what the Sub-Continent and its diaspora still need to confront.

2- OUTWARDS FLIGHT OF SOUTH ASIAN CULTURES: THE MANY INDIAN DIASPORAS

After having traced the historical complexity of the South Asian Sub-Continent, now it is time to study the dispersal of the peoples and cultures of the Sub-Continent around the world. Accordingly, this section aims at presenting the peculiarities of the South Asian

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[42] *Kanthapura* (1905) narrates the village's revolt against a domineering plantation based on the Gandhian ideal of non-violence. Its "Foreword" stresses how legend penetrates everyday *Indian* life under British dominion and English expression.

[43] Sonia Gandhi, in her 2003 speech to open the National Congress party, addressed the audiences with a speech entitled "Is India the Next Superpower?" and the idea that the concept of being a superpower involved a new adaptation of Western imperialist concepts of hegemony, aggression and power politics of post-Partition India.

diaspora and so it illustrates the notion that the Indian identity does not only correspond to a static reading of the traditions around the Sub-Continent but to a combination of both the inwards and outwards movement of South Asian people around the world. Here, I will be using India and Indian within a two-fold nuance: India as the land spanned under the institution of British Colonial India and the post-Partition Republic of India where both Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair's personal cartographies depart from. I will leave the inclusion and study of the Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan diasporas for further studies, although it must be remembered that some of the migrants left the Sub-Continent as British Indian citizenships and became Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Sri Lankan in their own migration. Thence, the convergent study of all those *Indias* is yet another component of what I have categorised as the many South Asias of the mind, the complexity of the postcolonial identity(ies) in the Sub-Continent, a product of the diversity of the many cultures that are currently in contact in both a psychical and a temporal space. Homi K. Bhabha exemplifies the previous complexity when he states that "the dissemination of the peoples of a nation should be considered as an important part of a national psyche" (1990: 204). Therefore, by contextualising the Indian diaspora during colonial times and after Partition (1947), I intend to display some light on the intricacy of the Indian cultural identity and so understand the coherent background and social commitment of the Indian imaginary which appears in the films by Nair and Chadha.

1.1. RAW MATERIALS AND PEOPLES: INDIAN DIASPORA TO THE UK, CARIBBEAN AND EAST AND SOUTH AFRICA DURING COLONIAL TIMES

Raw Materials (cotton and species) and *peoples* (inhabitants of the Sub-Continent who worked as servants and nursemaids) firstly arrived in England in the period Nasreen Ali calls "Pre and Post Colonial Phase". Likewise, and according to Ali's "Imperial Implosions: Postcoloniality and the Orbits of Migration", there are four waves of South Asian migration into Britain: the "Pre-colonial phase" (1608-1757) and the "Proto-colonial phase" (1757-1857) which consisted of natural resources and servants; the "Colonial phase" (1857-1947) in which a middle-high class introduced the first multi-ethnic, multi-class and multi-religious diasporic contact; and the "Postcolonial phase" (1947-), the age of the hybridising diaspora. Thence, in an empire in the making, the flux of the peoples from the colonies to the metropolis was as important as that of the natural resources. Nevertheless,

Indian peoples, as part of the Empire, were soon reduced to the coloniser's *Other* and became the basis for their colonial expansion.

A. ARRIVING AT THE BRITISH METROPOLIS: COTTON, LABOUR FORCE AND COLONISING EDUCATION
(1765 – 1947)

British Indians arrived at British land with a British passport granted following the three-fold pattern of their migratory justification: as labour force to work at British industries, as servants and as receivers of an English education with which the Empire guaranteed the mental colonisation of the Sub-Continent. To start with, Indian cotton played the most important part in the British Industrial Revolution: cotton was brought to England and, when crafted, was sent back to British India to be bought by Indians. While England developed new factories, Indians had to buy their own cotton, manufactured and overcharged outside India, and so they migrated to the UK to process their own *raw material.* Under these prospects, India was becoming poorer and the growing reputation of Great Britain as *the land of opportunities* annulled previous existing conceptions about the Hindu refusal to migration (*kala pani**). At that moment, the Sub-Continent lacked the possibility of survival whereas Great Britain held a prosperous pledge.

After the Indian arrival in the UK, the British Empire gave the worst and most unhealthy jobs at the factories especially to Indian Muslim immigrants. In this sense, Indian males were recruited as British soldiers for the First and Second World War while the Industrial Revolution was a source of jobs and salaries for the British population in the big cities. As military officers, Indians received British citizenship but there was no consideration for their cultural peculiarities, especially in terms of language and religion. Thence, in the WWI, most of them were commissioned to fight against the Ottomans and obviously there were lots of Muslims among them. Nevertheless, they were merely Indian immigrants under British consideration.

Equally, some of the intellectual high-class Indians migrated to England seeking a British education. Some of them did it planning to go back to the Sub-Continent and solve its previous economic misery. On the other hand, despite exceptions such as already referenced figures like Gandhi or Nehru, these educated migrants were integrated into the English culture reinforcing the British assigned role of Indians as *victims.* In this sense, the diasporic people, as people beyond two cultures, experienced what East African Indian

Avtar Brah calls a "cultural clash" (1976: 176), which would later defy the British imposed education that was both reductionist and colonising.

B. WORKING FOR THE EMPIRE: INDENTURED INDIAN DIASPORA IN THE CARIBBEAN (1838 – 1917)

The British colonies in the Caribbean demanded labour force for the sugar plantations after slavery was abolished in 1834. Indentured work force sent from British India in 1838[44] was the perfect answer: a British patron would arrive at India and would recruit Indian labourers after the promise of a five or ten years contract of work in the Caribbean. The patron would pay the journey, a salary for the work and a dwelling place. They normally included the promise that, after that indenture expired, indentured workers could go back to the Sub-Continent. On the contrary, once in the Caribbean, indentured workers would occupy the old slave quarters and would be forced to perform their *labour task* in the time and quantities required if they wanted to obtain their salary (something that they hardly received). Likewise, the British Indian workers were responsible for their own clothing and feeding so, if they were not paid, their basic necessities were hardly ever satisfied. According to Hugh Tinker, indenture was "a new form of slavery" (44) and so the British Indian hired labourers (known as *coolies**, a term which would then be used with a clear discriminatory voice although in the beginning it stood within the Sanskrit nuance used by the Indian indentured workers to refer among themselves) officially finished their indentures after Gandhi denounced the structures of the system in South Africa in 1895. At that point, the presence of People of Indian Origin in the Caribbean was very significant. The indenture system was also established in the Pacific Isles and, as an illustration of the great cultural sediment of this Indian diaspora, nowadays Hindi is still the official language in Fiji.

Furthermore, *coolitude**, which has also become a synonym of creolisation, produced what Brinda Mehta calls another "turn of the screw for the Caribbean creolisation" (434). For instance, *coolitude** brought the Hindi and Muslim credos to the Caribbean, a medley of Hindi and Afro Caribbean music (*chutney music**) and the incorporation of mango and rice[45] to the traditional Caribbean diet. Subsequently, the

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[44] The two first boats arrived in 1938. 1/3 of the passengers died in a journey which would last 3 or 6 months. Indian Trinidad scholars Sahadeo Baseo and Brinsley Samaroo assert that "only 25 % came back" (98).
[45] Fields of mango and rice where normally produced by diasporic Indians after indenture system was cancelled.

contact was most intense when the previous indentured Caribbean diasporas arrived in the US and the UK. The establishment of *coolitude** in the US and the UK meant, again quoting Brinda Mehta, "the mediation between the Indians and Africans and the incorporation of the Black fight to the concept of *Indianness*" (my emphasis, 444). The truth is that the extraordinary mixture soon merged into a powerful cultural hybridisation that permeated the place of arrival and the original homelands. The following quotation from Kempadoo, Indo-Caribbean poet from Trinidad, in his arrival at UK, summarises the grandiosity of the concept: "I could see myself as a *chameleon*, with no fixed appearance and no sense of an essential self, yet could enjoy the multiple spaces available due to the simultaneous inhabiting of different cultures" (my emphasis, 34). Thence, the Indian indentured diaspora provided a blend of the Indian culture with the peculiarities of the Afro cultures of both the Caribbean and the Pacific. In this sense, what Kempadoo calls a "simultaneous inhabiting a different culture" (34) also took place in the African continent, especially in East and South Africa, the destiny for a large number of indentured labourers from the Sub-Continent who undertook the role of the Empire's officials.

C. THE EMPIRE'S OFFICIALS: INDIAN DIASPORA IN EAST AND SOUTH AFRICA (1848 – 1945)

South-Asian *peoples* also worked for the British administration in the colonies held in East Africa[46] and South Africa. The British government assigned them to low rank official posts in the administration to guarantee the social stratification and the racism on which the Empire was based. As Avtar Brah points out: "[British Indians] were the preys of the colonial sandwich for South Asians came to constitute the middle layer below the white colonist but above black Africans" (2004: 44). Similarly, they were rejected by both British officers (to whom they were colonial subalterns) and African population (who regarded Indians as a racist group invading their land).

Beyond, although the British Indian arrival in East Africa can be traced since the Muslim empire, the first Indian indentured labourers arrived at Uganda in the last two decades of the 19th century to construct the Uganda Railway[47]. The *mindhis* (Swahili for

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[46] The East Africa Community (hence EAC) includes, as a regional intergovernmental organisation, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. Rwanda and Burundi, although also included, are considered part of Central Africa.
[47] Theodore Roosevelt, in his 1906 visit to Uganda would enhance the construction of the railway in a rather *Orientalist* speech which followed the differentiating role of Edward Said's previous cited definition. Hence, Roosevelt asserted that "The railroad, the embodiment of the eager, masterful, materialistic civilization of today, was pushed through a region in

British Indians) afterwards disseminated along Kenya and Tanzania as the construction of the railway advanced. They enjoyed a relatively peaceful life in East Africa until the middle 1960s and the 1970s, where several East African social revolts intended to overtake the work of the Indian traders in East Africa working in the *dukawallas**. East African Indians were granted British passports and migrated mainly to the UK. This is the story depicted in Mira Nair's *Mississippi Masala* (1990), the Indian diaspora out of Uganda after Idi Aman ordered that all previously indentured South Asian workers had 40 days to leave the East African country.

In the same line did South Africa welcome the British Indian indentured workers in the 1860s to work in the sugar plantations of Truro and Natal (East of South Africa, in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal). However, South Africa would attend a more important event in 1893, when Gandhi arrived at the country to work as a lawyer just after graduating from University of London. Once in South Africa, the Mahatma suffered racist attacks by the black South Africans but, instead of denouncing them, he undertook the attitude for which he should always be remembered: the active but peaceful revolution (*satyagraha**) that would strongly condemn the indenture system that constrained the South Asians migrants to a double subaltern position, both controlled by the British colonial yoke and later to be rejected by the South African inhabitants. This would be the start of Gandhi's legend and the preparation for the upcoming events associated with the Partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. Likewise, in his diasporic experience in South Africa, Gandhi contributed to the celebration of the Natal Indian Congress in 1894 (which recognised politically the Indian population in South Africa) and the passing of the Transvaal Act of 1906 (which regulated socially the situation of Indians in South Africa). Besides, Gandhi publically emphasised the idea that both the lowest Indian castes and the lowest statements of black South Africans (pejoratively known as *Kaffirs*, although the origin of the term simply denoted black labourers) should work together to dismantle the British empire from within the South African own political dynamics.

Thence, the importance of the Indian presence in East and South Africa transcends the replication of the institutions and sacred places (Hindu temples, Sikh *gurudwaras**, Muslim mosques or Buddhist pagodas) that now enrich the landscapes of cities in East and South African cities like Kampala or Johannesburg. When the East African Indians[48] were

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which nature, both as regards wild man and wild beast, does not differ materially from what it was in Europe in the late Pleistocene" (2).

[48] South Africans Indians had more problems to leave the country with the advent of Apartheid.

offered the opportunity to go to UK with a British passport[49], they enjoyed what Avtar Brah calls, "an urban background condition" (2004: 46) which would cause initial problems of coexistence with the other post-Partition Indian workers arrived at British cities straight from rural India. After encountering this situation, some decided to fly to the US, where there was, at that moment, a much more open welcoming policy.

At this stage, the diasporic Indian settlements assembled Hindu, Muslim and Sikhs South Asians, East African Indians and Afro descendants. The notion of *Indianness* had melted into *desi* (the Hindi term for diasporic South Asian). Thus, the first British and American generation-born *desi* shared a triple bond with the Indian, Caribbean and East African India and so started to share broadcasting companies around the world with the establishment of diasporic television South Asian channels such as Zee TV.

2.2- CONTACT AND CONFLICTS BEYOND TWO CULTURES: POSTCOLONIAL INDIAN DIASPORAS TO THE UK AND THE US

The Indian diaspora in the UK and the US combines the many historical layers of the Indian Palimpsest with the complexity of the cultural and social diasporic constructions of *Indianness*. In this sense, I believe that the abstract national identities of both the UK and the US nations are still nowadays a consequence of the many cultures and postcolonial stories that write the history of a new hybrid society as based on the connivance and interpollination of all those "scattering and gatherings of people in the diaspora" (1990: 190), as stated by Homi K. Bhabha in the previously quoted essay "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation". Accordingly, the following pages introduce the historical circumstances that surrounded the arrival and settlement of the Indian postcolonial diaspora in the UK and the US. By so doing, it is my intention to promote an understanding of the British and North American national identity as constructed by means of what Bhabha calls the "liminality of modern society" (1994: 297), an illustration of the formerly cited new hybrid society constantly in the making. In other words, the contemporary British and American national psyche conceptualised as a composite of the many cultures that coalesce in the currently so-called global age. The next

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[49] This finished with the 1968 *Immigration Act*, which proclaimed that people of Indian Origin would only reside in Britain if at least one of their parents had been born in British territory.

pages thence present the postcolonial diasporic background of Gurinder Chadha (postcolonial Indian diaspora to UK) and Mira Nair (postcolonial Indian diaspora to the US) as the perfect illustration of the intercultural and gender conflicts emerged in the postcolonial Indian diasporas.

A. POSTCOLONIAL INDIAN DIASPORAS TO THE UK

The postcolonial Indian diaspora in the UK departed from the newly created nations of India and Pakistan but also from every place where there were Indian-origin workers. The post-Partition diaspora towards the UK encompassed immigrants from rural areas as well as high-middle class college students, and it also gathered people with a different religious and linguistic background. The rural diasporic labourers were segregated outside the British industrial centres (Birmingham, Manchester, Leicester or North London) and suffered the refusal of the British white society, especially in the 1960s when England was re-adjusting after the post WWII era and the strong anti-migration feeling strengthened by the negative political response to immigrants in the UK. As to illustrate the British repudiation towards the migrants, Paul Gilroy points out how the British "criminalised everything that wasn't pure British" (134) and, moreover, Avtar Brah particularises how people from a South Asian background were considered "undesirable peoples who smelled of curry, were dirty, wore funny clothes, lived packed like sardines in a room and practised strange religions" (2004: 37). At this cultural stage of racism, South Asians migrants were condemned in a campaign of hatred and stereotypes such as the previous: they were de-humanised and socially prosecuted although, at the same time, Great Britain needed, as in colonial times, their labour force.

Still, the 1980s attended to the settlement of South Asians in the British landscape[50], hosting the cooperation with the Black struggle in the Handsworth Demonstrations[51] and

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[50] There are interesting studies such as Martina Gosh-Schellhorn's "Bradford Communities in the Move" (2006) which analyses the changes of the urban and rural landscape around Bradford creating an extensive photographic archive. Also, the work of the Singh Twins Sisters, (www.singhtwins.co.uk) in the form of plain mosaics in which many spheres of the BrAsian (a concept that will be expanded in upcoming pages and that agglutinates the British and Asian traditions) daily routines are displayed, is a great depiction of the BrAsian genuine blend. Some instances can be seen in the Image 5 of the *Appendix of Images*.

[51] The movie *Handsworth Songs* (1986), displays the riots, which took place in the Handsworth district of Birmingham during the summers from 1981 to 1985. Directed by the Black Audio Film Collective, the film created a great discussion and posterior controversy between the Indian writer Salman Rushdie (now nationalised as British after the fatwa raised against him due to the publication of *The Satanic Verses,* 1988) and Jamaican scholar Stuart Hall (the founder of the Cultural Studies Centre at University of Birmingham and the author of the previously quoted essay "Cultural Politics and Diaspora", 1992, and the iconic "The Emergence of Cultural Studies and the Crisis of the Humanities", 1990).

Notting Hill Carnival Riots. Also, in the late 1980s, the creation of a new South Asian-British hybrid youth[52] challenged the notions of what it meant to be immigrants in Britain and subverted the idea of diaspora to enhance its crucial part in the making of the Union Jack identity. Together with the link among migrant communities in the space of diaspora, the 1980s recognition of the Indian diasporic people as part of Great Britain led to the realization that the Indian diaspora was there to stay, and that both British and South Asian identities were intermingling together in a British-South Asian collective identity, what Nasreen Ali *et al.* define as "BrAsian identity" (10).

Thus, BrAsian identity is the result of the contact between the Indian diaspora in the UK with the UK reality. Consequently, the term BrAsian defines the cultural and social particularities of the South Asians that live in the *space*[53] of the postcolonial Indian Diaspora in the UK mixing Indian and British traits. In Ali *et al.*'s own words,

> BrAsian refuses the easy decomposition of the British and Asian dyad into its western and non-western constituents. BrAsian is not merely a conflation of the British and the Asian, it is not a fusion but a confusion […] BrAsian signifies the impossibility of a hyphenated identity […] BrAsian is not the correct answer to the question of British Asian subjectivities […] [but] the line that crosses out and gathers the postcolonial lines of contact […] the sense of irony of the term arises from a recognition [often tacit rather than explicit] of the distance between the narratives available […] often caricatures of the 'between two cultures' [we should say beyond], or the [constraining and reducing] terms such as culture clash and identity conflict" (10).

Thence, *BrAsian* embodies the confusion, contact and recognition shared among the receiving country (the UK), the received Indian diaspora and the South Asian homelands. At this stage, the resultant mixture, a clear illustration of Bhabha's conception of "the one out of many" (Bhabha 1994), recognises the postcolonial interdependent history of both Indian migrants and the British nation, the definitive melting of what Stuart Hall beautifully calls "The outside history that is inside the history of the English" (48-49). Thence, Indians and British merge together in the notion of BrAsian and, by so doing, they face the challenges (such as racism and gender discrimination) of their existence within a transcultural society.

In this sense, although the postcolonial BrAsian settlement produced a plural religious landscape (especially in industrial cities like London, Birmingham, Leicester or

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[52] First generation postcolonial immigrants born in UK who started to blend the South Asian culture and British way of life, creating an original cultural composite.

[53] As we will see in chapter two, Avtar Brah defines the contact of diasporic cultures with the receiving country as a *space of diaspora,* a "Third Space" (Bhabha 1994) of interchange and mixture where identities are in constant process of creating and re-negotiating themselves.

Blackpool – the main migrant's recipients), religion would soon become a source of discrimination. The events that followed the terrorist attacks of July 7th (2005), when the Metropolitan Police shot Brazilian Jean Charles de Menezes on July 12th (2005), because he acted *in a weird way* and *looked Muslim* can prove the still recurrent appliance of the idea. Besides the creation of stereotypes such as the "Religious Asian Fundamentalist Gang" (Miller 267), BrAsians had also to face discrimination in education, employment, housing and health (Ahmad *et al.* 1997). Muslim Bangladeshi and Pakistani migrants scored the lowest levels in the educational attainment and economic partition rankings developed, for instance, by the United Nations Development Programme's *Empowered and Equal* (with the publication of "Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2011"[54]), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs's *The Millenium Development Goals Report* (with the yearly Reports from 2006 onwards) or the World Economic Forum's *The Global Gender Gap Report* (2007, 2008 and 2009). These variables will later be used to analyse the representation of the gender conflicts in the selected films by Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair.

Consequently, and moving to our contemporary moment, it can be stated that BrAsian women still face what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak calls the "gender subaltern position" in already referenced articles such as "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1995) or "Teaching for the Times" (1992). In these references, Spivak emphasises the idea that the South Asian migrant woman is both the victim of the British *Orientalist* and racist socio-political dynamics as well as the sufferer of the chauvinist restrictions of the Sub-Continent's inherited patriarchal society. Accordingly, the foundation of the Southall Black Sisters non governmental organisation, the studies of Amrit Wilson and the shooting of films such as Gurinder Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993) or Jag Mundhra's *Provoked*[55] (2006) show and denounce some of the gender troubles suffered by the BrAsian women such as ill-treatment, lack of access to education or the revenge connected with notions of honour (*izzat**).

Likewise, the critical reflection about the postcolonial societies of our times, at both sides of any ocean, should always analyse the artistic representation of diasporic women to truly understand the overwhelming definition of the intercultural contact that defines our

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[54] Full references and link to downloadable versions of documents from the official sites are given in the *Works Cited* section.
[55] *Provoked* (2006) is an Indian-British production based on the real story of Kiranjit Ahluwalia, who set her husband on fire after being repeatedly mistreated in an arranged marriage. She was imprisoned and was not freed after a strong campaign developed by the Southall Black Sisters. The book *Circle of Life,* written by Kiranjit Ahluwalia and Rahul Gupta tells the story with an extremely subtle denouncing voice.

hybrid society. Subsequently, the postcolonial Indian diaspora in the UK shows the first integration of cultures (South Asian and British) beyond the mere binary restrictive analysis inherited from that previous moment of colonial contact. Here, the postcolonial BrAsian distinctiveness addresses the conflict of the current diversity of cultures in the UK and the social policies that need to be faced and revised in order to guarantee that, in such a transformational global space, there are no racist and gendered schemes of inequality. In this sense, the cinema of Gurinder Chadha (East Indian Kenyan born migrated to UK and so a paradigmatic BrAsian woman) illustrates the possible paradoxes that may arise in the postcolonial negotiation of cultures and its possible following coexistence. Accordingly, Indian scholar Shoba S. Rajgopal (2003) states:

> Gurinder Chadha is the first South Asian woman to have made inroads into the mainstream public sphere of the West with her films […] Starting with *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993) and going on to *Bend It Like Beckham* (2002), they demonstrate a feminist perspective in that gender and race are woven together to show complexities and conflicts both within and between minority communities (51).

Here, the convergent study of Chadha's BrAsiannes peculiarity needs to meet with Mira Nair's cinematographic coetaneous art in order to provide a true and consistent study of all those "complexities and conflicts" (51) Rajgopal mentions. Likewise, Nair's personal postcolonial Indian diaspora to the US proves itself an extraordinary of the intercultural and gender challenges to be faced.

B. POSTCOLONIAL DIASPORA TO THE US

The largest Indian diaspora in the US arrived after WWII[56]. South Asian[57] post-WWII diaspora had the same aspirations as the American population of the times: the promise of a prosper future in the US. The US needed doctors, lawyers and, after the end of the Cold

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[56] Indian American scholar Sunaina Maira identifies two significant phases of South Asian post-Partition arrival in US, "after 1965" and "during the 1980s" (140). Nevertheless, the first South Asian settlement in North America took place in British Columbia, Canada, in 1890, where a Sikh community established itself to escape from the religious simplification of the colonial empire in the Sub-Continent. At the same time, many other Sikhs arrived at Seattle and San Francisco for the same reasons. Afterwards, they established hostels, little shops and some agricultural exploitation along the Mexican border. Projects such as Jayasri Majumdar Hart's *Roots in the Sun* (2002-2008) explored the intermixing of both the Mexican and Indian communities. Hart's is an internet page with options to upload familiar pictures, written testimonies or videos. It also provided an option to trace back genealogical origins.

[57] I decided to use the terms South Asian and Indian American to address the Indian diaspora in the US. Some authors such as Pierre Gottslich (2004) assert that a more restrictive concept like Asian Indian American must be used to avoid definitory clashes with the Native Americans and recognise the South Asian heterogeneous particularity. Nevertheless, I maintain that both South Asian and Indian American recognise, at least within the pages of this dissertation, the Indian diversity of both defining adjectives.

War, also engineers. In this context, Indian immigrants to the US had the guarantee of having had a previous access to British middle-high education which made the 1960s' Indian community living in the US became "a model minority" (Maira 139). However, the US categorised all Indian migrants as *Hindu* in order to reinforce the North American general rejection against Muslim culture, crucially latent after WWII. As Edward Said states: "Since WWII, and more noticeably after each of the Arab-Israeli wars, the Arab Muslim has become a figure in American popular culture [in the form of] […] the menace of the Arab to the American Emporium" (1979: 284). At the same time, the *Hindu* migrant was perceived as a "rigid worker and melancholic" in opposition to the African community who was described as "black, phlegmatic and lax" (Narayana Singh 262-8). Nevertheless, the 1960s Black Freedom Movement would join the second postcolonial wave of Indian American migration during the 1980s and they would work together towards a final social integration and acceptance of the equality of civil rights for any human being within the US society.

Accordingly, if the first wave of Indian diaspora in the US was characterised by a mainstream of middle and high class South Asians, the second wave of Indian diaspora in the US was formed by labourers of scarce formation who came to America following the echoing myth of the Promised Land. They worked as taxi drivers or founded shops at the Indian American ghettos, trying to send money to the family in India, running blockbusters, gathering around the dinner table for daily rituals (there is an erroneous conception that this is a Hindu custom when it is actually much of a Sikh custom) or starting to invest money in properties back in India. Although this diasporic representation has created the stereotype of the South Asian American Apu[58] in Matt Groening's *The Simpsons*, the truth is that, according to the US Census Bureau, the American Indian population in the United States grew from almost 1,679,000 in 2000 to 2,569,000 in 2007; and, according to the Indian American Centre for Political Awareness, almost 40% of all Indians in the US have a Master, Doctorate or Professional degree, five times the US rate. Contrarily, and especially after the terrorist attacks on September the 11th, the reaction against the Muslim migrant was progressively radicalised.

Bearing this racist polarisation of the heterogeneity of cultures, the US identity should always be defined in terms of the ever-existent coexistence of its many postcolonial

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[58] The character of Apu in *The Simpsons* has his name taken from the classical *The Apu Trilogy* directed by the Bengali filmmaker Satyajit Rai. The character is stereotypically constructed as a disciplined patron of his family, tremendously religious and an extremely hard-working employee.

peoples (each one with a different origin, a peculiar myth, and a particular recreation of the American Dream). In this sense, Karen Piper points out, in her article "Postcolonialism in the U.S.: Hybridity or Diversity?", that the US has to deter itself from the current exotic notions enhanced by *multiculturalism* and move towards the recognition of the cultural *ambivalent* diversity of the notion of *hybridity*. In Piper's own words, "hybridity is the true articulation of the true culture […] not the exoticism contained in the current articulation of the policies about multiculturalism" (16). In my opinion, only by understanding the current contact of cultures as a socio-cultural hybridity can the re-writing of colonial discourse be disrupted. Here, South Asian migrant characters such as Mina in Mira Nair's *Mississippi Massala* (1990) or Ashima in Nair's *The Namesake* (2006)[59] question the contemporary honesty of the *melting pot*, evaluating if they are mere exotic additions to a multicultural *Orientalised* society or if, on the other hand, they are truly components of the embracing American fluctuating diversity.

In this sense, the Indian American diaspora constantly negotiates its own identity within the American hegemonic sense of miscellany. Accordingly, the Indian Diaspora enriches culturally the US and economically the Republic of India, providing an interconnection of cultures which goes beyond the proliferation of Indian take-away restaurants in San Francisco or the Hindi cinemas in The New Yorker district of The Village. As a result, if as Meenakshi Mukherjee remarks that "*nation* writes diaspora" (my emphasis, 41), then diaspora necessarily writes, enriches and questions that concept of *nation*. So, diasporic artists such as Mira Nair and Gurinder Chadha illustrate the grandiosity of the current socio-cultural hybrid society while they struggle to subvert and dismantle the previously *Orientalised* Indian historiography. Besides, they evaluate their own personal position as Indian women in the diaspora by describing female characters that negotiate the still valid subaltern position of the non-Western women.

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[59] Mina is an East African Indian who arrives at the US to be addressed as Mexican, black, or Latina, suffering instances of American racism while working at her family's motel. Throughout the movie, and with the help of African American Demetrius, she realises that she is both an African Indian and an American. Ashima, main character in Nair's *The Namesake* (2006), illustrates another step of the process. She is Indian born emigrated to the US as a simple husband's wife. In fact, it is her diasporic experience in the US what makes her come to terms with both notions of being an Indian and a woman, with another decision to be furthermore taken: does she want to live in the US or in India?

3. GURINDER CHADHA AND MIRA NAIR'S PERSONAL HISTORIES AND DIASPORAS

Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair are the perfect representatives of the plurality of the South Asian diaspora and, similarly, their films are inspiring conceptualizations of the hybrid postcolonial societies in both the UK and the US[60]. Both Chadha and Nair's cinematographic stories articulate and recreate their personal experiences of diaspora by constructing characters that establish a dialogue with our current society through the metaphorical location of culture[61] of the *many South Asias and Indias of the mind*. Here, both Nair and Chadha's are pioneering filmmakers because their movies firstly introduced the South Asian diasporic character into the mainstream cinema. Hence, the following section provides a brief account about the biography and cinematography of both Chadha and Nair so as to stimulate the study of their *hybrid cinemas* (a concept that I will furthermore explain in Chapter Two) as the meeting point where the multiple diasporas that constitute the abstract concept of *South Asianness*, *Indianness*, *Britishness* and *Americannes* interact with each other. By so doing, the convergence of Chadha and Nair's *shared differences* would enhance a powerful analysis of the socio-cultural structures of inequality that still need to be faced by our current society.

3.1. GURINDER CHADHA. FROM KENYA TO *QUEEN OF THE MULTI*

Gurinder Chadha was born in Nairobi (1960, Kenya) and, as an East African Indian descendant, diaspora has troubled her life in the most enriching ways. The Chadhas emigrated to British Kenya from the Punjab as a Sikh family looking for a better economic prospect: the father as a banker and the mother as a shop tender. Hardly was Gurinder Chadha two years old, when her family moved to Southall, England. In the UK, she would be brought up as a British girl surrounded by the peculiarities of the Indian cultures from the East African Indian diaspora. During her last two years at high school, Chadha recognised the racism imposed by the British white-normativity when, at the times of her

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[60] This statement is structured to answer Trinh Min-Ha's double question about what a truly cultural filmmaker must represent as, in her essay "No Master Territories", she states that the spectator should always consider the cinema director within a double-fold determination: "How loyal a representative of her people is she […] and how authentic is her representation of the culture observed?" (215).

[61] Homi K. Bhabha, in his article "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation" (1990) states that art is "the middle passage, *a metaphor*, that [represents] the current temporal moment […] the artistic representation therefore fulfils [the] necessity of filling the space left, *nation expressed by a language of metaphors*, transferring the meaning of home and belonging to a middle passage" (my emphasis, 191).

Leaving Certificate Exam, she was appointed "to do [her] best and become a hard working secretary" (Chadha 2006: 2). Nevertheless, her family's historical spirit of struggle encouraged her to prove her teachers wrong and strengthen her own sense of independence. As she points out:

> Experiences like that [referring to the incident with the professor], and seeing my parents struggle, made me think: You don't believe I can do that, so I'm going to prove you're wrong. If you tell me I can't do something, that's the worst thing to tell me. And that's what I tell girls, and what *Beckham*'s about: you can do it, you can do it better, and you can do it in the way you want (2006: 2).

During her first year at East Anglia University she would see a photograph of a black man wounded during the 1980s Brixton riots under the headline "The future of Britain". At that point, she decided to turn herself to cinema and illustrate her own vision for the future of Britain. In these regards, she remarks:

> I remember a picture on the front page of the Sun during the Brixton riots: a Rasta guy with a petrol bomb, and a headline saying something like: *The Future of Britain*. And I thought: 'Wow! Look at the power of that image', and I wanted to get behind the camera to make these people three-dimensional (2006: 1).

Later, Chadha would start to work for BBC Radio and she gathered enough artistic and economic support to shoot her first feature, the short film *I'm British but…*(1990) where she researched the emerging importance of the *bhangra** music in the making of the incipient BrAsian identity.

After marrying Paul Mayeda Berges, a Chinese American screenplay writer and cinema director, Chadha founded her own producing company, Umbi Films[62], in order to direct her two first cinematographic successes which both represented how different generations of BrAsian women faced with the daily routines of racism and patriarchal domination: *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993) and *What Do You Call an Indian Woman Who Is Funny?* (1994). Later, she would celebrate the US dynamic diversity of cultures in *What's Cooking?* (2000) before writing, producing and directing *Bend It like Beckham* (2002). At that moment, not only England but the whole world enthroned Gurinder as *Queen of the Multi*[63], *multi* standing both for *multiplex* (referring to the great worldwide economic success of the movie) and *multicultural* (pointing at Chadha's representation of the cultural

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[62] The company will be renamed as Bend It after the success of *Bend It like Beckham*.
[63] Jigna Desai refers to Gurinder Chadha as *Queen of the Multi* in her book *Beyond Bollywood. The Cultural Politics of South Asian Diasporic Film* (2004).

variety of suburban London). Afterwards, if Chadha's *Bend It like Beckham* brought the distinctiveness of BrAsianness to the mainstream cinemas, her following film, *Bride and Prejudice* (2004) followed the same line of representing the transculturality as she did in this re-writing of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813).

Likewise, Gurinder Chadha was awarded Dame of England in 2006 and, instead of refusing the acknowledgement (as Rastafarian London-based poet Benjamin Zephaniah or East African Indian playwright Yasmin Alibhai-Brown did), she celebrated "her many different sides" (2006: 3), praising the cultural miscellany of her diasporic identity and the recognition that the award gave to the still present British domination over the Sub-Continent. In relation to this, she stated:

> [My] story is the story of empire. A product of globalisation before the term was properly invented, and I am grateful for the breadth drawn from my richly textured heritage. I think my ancestors would have been thoroughly pleased. One reason I got it, I think, is that I show contemporary Britain to the outside world. I'm only able to do that - my Britain is only like it is - because of the history of the last five hundred years (2006: 3).

Equally, Gurinder Chadha takes into account the hybridising effects of the people of the diaspora in both the country of departure (South Asian Sub-Continent, East Africa) and arrival (UK, the US). In this sense, Chadha has always focused on presenting the contact of different generations of South Asian diasporic women as an empowering review of the transcultural conflict. *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993), *How Do You Call an Indian Girl Who Is Funny?* (1994), *Bend It like Beckham* (2002) and *Bride and Prejudice* (2004) show how South Asian diasporic women oppose the racist discrimination while they celebrate the South Asian cultural difference in terms of religion, language or food traditions. By so doing, Chadha proposes a positive and hopeful portrayal of the South Asian woman in the diaspora as a figure who comes to terms with her *Indianness* and *womanness* and so rejoices the possibilities the hybrid society in which we all now live.

3.2. MIRA NAIR. FROM DOCUMENTING BOMBAY TO THE NAME OF THE AMERICAN *MASALA*[64] *

Mira Nair is a clear example of the Indian cross-pollination of cultures. Nair was born in the Indian Punjab (North West of the Sub-Continent) but soon emigrated to the Orissa Province, then to Delhi and afterwards to the US, Uganda and South Africa. Her life is defined by famous Indian actor Rosham Seth as "the synthesis of the global human being" (3-4) and her work, in Nair's own words as,

> [A] mode of exploration of what happens when you cross the colour line from one community to another […] I want to create the unpredictability of life, that grey arena that makes us all what we are and not just the black-and-white/good-and-bad that cinema is always relegated, but that very real life we all life. That is my passion […] to find ourselves for the first time (qtd. in Redding & Brownworth 170-2).

Furthermore, I consider that it is noteworthy to state that Mira Nair attended an Irish-Catholic missionary school and received a mixed Western-Indian education. After graduating from Delhi University, where she administered her own amateur theatre company of theatre (where she also acted), Nair obtained a grant to study Drama at Harvard. Although "an opening of horizons" (Nuir 26), Harvard would show Mira Nair a kind of theatre that was "too conventional as opposed to the bustle of the Indian streets stages, so [she] soon turned [herself] to cinema, and it empowered [her]" (Nuir 48).

After shooting four documentaries[65] about social inequalities in India, she co-wrote with Harvard College Indian mate Sooni Taraporevala[66] the draft of *Salaam Bombay* (1988). The resultant project met a tremendous international success (Cannes Film festival's 1989 Palme d'Or and nominations for Best Foreign Feature at the 1989 Oscars and BAFTAs). Later, she directed *Mississippi Masala* (1990), a film that illustrated the reality of the South Asians in the diaspora and its intermingling in the 1990s US society. At a personal level, Nair met a South African Indian professor during the shooting, married him and established their home in South Africa.

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[64] The *masala* * is a Punjabi cooking sauce, made out of many different species to obtain a hot and spicy flavour. Beyond this, and within the Hindi Popular Cinema commercial market, a Masala is a type of commercial film in Hindi which combines long and spectacular action scenes with comedy moments and a love story.

[65] *Jama Masjid Street Journal* (1979), *So Far from India* (1983), *India Cabaret* (1985) and *Children of a Desire Sex* (1987). The Criterion Collection DVD edition of *Monsoon Wedding*, published in October 2009 in the US offers, for the first time, the opportunity to watch these documentaries with an explanatory introduction by Mira Nair.

[66] Sooni Taraporevala (born in 1957), a Parsi Zoroastrian, is a screenwriter, photographer and cinema director who has written the screenplays for Mira Nair's *Salaam Bombay*, *Mississippi Masala*, and *The Namesake* after they both studied together at Harvard. As previously referred she also wrote the screenplay adaptation of Rohinton Mistry's *Such a Long Journey*, directed by Sturla Gunnarsson in 1998. Nowadays, Taraporevala has returned to India, from where she leads an active free lance journalist activity, besides having directed the film *Little Zizou* (2007), a story about a Zoroastrian boy in Mumbai.

Following the economic and critical success of *Mississippi Masala*, Nair founded her own producing company, Mirabai Films, a very remarkable fact that, as already explained with Chadha's establishment of Umbi Films, proved that, in the early 1990s, immigrant women were starting to subvert the previous limiting economic and creative structures. Nair's next features continued dealing with the themes of displaced people (*The Perez Family*, 1995, and *My Own Country*, 1998) and the social inequalities applied to race, class and gender (*Kamasutra: A Tale of Love*, 1996, and *The Laughing Club of India*, 1999). In my opinion, these four features are illustrative of Nair's personal commitment to show and understand the individual and social cultural identity of the people of her times. As she states: "[My] cinema is about that constant journey and the involved quests to understand identity, especially people affected my deep imposed insecurity" (Nair qtd. in Nuir 241). After these films, Mira Nair would astonish the world with the diasporic Punjabi[67] wedding portrayed in *Monsoon Wedding* (2001), the film that won Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival in 2001. Furthermore, in 2006[68], she would undertake the cinematographic adaptation of the novel *The Namesake* (2003), written by her Bengali American friend Jhumpa Lahiri and winner of the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for *The Interpreter of Maladies* (2000). In her personal reading of *The Namesake*, Nair would focus more on the individual process of questioning that, as a consequence of the comings and goings of the Indian diaspora, Ashima faces prior to her coming to terms with her position as an Indian mother in the diaspora and her true name which, translated from Punjabi, means *without borders*.

At the same time, Nair would institute two social projects. On the one hand, she created Maisha (which means *life* in Swahili)*,* an organization that supports visionary screenwriters and directors in East Africa and South Asia under the slogan, coined by Mira Nair, "if we don't tell our stories, no one will". Maisha opened its first laboratory in Kampala (Uganda) in 2004 and it now agglutinates different offices in Rwanda, Kenia and Tanzania, where the organisations promotes courses on screenplay writing, lighting and production.   On the other, she started, back in the times of the production of Salaam

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[67] In the Director's Commentary for *Monsoon Wedding* (both Standard and Criterion Collection DVD editions), Nair reinforces the idea that she wants to shoot a Punjabi and not an Indian wedding. She claims that in the Punjab, the marriage ceremonies clearly illustrate that Indian weddings do not merely follow Hindu standards but that, as in the Punjabi regions, they juxtapose all the millenary traditions that have been present in the Sub-Continent.

[68] In between, Mira directed *Hysterical Blindness* (2002), re-took her favourite English novel, *Vanity Fair* (2004) and contributed with the segment "India" (about a Muslim charged of terrorist right after the terrorist attacks at 9/11th) to *11' 09'' 01 September 11* (2002). Also, she would receive the offer to direct *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, although she turned it down because she was gathering the financial support around her screenplay for Athol Fugard's novel *Tsotsi* (2004), something that she failed to do. Nevertheless, the novel which would then become the winner of the Oscar for Best Foreign Feature in the 2006 Awards Gavin Hood's *Tsotsi* (2006).

Bombay in 1988, an educational campaign in India, the Salaam Baalak Trust which, under the slogan "salute the spirit of survival", aimed at fostering awareness about AIDS and its prevention. She would direct the short film *Migration* (2007) to promote a short movie contest in which cameras would be lent to the homeless people of Mumbai so that they could record their own stories about AIDS. Clearly inspired by her experience shooting *Salaam Bombay* (1988), the project grants education to the street children of both Mumbai and Delhi, focusing on programs AIDS prevention.

In addition, it can be stated that Mira Nair confronts the still existent subaltern position of women in all her films. For instance, *Kamasutra*'s (1996) main characters Maya and Mara are sketched to challenge their positions as victimised women by both the society and the men around them. In this sense, it can be said that other films directed by Nair like *Mississippi Masala* (1991) or *The Namesake* (2006) also present female characters who undertake an illuminating self-discovery of their femininity and their subaltern position while they recognise the subversive commitment that is granted from their position as women in the diaspora. As to illustrate this process of social and individual acknowledgement, Ashima, the already mentioned character in *The Namesake*, accepts her life as an Indian immigrant and discovers her womanhood both in America and India while renegotiating herself as a *woman of the world*, a woman without imposed frontiers. In other words, Nair's interest can be summarised as that of telling, presenting and posing the diasporic paradox as both a woman of the world and an Indian woman of the world. Here, I believe that her films all involve a direct confrontation against ignorance, fear and lack of personal questioning.

To sum up, I would like to point out how, as inhabitants of the world, Mira Nair meets Gurinder Chadha and Gurinder Chadha meets Mira Nair in the re-thinking of the social formulation provided by their experiences of diaspora. Chadha and Nair are bound by age, South Asian background (both have their familiar background in the Punjab) and Indian experiences in East Africa, the US and the UK. So, their personal cartographies of diaspora juxtapose their different knowledge of *South Asianness* and *Indianness* to their social and cinematographic experiences. As a result, the polyhedral Indian diversity talks back to previously imposed discourses of imperialism and colonialism, both placing their true multiple integration and displacing the possible adaptation of ever-existing schemes of oppression, racism and sexism.

Besides, as women of the world, Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair speak from and about the cultural and gender boundaries existent in our current world, acknowledging the Indian diversity and the complexity of their female experience in the practice of what Gloria Anzaldúa called "the dwelling on the borderlands" (4). Thence, both filmmakers represent the reality and the conflicts of the coexistence of cultures through a cinema that *shows* the possibility of cultural coexistence, while denouncing what African American feminist writer bell hooks calls the "inherent female relation to power and domination [...] to expand our awareness of sex, race, and class as interlocking systems of domination" (1981: 25).

In this sense, both Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair's cinema fulfil a double endeavour that challenges those structures that Canadian ecofeminist writer Karen Warren calls the "isms of domination" (1). On one hand, they gather the peculiarities of the historical diversity of the Indian Palimpsest and its reception and conceptualization in the diaspora. On the other, Chadha and Nair's films confront the situation of women in the diaspora in an intercultural society while they enhance a postcolonial and feminist[69] evaluation about our contemporary world. Thence, Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair present their female characters as mediators between the colonial and the postcolonial world, representatives of a process of individual transformation within their social and cultural hybridisation. Accordingly, Chadha and Nair's female characters are denouncing agents of the current inequalities in the global world, negotiators of race and gender inequalities beyond any dogmatic construction.

Both Nair and Chadha are illustrators of the social confrontations unveiled by diaspora as well as locators of the surviving subaltern position of women in the present diversity of cultures. It is in this sense that Chapter II of this dissertation aims at promoting the relevance of a convergent study of their diasporic selected filmography as the background analysis from which to evaluate the theoretical concepts of diaspora, hybridity and the recurrence of a particular cinema that I will define as hybrid cinema. So, and before Chapter III's practical analysis of specific gender conflicts represented by both Chadha and Nair, it is my intention to highlight the cultural relevance and theoretical particularities of

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[69] Throughout the whole dissertation, by *feminist* I understand the conscientious fight (artistic, political, social and individual, for I think all four are always intertwined) which aims at establishing equality as the basis for any relationship between men and women. In other words, I agree with the following definition by Celia Varcárcel: "[Feminist] refers to that political tradition that aims at attaining an egalitarian and democratic society where no human being is excluded due to any condition" (my translation, 123). Also, in the same line of thought, bell hooks points out that "feminism, as liberation struggle, must exist apart from and as a part of the larger struggle to eradicate domination in all forms." (1989: 22).

Nair and Chadha's cinematographic representation of the diasporic *South Asias* within those postcolonial and gender challenges that still need to be faced by us all citizens of the world.

CHAPTER 2

DIASPORA, HYBRID CINEMAS
AND GENDER REPRESENTATIONS

A THEORETICAL APPROACH

> You've crossed over.
> And all around you space. Alone.
> With Nothingness
>   (Anzaldúa 165).

> Beginnings and endings may be the sustaining myths of the middle years, but in the fin de siécle, we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce *complex figures of difference and identity*, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion […]. The *beyond* is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving venue of the past […]; beyond signifies spatial distance, marks progress, promises the future; but our intimations of exceeding the barrier or boundary – the very act of going beyond – are unknowable, unrepresentable, without a return to the "present" which, in the process of repetition, becomes disjunct and displaces (my emphasis, Bhabha 1994: 1).

We all now live within a far-reaching debate of cultural interplay and, as a result, our identities (both as individual and social entities) become enriched by a process of constant change and transformation, a consequence of the continuous sociological, political and artistic negotiation among cultures. As a result, if as Stuart Hall proclaims that "things are related as much by their differences as through their similarities" (1980: 328), the cultural and social encounter that characterises the twenty-first century reveals that we all cohabit in a heterogeneous world, defined by the postcolonial essence of terms such as *diaspora* or *hybridity*. In this sense, cinema and filmmakers like Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair represent the diversity and complexity implicit in today's convergence of cultures.

Consequently, this chapter aims at providing a theoretical definition about *diaspora* as an abstract space where the meeting of cultures takes place; *hybrid identities* and *hybrid cinemas* as the subsequent construction of this intercultural contact; and a *feminist evaluation* from which confront the structures and representations of gender discrimination existent in the two previous contexts of Diaspora Space[1] and hybrid cinemas. In this sense, the chapter develops a postcolonial theoretical approach which will always try to take into account what Carol Boyce Davies defines as the core of postcolonial art, "that of always being transformational, oppositional and revolutionary" (74). Thence, I intend to apply the contemporary relevance of the former theoretical conceptualisation to the context of the South Asian post-Partition diaspora in the UK and the US, as portrayed in the selected case-study films by Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair.

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[1]Hence, I will refer to Avtar Brah's term "The Diaspora Space" (1996: 34) as Diaspora Space, but Brah's inspiration will be thoroughly present all along.

I will firstly offer a definition of diaspora as the collective space where the many Indian diasporas discussed in Chapter I congregate. Here, I will promote Avtar Brah[2]'s conception of The Diaspora Space as the abstract space of convergence between "specificities" (economic, political, cultural variables) and "modalities" (such as gender, race, class and religion) where the hybridity of cultures is produced (1996: 24-5). It is from this perspective that I will illustrate how the transcultural contact performed at this Diaspora Space leads to the construction of a hybrid identity that articulates the contemporary diversity of cultures beyond static discourses such as those of multiculturalism[3]. The distinctive particularities of the South Asian post-Partition diaspora will then prove the relevance of the discourse.

Secondly, I will propose the definition of *hybrid cinemas* as expressive of the respective trajectories of cinema that, in the Diaspora Space, depict hybrid cultures and hybrid identities. I therefore will go through the definitions of postcolonial film that have already been coined, pointing at their advantages and disadvantages in order to present hybrid cinemas as the theoretical category with which truly embrace the hybrid identities produced in the Diaspora Space as well as the subversive discussion inherent to postcolonialism. At this juncture, I will prove the relevance of hybrid cinemas in the reality of the post-Partition South Asian diaspora, pointing at how Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair's films stand as true expressions of hybrid cinemas and so they describe the transcultural flux of identities ignored by preceding definitions.

Thirdly, I intend to acknowledge the subaltern position of the postcolonial woman in the Diaspora Space. Therefore, I will provide a general approach to the location of the postcolonial woman as a figure interwoven in what bell hooks called "the interlocking systems of domination—sex, race, class" (1981: 21) as well as in the prejudices and inequalities of cinema. Thus, it is my purpose to open a reflection on the gender discrimination that still pervades our twenty-first century. With this purpose in mind, I will

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[2] Avtar Brah is an East African Indian who emigrated from Uganda to London (UK) in her mid-teens. Today she is a professor of Sociology and Anthropology at Birbeck University (London, UK) where she develops different research projects concerned with the Indian diaspora. Her book *Cartographies of Diaspora. Contesting Identities* (1996) is a constant inspiration in both my academic research and personal life.

[3] The term multiculturalism unveils a restrictive acknowledgement of the diversity of cultures. Besides, it does not provide a space to study the discriminatory and racist conflicts that emerge in the vertical relationship of cultures promoted by the multicultural speech. Accordingly, Mbye Cham coined the term "postmulticultural" (10) as a counter-concept that recognised the postcolonial heterogeneity of cultures. In this sense, multiculturalism has been criticised since the 1980s by critics such as Stone, Brittan & Maynard, Brah & Mihas and Troyna & Williams for ignoring the recognition of the dynamic cultural cross-fertilisation. The attack continued along the 1990s in the line summarised by Avtar Brah's following statement: "Multiculturalism simply recognised a mere pluralism which ignored the cultural difference" (1996: 124). Nowadays, thinkers such as Gayatri Ch. Spivak and Arjun Appadurai believe that multiculturalism enhances, as previously said, structures of vertical racism instead of horizontal connivance.

later analyse, in Chapter III, Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair's selected films as cinematographic representations of the gender conflicts faced by the South Asian Diasporic woman which, within the Diaspora Space, are extensible to all the different spheres of the transnational world we all share.

1-DIASPORA: A THEORETICAL CONTEXTUALISATION

The migratory movements of people and the corresponding (dis)location of the themes of belonging, identity and national citizenship in the cultural discourse define our contemporary society. Thence, diasporas or exiles, as broad general terms, are normally interwoven in the media communication obviating the recurrent human necessities of the displaced person. Likewise, as the movement of people increases, the feeling of belonging to a discourse and to a place becomes a pressing need. This is especially the case in contemporary society, where we all have the potential to become a migrant.

The coexistence of new and complex identities consequently requires a theoretical definition that helps analyse the contact between the many different cultures in motion, a contact revealed as a multisided composite in the context of the South Asian Sub-Continent. It is from this conjectural crossroads that the present section categorises diaspora within a threefold purpose. Firstly, it aims at providing a general notion of diaspora as Diaspora Space, where the union of cultural, political and economic factors is performed as a postcolonial outcome. Secondly, it considers the notion that the contacts and conflicts[4] produced by the coincidence of diasporic people unleash a hybrid culture which, in the context of identity making, proves that *global* and *globalisation* mean connivance of cultural heterogeneity. Thirdly, it demonstrates how the post-Partition Indian diaspora in the UK and the US illustrates the convergence of hybrid identities and cultural differences in the Diaspora Space.

To start with, I believe that diaspora, as a theoretical term, is the top of an iceberg that usually only addresses the arrival and departure of people linked to migration, ignoring the undergoing processes of cultural coexistence and mutual influence. The Greek etymology

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[4] Conflict is then understood following David Wilkinson's line of thought. In his article "Central Civilization", he proposes that "conflict should be systematically treated, when found, as associative, […] conflict as a form of association; internally connected, heterogeneous, divided" (49, 72). Conflict is therefore a consequence of the multiaxial contact enhanced by the diasporic movement and the resultant Diaspora Space.

of the word would therefore denote the peak of the iceberg, since *dia* means "through" and *sperein* "to scatter". It was in this sense that the first use of the term diaspora referred to the scatterings of people of the first Jewish diaspora (1st century AD). Here, Robin Cohen recognises that the common features shared by any contemporary diaspora with the ancient Jewish diaspora point at ethnographic consequences such as "an expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or the further colonial ambitions", "a collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its locations, history and achievements" or "an idealization of the putative ancestral home, and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity" (26). Nevertheless, Cohen acquaints the submerged part of the iceberg when she points out that "diaspora unveils a hidden possibility of a distinctive creative [*sic*] which enriches life in host countries with, among all cultural grandiosities, a tolerance for pluralism" (26). It is here that the underwater interstice of diaspora is revealed as a powerful process of identity making, determined by cultural contact and enriching conflict.

Therefore, diaspora involves a process of transformation that goes beyond the dispersal of peoples. Diaspora becomes a multiple passage, what Paul Gilroy defines as the collision between "roots and routes" (2000: 34), the dilemma shared between the "locations of residence" and the "locations of the belonging" (2000: 36) which creates a particular constant reformulation. This space of convergence is what Steven Vertoveck calls "the diasporic mode of cultural production" (2000: 199; 2009: 24). Here, diaspora creates a diasporic identity which, as Sujeta Moorti asserts, "is always being reconstituted, always in the making" (372). Diaspora consequently contains a complex system of many variables which, in a permanent relationship of interference, has recently produced a large body of critical writing[5]. Nevertheless, I believe that it is Avtar Brah's "The Diaspora Space" (1996: 34) the term which best gathers the particularities of the diasporic intricacy.

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[5] The academic scholarship about diaspora is very extensive and interdisciplinary. It involves geographical, anthropological, literary, cinematographic or socio-political analysis. Although this dissertation does not have the space to take into account all the methodological conceptualisations, I think that it is necessary to highlight the theoretical nuances brought out by some critics whose personal background and critical relevance are key points in the emergent field of the South Asian Diaspora Studies. In this sense, Virinider S Kalra *et al.* state that diaspora plays a decisive role in "the globalizing and transnational ravages of local and contemporary capitalism" (27). In the same line, Samir Dyal remarks that diaspora should embrace the "definitive critical perspective for any transnational and postcolonial debate" (46); Iqbal Mahmood links diaspora with a process of "quest and understanding of the collective identities of any social community" (20); J. T. Shuval states that diaspora is "a social construct founded on feeling, consciousness, memory, mythology, history, narratives, group identity, longing dreams and other virtual elements" (43); and Arjun Appadurai and Carol A. Breckenbridge state that diaspora always reveals a "collective memory in the making, whose archaeology is always fractured" (qtd. in Vertoveck 1999: 454). At this point, Vijay Mishra's poetical definition is very relevant, as he defines diaspora as a "fossilised fragment of an original nation that seeks a new renewal" (39). Therefore, definitions about diaspora should always regard a geographical contextualisation, acknowledge the cultural differentiation and recognise new social categorisations. All of these spheres are encopassed by Brah's Diaspora Space.

In my own words, Diaspora Space is the abstract space where cultures and identities are situated in the context of border meddling, where cultures share a process of mutual, symbiotic influence. It is in this abstract *Space* that *modalities* and *specificities* encounter each other and produce (and reproduce) diasporic identities. Thence, diaspora is a conceptual, agglutinating site of immanence defined by Brah as follows:

> [The] concept of diaspora should be understood as an ensemble of investigative technologies for genealogical analysis of the relationality within and between different diasporic formations. The potential usefulness of the concept of the diaspora today rests largely upon the degree to which it can deal with the problematics of the late 20th century transnational movements of people, capital, commodities, technologies, information and cultural forms. I have also suggested that the concept of "diaspora" articulates with that of "border"- the latter is concerned with the construction and methaporisation of territorial, political, cultural, economic and psychic borders. In these various forms, borders are social constructions with everyday effects in real lives. I have argued that the concepts of "diaspora", "border" and the "politics of location" are immanent. I define this site of immanence as *Diaspora Space* (my emphasis, 1996: 241).

Diaspora Space thence addresses the distinctiveness of both the top and underwater figurative iceberg. Diaspora also unveils a multiple journey beyond spatial terms, a composite of identities, differences and border-crossings which are reciprocally self-constituting. In this sense, culture in the Diaspora Space must be understood in reference to what Clifford defines as "a site of travel" (199), pointing at the constant interconnection Annia Loomba categorises as "the intersection of the multiple histories and stories of postcolonialism and colonialism" (183). For this reason, Diaspora Space is a collaborative cartography for our contemporary age, the system framing what Bhabha defines as the "moment of transit where space and time produce complex figures […] reminding us that history is happening" (1994: 1, 25). It is at this place that the cultural intercourse that takes place in the Diaspora Space unveils the interconnection of the diverse experiences that defines culture as a complex hybridised phenomenon.

Accordingly, Diaspora Space is a global contact zone[6] where hybrid identities are produced. And it is global because we all live in a world where globalisation turns to be an

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[6] Mary Louise J. Pratt, in her book *Imperial Eyes*, defines contact zone as follows:

> [The] space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict. I borrow the term "contact" here from its usage in linguistics, where the term contact language refers to improvised languages that develop among speakers of different native languages who need to communicate with each other consistently, usually in the context of trade contact zone is an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal co-presence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect (6).

In other words, the concept of contact becomes pretty much illustrative of Bhabha's Third Space, which he defines as "the middle passage of contemporary culture where culture eludes the politics of polarity" (1994: 38).

unstoppable process that articulates the heterogeneity resolved by the contact of cultures. Thence, globalisation is considered far from the homogenising and totalitarian capitalist interpretation. In this view, Indian anthropologist Arjun Appadurai also recognises that globalisation is a unifying force rather that a limiting and simplistic description. In his own words:

> [Globalisation] has shrunk the distance between elites, shifted key relations between producers and consumers, broken many links between temporary locales and imaginary national attachments, and such has been seen as a homogenizing force where cultures are subsumed by "Americanization" or "Mcdonalization". However, this definition is limiting and simplistic. Rather, it needs to be seen as a series of complex, overlapping, disjunctive, global cultural flows of people, information, finance and ideology (1996: 9).

It was also in this line of thought that Gayatri Ch. Spivak already interpreted globalisation in her article "Teaching for the Times" (published in 1992). In this essay, she proclaimed that the teaching of the "multicultural doctrine" (10) was one of the failures of undergraduate academic programs. Instead, she proposed that university academia should promote studies much more based on "the access to universal" (12), later to be followed by postgraduate programs based on "the Global Field" which would assure "a transnational literacy" (14) to which the slogan "think globally, act locally was not a bad start" (15). In other words, only within the terms of the global coexistence can the hybridity of cultures produced in the Diaspora Space be addressed.

It is then by the recognition of these resultant hybrid identities that the heterogeneity of the Diaspora Space embraces its transcultural scope, assuring the intermingling cultural influence created. In this sense, Diaspora Space is a universal consign that articulates cultural differences beyond a mere restrictive ethnic, multicultural display of isolated idiosyncrasies. In other words, Diaspora Space is the place at which hybridity is performed, where hybridity stands back for its biological etymology, indicating "the cross-breeding of variables from different species" (Britannica, 716). A hybrid society is subsequently a valid formulation to address our present day civilization, following Annia Loomba's premise of "[the world] […] as an amalgam, not a unitary whole" (4). Therefore, it is by acknowledging the hybridity of cultures and the existence of hybrid identities that the contemporary cultural ambivalence can be regarded within the contradictory and instable, yet enriching, *underwater* dynamics of the diaspora.

In this sense, if Brah's Diaspora Space is a "composite formation" (1996: 196), hybridity is the composed result. Respectively Ella Shohat remarks: "[Hybridity] assures

the negotiation of the multiplicity of identities and subject positioning which result from displacements, immigration and exiles without policing the borders of identity along essentialist and originary lines [...] hybridity guarantees the non-universalising, neo-colonial perspectives" (329). In other words, the identification of hybrid identities definitely displaces homogenising discourses, revealing a subversive recognition of the term which can be traced back up to the 15th century *mestizaje* that made the Spanish Empire in America tremble down.

Similarly, besides challenging preceding social and cultural hierarchical categorisations, hybridity becomes a contesting instrument of contestation against the proliferation of vertical racism structures, such as the previously criticised discourse of multiculturalism or the appearance of the term *clash of civilisations*[7] in the late 1990s. Avtar Brah corroborates this statement when she remarks that "multiculturalism ignores the intersectional which appears in hybridity and which the concept of Diaspora Space interrogates" (1996: 214). Hybridity therefore stands as the counter-definition of culture demanded by the Diaspora Space and its transnational identities.

At this juncture, not only does hybridity ensure the gathering of the contradictions and fragmentations of the contemporary cultural intercourse but also a place for subversion. In this line of thought, Bhabha recognises hybridity as a space for "transgression, a revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory effects" (1994: 34), which also evokes what Virinder S. Kalra *et al.* call "the all manners of creative engagements in cultural exchange promoted by hybridisation" (73). Likewise,

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[7] The discourse of the clash of civilisation was firstly coined by Samuel P. Huntingdon (1936-2008) in his articles for the *Foreign Affairs Magazine* (which can be accessed on-line on the following link http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/48950/samuel-p-huntington/the-clash-of-civilizations) and that would later be gathered by the author in *The Clash of Civilisations and the New World Order* (1998). In this book, Huntingdon asserts, for instance, that "the world politics is entering a new phase, in which the great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of international conflict will be cultural consequences of lack of dual division First/Third World and Secular/Religious" (33). In a posterior publication, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity* (2004), Huntingdon pointed out at the necessity of splitting American society into "pure Americans and Latinos to avoid and canalize the clash of cultures" (45). In my opinion, the discourse of the clash of civilisations is pejoratively essentialist and involves a mere distinction between rich and poor countries based on the traditional colonial schemes of power (illustrated in the trope East versus West). The academic discourse which follows Huntingdon's line of though is clearly attacked by Indian Partha Chatterjee in *The Nation and its Fragments* (1993); *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (1986) and *The Politics of the Governed* (2004). Guy Ankerl's *Coexisting Contemporary Civilizations: Arabo-Muslim, Bharati, Chinese, and Western* (2000*)* also stands on Chatterjee's side, attacking Huntingdon's discourse point by point. Both authors praise the current necessity of the articulation of a hybrid culture as the only guarantee to assure the coexistence of cultural and social variables. Susan Stanford Friedman in her recent article "The 'New Migration': Clashes, Connections, and Diasporic women's Writings" summarises this attack against Huntingdon's discourse and remarks that "[Huntingdon's discourse] has the purist's paranoia about the pollution of too much mixing, about the invasion of outsiders into home turf to become the threat within the heart of the West – in Europe, from Muslim migrants; in the US primarily from Hispanic immigrants" (2009: 7). Furthermore, I consider that essentialist dividing discourses (such as Huntingdon's) impose borders as separating categories are doomed to be derogated because, as Ursula Biemann points out, "in the border areas, everyone is being transformed into a transnational subject [...]; in the border, identities are constantly forming and collapsing, confronting and transgressing (109). I would quote Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands*, and praise that we all are creatures of the border, "border dwellers" (79) as she states.

hybridity is a powerful concept that defies the following accusations made by Paul Gilroy: "I try not to use the word hybrid; […] cultural production is not like mixing cocktails, because hybridity, in itself, means and challenges all sorts of things to do beyond the combination of cultures in the moment of cultural exchange" (1993: 54-5). Instead, hybridity ensures a political rebellion and a social transgression against imperialistic and discriminatory discourses.

Hybridity responds to what Ashcroft *et al.* call the "postcolonial process of resistance and reconstruction" (2000: 2), in the same line as Indian anthropologist Akhil Gupta states that "the recognition of cultural hybridity gives voice to the ever-present subaltern struggle" (qtd. in Spivak 1995b: 76). Thus, the Diaspora Space produces hybrid identities that combine identifying traces from the past as well as from the emergent cultural components of the present-future moment. This is the suggestion of a heterogonous negotiation of cultures proposed by Indian American psychologist Sunil Bhati's in *American Karma: Race, Culture, and Identity in the Indian Diaspora* (2007), a compendium of the problems experienced by the South Asian Diaspora in the US, out of which he concludes observing how "the hybridity perspective helps us understand how immigrants living in postcolonial and diasporic locations are negotiating and reconciling conflicting histories and incompatible subject positions" (233). Accordingly, I believe that only by acknowledging the hybrid identities formed in the South Asian Diaspora Space can characters like Ashima in Mira Nair's *The Namesake* (2006) or Asha in Gurinder Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993) be understood.

Thereby, the concept of Diaspora Space perfectly illustrates both the coexistence of many cultural layers and influences shared by the Indian Palimpsest and the South Asian diaspora. It is then by recognising the hybridity of the South Asian Diaspora that the "diasporic Indian plurality" (Raghuram & Kumar Sahoo 1) and the "complex identifications from where the Indian diaspora emerges" (Moorti 358) can be materialised, hence fighting West's neo-colonial and neo-*Orientalist* discourses as well as Indian totalitarian discourses such as *Hindutva**. Nobel Laureate Indian writer in Bengali language Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) already pointed at the hybridity contained in the Sub-Continent (at his time under British imperial control) and he compared South Asia with a

banyan tree[8], as its prominent roots expand both horizontally and vertically, reproducing through the dissemination of its seeds by birds. Likewise, he wrote:

> [To] study a banyan tree, you must not only know its main item in its own soil, but also must trace the growth of its greatness in the further soil, for then you can know the true nature of its vitality the civilisation of India, like the banyan tree, has shed its beneficent shade away from its birthplace, by spreading abroad (qtd. in Tinker iii).

Hugh Tinker re-appropriates the image to illustrate the hybrid identity produced in the South Asian Diaspora, both South Asian and from overseas, and so he remarks:

> The banyan tree has thrust down roots in soil which is stony, sandy, marshy - and has somehow drawn sustenance from diverse unpromising conditions. Yet the banyan tree itself has changed; its similarity to the original growth is still there, but it has changed in response to its different environment (19).

Thence, the South Asian diaspora produces hybrid identities both as an outcome of the historical South Asian process of *becoming* already explained in Chapter I as well as the contact and articulation of cultural differences found in the Diaspora Space.

Consequently, only by considering the cultural heterogeneity inherent to living in the border interference of the global Diaspora Space can the South Asian hybrid identities be comprehended. In accordance, the ambivalence of the South Asian borders constitutes another insuperable metaphor of the existent meddling among territorial and mental boundaries, where the existence of hybrid identities becomes, as Christiane Brosius and Nicolas Yazgi assert, "a contesting experience that requires an *artistic representation*" (my emphasis, 356). Here, filmmaking emerges as a very illustrative image of the dynamics interwoven in the creative production, a perfect paradigm from where to study *the artistic representation* produced from and about the Diaspora Space. It is from this point that next section unveils, bearing in mind Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair's previously studied biographies of diaspora as illustrators of the true nature of the hybridity of cultures and the subsequent subversive nature of their hybrid cinemas.

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[8]The banyan tree is one of the most typical trees in the Sub-Continent. Its Gujarati name means *merchant* because of its form of reproduction. Tagore, after joining Gandhi in his years in London, defined India as a banyan tree to illustrate the many vertical roots contained in the Sub-Continent and the necessity of recognising their own particularities of difference horizontally spread. There are three reproductions of the banyan tree in the image number 6 and image number 7 enclosed in the *Appendix of Images*.

2- POSTCOLONIAL FILM THEORY AND HYBRID CINEMAS: AN OVERVIEW

Cinema, as well as the experience of filmmaking, is a complex system of at least, cultural, social, political and economic variables. In this sense, American Professor of Cinema and African Literature Kenneth W. Harrow argues that the contemporary discussion of film should always consider "issues of spectatorship, national identity, ethnography, patriarchy, gender roles and the creation of key film industries" (ix). I believe that his words tinge the all-embracing definition recently provided by Carlos Saura, "cinema is a *total* concept" (my emphasis, 84). The *totality* of film then does not only refer to the twofold cultural representation provided by the art of filmmaking (the voice and the vision of both the creator and the depicted reality) but to the modalities and specificities, to continue using Avtar Brah's words, that are inherent to cinema. At this juncture, the role played by film culture in the Diaspora Space is crucial, as Indian writer Rajinder Kumar Dudrah asserts:

> Cinema represents the fostering alliance of the cultural cross-disciplinary dialogue […]; the interconnection between cultural flows makes that a collectively important in the film-making process […] [as well as] the audiences around the globe [that] receive and experience a large, constant, complex and interconnected supply of images from around the globe" (25, 215).

Thence, the uniqueness of cinema is that of the Diaspora Space, a cultural and social practise enhanced by the dynamics of the global world, where the film production and consumption disseminates[9] around the globe.

Thus, if not only does a film represent the encounter of cultures but also speaks about the circumstances in which a movie is shot, the relevance of filmmaking in the dynamics of the Diaspora Space interweaves factors that influence the film production (with involved aspects such as economic funding, censorship, advertising campaigns or audience reception). It is from this point that imperialist patrons of dominance come into view, for it cannot be forgotten that Diaspora Space is imminently a postcolonial outcome settled among old and neo colonial discriminatory relations. Bearing this postcolonial outcome in mind, this section unfurls an overview about Postcolonial Film Theory by analysing the pros and cons of the definitions that have been already given by theorists such as Teshome Gabriel, Hamid Naficy or Jigna Desai. In this respect, it is my purpose to analyse these concepts in terms of the recognition of the previous hybridity of cultures

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[9] By using dissemination I am echoing Homi K. Bhabha's article "Dissemination and the Margins of the Modern Nation", a very inspiring account about the identities created out of the "scatterings and meeting of the people around the world" (1990: 291). This concept also articulated the historical approach to the Sub-Continent undertook in Chapter One.

promoted in the Diaspora Space. By so doing, I intend to propose the term hybrid cinemas as expressive of the hybridity's subversive proclaim because, as Senegalese filmmaker Ousmane Sembene points out, the honest film director always seeks to "denounce what he sees wrong in society" (qtd. in Naficy 2001: 304). That is why I will present hybrid cinemas as the theoretical category which truly embraces the postcolonial hybrid identities produced in the Diaspora Space, overcoming the delimitations provided by previous definitions. Hereby, postcolonial cinema responds to "the transformational, oppositional and revolutionary agenda of postcolonial art" (Boyce Davies 76) and so the study and production of a postcolonial film always involves an analysis of the forms of dominance that have been perpetuated since colonial times.

To start with, it was from the postcolonial traditional attack against colonial dichotomous relationship centre/periphery and West/East that Ethiopian film theorist Thesome Gabriel first pointed at the existence of a postcolonial film which "stands opposed to imperialism and class oppression in all their ramifications and manifestations" (1979: 2) and which he called "Third Cinema in the Third World" (1979: 1). Gabriel defined this Third Cinema as opposed to the dominion of Hollywood standards at those times (late 1970s – early 1980s), praising film directors which promoted "Third World's contestation" (1979: 4), such as Ousmane Sembene or the early short documentaries[10] by Mira Nair. In these terms he defined Third Cinema as follows:

> Third Cinema is built on the rejection of the concepts and propositions of the traditional image as represented by Hollywood […], [its aim being] to immerse in the lives and struggles of people of the Third Word: Africa, Asia and Latin America […] [and] contain – both as representation and as reference – cultural elements with which people can identify, providing the tools with which it can help change the environment (1979: vii - 9).

Taking into account the temporal reference, I believe that Gabriel's categorisation aimed at defining postcolonial cinema as the cinema done in the places that did not correspond with North American and European mainstream productions. His "Third Cinema in Third World" was recognised by 1980 critics such as Paul Willemen (in "The Third Cinema Question: Notes and Reflections", 1989), Ashish Rajadhyaska (in "Debating the Third Cinema", 1989) and Andres R. Hernández who praised, in his article "Filmmaking and

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[10] Gabriel included Nair's *Jama Masjid Street Journal* (1979), a documentary about the Great Mosque (Jama Masjid) of New Delhi, a length shot by Nair as an attempt to show that India was not an all Hindi/Hindu Republic. Nevertheless, Gabriel also showed acquaintance of other short films that Nair directed while still studying at Harvard and Delhi and that were part of the assigned coursework. Nair and Caitlin McFarland (Nair's personal assistant) are currently working in the edition of this material, which will include *Jama Masjid*, *So Far from India* (1983), *Indian Cabaret* (1993) and *The Laughing Club of India* (1999) in the *Monsoon Wedding*'s recently released (October 2009) edition for Criterion DVD.

Politics" (1984), "the recognition of the cinema produced from and about the Third World countries" (67). Nevertheless, Gabriel's taxonomy somehow should be strictly used in this temporal context because his "Third World", as enunciated in Gabriel's broad "Africa, Asia and Latin America" (1979: vii), sounds excessively *otherising*, and can be understood under the capitalist restriction of great departments stores' *Other Cinemas*[11] or definitions such as Alberto Elena's "peripheral cinemas or cinemas of the periphery: Africa, India and the East" (ii). In this sense, I think that the fact of defining filmmakers like Mira Nair or Iranian Abbas Kioristami (as Gabriel does in the 1992 re-edition of his work) as Third Cinemas restricts and simplifies postcolonial filmmaking to a mere process of counter-telling from the Third World, which clearly ignores that they are not only Third World directors but filmmakers of the world.

Therefore, although Gabriel's proposal was of doubtless relevance, it nowadays presents certain inadequacy to categorise films made in the Diaspora Space, which are not shot according to what he calls the "Third World's still traditional, artisan art of filmmaking" (1979: vii). Obviously, these films share a postcolonial will to subversion, but are not produced in the Third World per se and so cannot be categorised as Third World Films, as Gabriel attempts to blend in when he rewrites his theory and asserts that the Third Cinemas are more "a matter of the ideology espoused and consciousness displayed" (1992: 205). I thence think that Third Cinema still resounds of exotic structures of economic inferiority. Under these terms Paul Willemen also considers that the term Third Cinema "fails to consider filmmakers in the Third Space, those who occupy both an inside and outsider status" (18). Moreover, Simon Featherstone writes that "Third Cinema was a very practical ideological project and set of analytical tools but now production explores other *tools*" (my emphasis, 104-5.). In my opinion, these *tools* should take into account the peculiarity of the hybridity of cultures found in the Diaspora Space and already represented in cinemas produced in the late 1980s which clearly challenged the particularities, needs and struggles of what Gabriel called "developing nations in the Third World" (1992, 12). Films that illustrate this point are John Akomfrah's *Handsworth Songs* (1986) produced by Black Audio Film Collective, Maureen Blackwood and Isaac Julien's *Passion of*

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[11] As I could verify, London's most famous department stores such as Harrods, Harvey Nichols, besides popular multinational franchises like Virgin Megastores included Mira Nair's *Mississipi Massala, Monsoon Wedding* and *The Namesak*e, together with Gurinder Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice*, under the heading *Other Cinemas*.

Remembrance (1986) produced by Sankofa or Stephen Frears' *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985) and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*[12] (1987).

Furthermore, it is on this restricting sense of marginality implicit in Third Cinema that Iranian Hamid Naficy (UCLA disciple from Teshome Gabriel) settles his definition of "accented cinema" (2001: 2). Naficy gathers films like Israeli Amos Gitai's *Bayit. The House* (1980); Canadian of Armenian descent and Egyptian birth Atom Egoyan's *Family Viewing* (1987) and *Exotica* (1994), Nair's *Mississipi Masala* (1991) and Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993) as instances of "accented cinema", defining the concept as follows:

> [Accented cinema] expresses a particular national culture defined by accented filmmakers who live in various modes of transnational otherness and inscribe and (re)enact in their films the fears, freedoms and possibilities of split subjectivity and multiple identities […]. The state of being represented as an "all-inclusive" simultaneity and intertextuality, where original cultures are no longer formed but created astride in the interstices of social formations. […] Accented cinema offers the transitional journey of transnationality with boundless and timelessness depiction of identities (2001: 3, 18, 271).

It is in this interpellation that accented cinema promises, as a cinematographic paradigm, to illustrate the hybridity of cultures produced in the Diaspora Space that was ignored in Gabriel's taxonomy. However, Naficy obviates the figurative, cinematographic possibility of a hybridised form of postcolonial language that is recognised by prominent postcolonial critics such as Antiguan Jamaica Kincaid or Kenyan Ngugi wa Thiong'o. Instead, Naficy perpetuates the isolated marginality of the previously referred filmmakers and he argues that "the *accented* emanates not so much from the accented speech of the diegetic characters but from the displacement of the filmmakers and their artisan production modes" (2001: 4). Thence, the promise of articulating the different cultural accents collapses if films like Gitai and Egoyan's are categorised as accented films only because they do not come from the West (which, according to their place of residence will be a mistake: Gitai lives in Los Angeles, California, and Jerusalem, Egoyan in New York and Toronto). In my opinion, there is a huge risk of perpetuating the simplistic notion of accent as exotic in Naficy's contextualisation, for he does not refer to the idea of the interpollination of cultures found in the Diaspora Space in neither of his two most important books *Home,*

Exile, Homeland: Film, Media and the Politics of Place (1998) and *An Accented Cinema. Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (2001).

At this point, the definition "trasnational cinemas" (i) provided by Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden also fails. They propose the label of transnational cinema as only significant of the internationality of film production in terms of funding, settings or technical and artistic crew. In their own words:

> The category of the transnational cinema allows us to recognize the hybridity of much new Hollywood cinema (Eastern martial arts, European auteur cinema, Indian fables...) […] Transnational names with international recognition such as Almodóvar, Von Trier, Wenders, Sembene and Nair […] form the global cine-literacy [which] have been created and made necessary by the degree to which capitalism as the catalytic agent in the expansion of popular culture has determined the visibility of cultural or national insularity (2).

Despite these revelatory terms, Ezra and Rowden's definition ignores the cultural and artistic transnational product per se. The diasporic imagination and posterior cultural diversity is completely disregarded by a definition that only evaluates cinema from a capitalist point of view. In this sense, as I have previously said, cinema is a complex artistic system which involves different disciplines, but it also has (and should always have) a much more powerful *raison d'être* than money; especially talking about films coming from and dealing with the Diaspora Space.

Therefore, previous definitions fail to recognise the intercultural dilemmas and the process of identity transformation regarded in the films produced by filmmakers of the Diaspora Space. In some kind of way, all the considered terms crumble down because they try to present homogenising visions about the cinematographic creation in geographical, artistic and economic terms, obviating the contemporary encounter of cultures and the coexistence of cultural difference that takes place in the Diaspora Space and that Avtar Brah eloquently defines as follows:

> Difference may be constructed as a social relation constructed within systems of power underlying structures of class, racism, gender and sexuality […] [Difference] may also be conceptualised as experiential diversity. Here, the focus is on the mean and different ways in which ideological and institutional practises mark our everyday life. These everyday practices are the matrices enmeshed within which our personal and group histories are made and remade. But we need to make a distinction between difference as the marker of the distinctiveness of our collective histories and difference as personal experience, codified in individual's biography. […] [Symbols] of cultural difference may also be mobilised by subordinated peoples as a means of consolidating a political challenge (1996: 88-91).

Only by these means can, for instance, the particularities of the South Asian Diaspora be unveiled. Accordingly, how could the postcolonial experiences of diaspora in Gurinder Chadha's filmmaking be simply classified as Third Cinema representations? Is Ashima's inner quest in Mira Nair's *The Namesake* to be recognised merely by her accent? Are the stories of *Mississippi Masala* or *Bend It like Beckham*, as Alberto Elena's asserts in his *Peripheral Cinemas (Los cines periféricos: África, Oriente Medio e India)*, "simple stories of India adjustment" (26)?

It is then at this controversial point that I consider that there should be a new theoretical discourse that would integrate the local peculiarities of a particular postcolonial cinema (as, for example, the case of the South Asian Sub-Continent and its post-Partition diasporic context) into the transnational[13] context. Here, I believe that the term *hybrid cinemas*, as it will be later introduced, guarantees the no prevalence of a particular differential discourse but the connivance of the many variable interwoven in the Diaspora Space. Therefore, as this dissertation is framed in the context of the South Asian diaspora I believe that I should provide a brief account about the arrival and departure of cinema in the Sub-Continent, as the paradigm to analyse the emerging particularities of the postcolonial local, yet global importance of a hybrid film in relation to the South Asian diasporic peculiarities.

To begin with, it was the British colonial intervention which first took cinema into British India. Maurice Sestier, a British entrepreneur on a business trip to Australia, formerly brought the cinematographer to the Sub-Continent in 1896. He taxed cinema as an object of luxury to warrant his economic retirement. Nevertheless, the arrival of Soviet propagandistic[14] cinema and documentaries in the Sub-Continent, alongside the progress of the Progressive Writer's Association[15] and the Indian People's Theatre Association[16],

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[13] Transnational is understood here following Steven Vertoveck's line of thought. He defines transnational as "the multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across borders of nation-states, […] [therefore sustaining] cross-border relationships, patterns of exchange, affiliations and social formations spanning nation states as parallels to the growth of social interest in globalization over the same period" (2009: 2-4).

[14] The Soviet political influence spread, as Herman Kulke (224) and Henry Stein (121) recognise, through the Sub-Continent from 1939 onwards. Its aim was to foster an Indian revolution against the British recruitment/indenture of Indian civilians for the WWII. These films would focus on the teaching of Marxism precepts of social equality (therefore attacking the varnas-based social stratification by British and *Hindutva** political power) with the displaying of social documentaries that highlighted the cruelty of the British-American cooperation against the USSR.

[15] The Progressive Writers' Movement, constituted in London in 1936 and in Calcutta in 1937, gathered progressive left writers from the Sub-Continent, together with anti-British voices, to attack the Raj and support the equality all through the Sub-Continent. They would praise the use of Urdu (attacked by the British Ministry for Foreign Education) and enhance an intellectual alliance with the USSR (Union of Socialist Soviet Republics).

[16] The Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA), founded in 1942, right under the influence of the WWII and the upcoming 1943's Bengal Famine. Through the representation of plays such as *Nabana* (*Harvest*) (1943), based on popular Bengali folklore, the group tried to explain to the Indians the British repression and the Indian inability to respond. The influence of the group in popular dancing, traditional music and cinema of the times is said to be, as Zohra Segal asserts,

would make cinema emerge as a very successful enterprise, despite the fact that, as Alberto Elena points out in *Los Cines Periféricos* (1999), the market in the Sub-Continent could barely fight against the influence and low production costs of Hollywood[17].

The British colonial administration then would realise about cinema's indoctrinating power and promoted, through the creation in 1940 of the British Film Advisory Board[18] in India[19], what Srirupa Roy calls "a vertical artistic British dominance which would soon atomize the many languages in which Indian cinema had been shot to introduce WWII documentaries which tried to convince Indians to enrol the British Army" (235). In other words, cinema was taken as a part of the imperialistic domination, a device still used after Partition by the British, USSR and North American commercial and political enterprises to assure their own economic success and cultural hegemony. Therefore, cinema became an important identifying trait for the postcolonial Indian context because even *Hindutva** emergent political ideals promoted, during the Partition decade (1945-1956), a misleading *escapist*[20] cinematographic production motif to found the figure of an ideal Indian who

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of immense value to the arts scene both in India and its diaspora. Also, the IPTA is said to be the strongest influence on the visual and singing culture of the popular Hindi films (Bollywood) and the South Asian Theatre. For further academic researches in this topic, I would recommend the following works: Farley P. Richmond's *Indian Theatre: Traditions of Performance* (1990), Ralph Yarrow's *Indian Theatre: Theatre of Origins, Theatre of Freedom* (2000), Ananda Lal's *Oxford Companion to Indian Theatre* (2004) and Nandi Bhatia *Acts of Authority/Acts of Resistance: Theatre and Politics in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (2004).

[17] Alberto Elena points out that the average cost of a North American/Hollywood film was, back in the 1930-40s, 2000 Rupees, whereas a production in Mumbay could never be shot for less than 20000 Rupees. As the costs of production were most expensive in other Indian regions (such as Kolkata or Chennai), the Indian-based producers and distributors would soon try to counteract the American numbers of production by locating much of the Indian cinematographic industry around the city of Mumbai. This obviously marks the beginning of the concentration of almost 80% of the Indian cinematographic industry in Mumbay (despite the fact that the region speaks Gujarati and Bengali) and the emergence of the Bollywood label (56).

[18] I strongly recommend the reading of Phillip Wood's article "From Shaw to Shantaram: the Film Advisory Board and the making of British propaganda films in India, 1940–1943" (2001), for his very committed analysis of the British colonisation brought over the Indian minds.

[19] The British Film Board in India would be then transformed, in 1948 and by the *Hindutva** nationalism, in the Film Division of India (FDI), adhered to the Indian Ministry of Exterior Politics. The FDI would promote two lines of production: the former still makes it the single producer of documentary in the world (Roy 2003) with propagandistic documentaries dealing with the Indian nationalist movement, the railway system in India, the historical trapping of elephants in colonial India and the accounts of natural disaster (earthquakes in the region of Quetta 1935 and 2008, the 2004 tsunami). The latter was carried as a general concern to strengthen tourism, and it tried to provide an exotic myriad of feelings on the viewer although most of them were based on an exotic breathtaking vision of India or a victimising account of the lives of the poor Indians. As Srirupa Roy states, both tendencies are synonymous of a stereotypical attempt to sell India to the world by pointing at the still special Indian postcoloniality (242).

[20] As Erik Barnouw and S. Krishnaswamy point out, escapist is not an accurate adjective to refer to traditional popular Hindi films. Nevertheless, I use it in this context because movies of those times such as Bimal Roy's *Devdas* (1955) or Mehboob Khan's *Mother India* (1957) provided a melodramatic possibility (as understood by Peter Brook in *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama and the Mode of Excess,* 1996) for the country's deep tensions, those of being between wealth and poverty, tradition and modernity, hope and fear. Thence the grandiloquence of both music and images provided a character that had sudden access to a hopeful richness. However, the Hindutva reading was guaranteed, for those bright values always subscribed to ideals of Hinduism and attacked those of Islam. The Classificatory films provided by the FDI at those times was, as and Srirui Roy in her reading of Jag Mohan's "Documentary Films and National Awakening" describes as "Arts and experimental films, Biography and personality film, Classroom films and children's films, Educational and motivational films, Defence ministry films, Export and tourist promotion films and Visit films" (243).

followed the required Hindi/Hindu standardisation (a base for the *Orientalist* Western definition of *Bollywood**)

Films such as Bimal Roy's *Devdas* (1955) or Mehboob Khan's *Mother India* (1957) were produced under this political *Hindutva** patronage although, at the same time, India saw the international acclaim of the Bengali-speaking Indian filmmaker Satyajit Ray, director of films like *Pather Panchali* (1955) and *Aparujito* (1956), a figure who is still a source of controversy in the Sub-Continent. On the one hand, there were Indian politicians and intellectuals who criticised Ray's masterpieces for reducing India to a mere unappealing poor misery which discouraged the international ideal Hindutva image promoted by the other movies. On the other hand, the debate created the term Indian Film (firstly coined by Erik Barnouw and Subrahmanyam Krishnaswamy, in 1981, in their book *Indian Film*). Under this Indian Film definition, *Mother India* and *Aparujito* shared intrinsic peculiarities of the "formulaic Indian Film" which, in Rachel Dwyer and Divia Patel's words, presents "the always-Hindi told victory of Hindu ideals over Muslim or English tyrannies and westernised values" (152). In this sense, I consider that the tradition initiated by *Mother India* (1957) is still followed by films like Ashutosh Gowariker's *Lagaan* (2001) and other important transnational productions[21] (with American and British successful box-office) such as Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Saawariya* (2007), Farah Khan's *Om Shanti Om* (2007), Gowariker's *Jodha Akbar* (2008) or the economic success of Karan Johar's *My Name Is Khan* (2010).

In this line, both Barnouw and Krishnaswamy defined the Indian Film production as "a homogenous trend caught in a post-colonial momentum and the constant struggle against the surviving British colonial yoke" (24). Hereby, I consider that the term Indian Film is a useless term in this dissertation because it only points at the nationality of the film production, whilst also erroneously conceptualising the language of Indian films only as Hindi or Bengali (when Gujarati and Tamil languages were also used in films included in Barnouw and Krishwamy's volume). Moreover, the Indian Film also gathers other mistaken generalisations in the description. For example, the films are categorised as "opulent visual extravaganzas" (Barnouw and Krishnaswamy 32), a remark about which I wonder, how can Ray's intimate film productions be classified as such? Moreover, they

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[21] Gurinder Chadha's new project, *It's a Wonderful Afterlife* (released in April 2010 to a great critical rejection), and Mira Mira Nair's uptake on the cinematographic adaptation of Gregory David Robert's novel *Shantaram* (with Johnny Depp appointed for the main role) are to disrupt this *Hindutva** totalitarian tendency in the cinematographic representation, since *It's a Wonderful Afterlife* displays a Sikh family in the main roles and *Shantaram* tells the story of the author, caught in Mumbay's prisons, and the diversity he finds there.

remark that "Indian films are political weapons for the delimitation of Indian boundaries" (33) and include Bangladeshi Ritwik Ghatak Rahdadk[22] within its pages. How can Ghatak be defined as an Indian film director when he holds the Bangladeshi passport and deliberately makes Bangladeshi national film? Nevertheless, the biggest mistake arises when, in the re-edition of Barnouw and Krishnaswamy's work in 1992, films such as Nair's *Mississippi Masala* or Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* were also included under the previous categorisation, restricting them to that propagandistic exotic representation, in this case as related to the "Indianness of the Diaspora" (Barnouw and Krishnaswamy 24). In this sense, the theoretical discourse of Indian Film fails to recognise the settlement of these films in the Diaspora Space, exactly at the same place where Third Cinema and Accented Cinemas proved erroneous, almost *Orientalist* optics.

It is exactly from that *Orientalism* where colonial fantasies survive with the prominence of labels such as *Bollywood*. Here, although there has been a previous definition for *Bollywood** offered at the *Glossary* of this work, I think that it is necessary to add a few nuances strictly taken from the cinematographic theory this section deals with. In this sense, Edward Johnson, in *Bombay Talkies* (1987*)*, pointed at how "the West thinks of Bollywood films as commercial films which express the ridicule of Indian culture" (2). Asha Kasbekar agrees with him in her article "An Introduction to Indian Cinema" (1996), where she states that "Bollywood seems to be a synonymous of exotic, grandiloquent scenes of music and dance in Indian film […], an erroneous conceptualisation of the West because these sense are the inheritance of the traditional *sangeeta** which, since 2000 years ago, consisted of instrumental music and dance scenes as essential features of dramatic performances" (369). Further into a much more contemporary context, Rachel Dwyer and Diva Patel define, in *Cinema India: The Visual Culture of Hindi Film* (2002), the totalising use of *Bollywood** by Western critics as a neo-colonial strategy that ignores the richness and success of Indian cinemas in the forms of Northern regions or in the area of Tamil Nadu, without mentioning the splendour of the diasporic recreation of the cinema in the

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[22] The case of the filmmaker Ritwik Ghatak, as he is commonly known, proves very illustrative when dealing with the complexity of the Sub-Continent's national identity and labels. Born as a British Indian citicisen in 1925 in Dhaka, he then would become resident of East Pakistan (after 1947 Partition) and then a Bangladeshi cultural touchstone (after 1971 Partition, which would recognise West Pakistan as Pakistan and East Pakistan as Bangladesh, the free nation of Bengali people, therefore ignoring the tradition of the then Indian Kalcutta). Beyond this, it is remarkable to note that Ghatak was an active member of the IPTA and his films *Nagarik (The Citizen)* (1952), *Ajantrik (The Unmechanical, The Pathetic Fallacy)* (1958), *Titash Ekti Nadir Naam (A River Called Titash)* (1973) and *Jukti Takko Aar Gappo (Reason, Debate and a Story)* (1974) are intense denounces placed against British colonialism and *Hindutva** totalitarism. The book *Rows and Rows of Fences: Ritwik Ghatak on Cinema* (2000), published by Seagull under the patronage of Ghatak's Trust Foundation and under Ghatak's name, is a great account of interviews, reviews, personal motivations and historical analysis of Ghatak's times.

Telegu dialect "as well as the discord of tongues and complex kaleidoscope of Indian Cinema" (8). As also stated in the *Glossary*, India's cinema industry is not all about Bollywood and Hindi songs and dances. Paraphrasing the statement that appeared in Chapter I, "India contains a lot of Indias" (my translation, Batalla 3), it could be said that India's cinema contains a lot of cinemas and not all of them are followers of Bollywood *Orientalist* normative.

It has been in this essentialist, simplifying and stereotyping fashion that films like Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice* (2004) and Pratibha Parmar's *Nina's Heavenly Delights* (2006) have been defined as *Bollywood** movies, clearly ignoring that both films are articulated within the dynamics of the Diaspora Space's transcultural flux of cultures. It looks as if it is from this perspective of going beyond Bollywood that Indian Resident Professor of Women's Studies Jigna Desai proposes the term "Diasporic Cinema" (i) in her very inspiring book *Beyond Bollywood. South Asian Diasporic Cinema* (2004).

In this book, Desai tries to provide a critical and academic space to account for the tensions among the homelands, the diasporic homes and the articulation of the global hybridity of cultures at the Diaspora Space. It is in this trend that Jigna Desai backgrounds her theory by pointing at how her own experience of diaspora (an Indian woman immigrated to the US) made her "began a search for the beyond, […] for the new cultural processes and flows of cultural products in the South Asian Diaspora" (vii). Her conception of diaspora as a concept as well as a relationship between people and place completely matches with Avtar Brah's conception of Diaspora Space. Bearing this conception in mind, Desai defines Diasporic Cinema as:

> [A] cinema resulting from the migratory processes engendered by capitalism[,] postcoloniality […] and beyond them; [therefore] posing hybrid possibilities forged out of the shifting sands of Hollywood, Bollywood and other formulas, a global visual culture which engages the *diasporic audience beyond disciplinary rubrics and schemata* […]. South Asian diasporic cinema *negotiates* and *traffics* among the two largest global cinemas – Hollywood and Bollywood – as well as individual national cinemas including British, Canadian, alternative US, and alternative Indian […]. South Asian diasporic films function significantly as part of the shifting economic, political, and cultural relations between global capitalism and the postcolonial nation-state, raising questions regarding the negotiation of cultural politics of diasporas located within the local, national, and transnational processes of the heteroglossia of these movies (my emphasis, ix, 35-36).

In other words, Diasporic Cinema, as enunciated by Desai, is a cinema about the confluences of cultures in the Diaspora.

However, Desai only confers the essential particularities of Diasporic Cinema to the South Asian diaspora. And here, the definition feels too restrictive, as if she focused too much on the Indian diaspora from India, therefore offering misleading analysis of Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) and excluding films like Vipul Amrutlal Shah's *Namaste London* (2007)[23] that, although produced in India, are a clear reflection about the cultural dillemas found in the Diaspora Space. I believe that it is by overanalysing the recurrence of these constructions only in the South Asian Diaspora that Desai fails to look through the diasporic optics per se, especially if we are to understand these diasporic optics as within Sujata Moorti's definition: "[Diasporic optics] offers the possibility of negotiating identities across differences through the use of the many images and discourse of the cinematography" (355). Thence, Diasporic Cinema still produces a definition that accounts more for specificity rather than for the articulation of the differences and identities produced in the Diaspora Space. I consider this a big disadvantage because if new diasporic identities are to be defined as only containing isolated diasporas, the hybridity of cultures is rarely to be fully articulated. In this context, the subversive transformation inherent to the hybrid identity is obviated, as well as the possibility of a new home for the contact of difference. Ghanaian born, British resident Kobena Mercer beautifully let us understand the point in the following quotation, where he states:

> I suggest that the emerging culture of hybridity, forged among the overlapping African, Asian and Caribbean diasporas that constitute our common home, must be seen as crucial and vital efforts to answer the possibility and necessity of creating a new culture so that we can live (3-4).

Once again, the mere statement of hybridity brings back the possibility to revaluate discriminatory paradigms in the contemporary globalisation of cultures, as well as the possible endorsement of new systems of domination which may surface from the diasporic displacement and the cultural syncretism. It is exactly from this context that I want to propose *hybrid cinemas* as a definition which emerges from the hybridity of cultures in the Diaspora Space.

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[23] *Namaste London* tells the story of Jasmine as a first generation BrAsian born in a very traditional family. Jasmine soon falls in love with Charlie, a white divorcee. When Charlie is proposing, Jasmine's mother phones her to inform that they are all decided that they are embarking on next flight to India, obviously including Jasmine, to find her a suitor and arrange the marriage. Here, Jasmine will face comic and melodramatic situations where she must made her mind whether to stay in India, London… or managed to bring *her* London to India. The film was a huge hit overseas. It debuted at number nine on the UK charts and within the top twenty in the United States and Australian charts. The film collected £ 238,841 GBP in its release week. As of July 27, 2007 (date of the DVD release) the movie had grossed an estimated $15,273,747 USD (£9,332,044.29 GBP) in five territories which included the US ($4,149,772 USD - £2,535,452.24 GBP), Australia ($197,148 - £120,454.65 GBP), India ($17,267,662 - £10,550,298.28 GBP), Malaysia ($15,285 - £9,338.92 GBP), and the United Kingdom ($9,021,900 - £5,512,253.83 GBP).

Hybrid cinema defines films which address the intersection of cultures from an interdisciplinary perspective. This is a proposal that considers the filmmakers of hybrid films as directors who have a postcolonial background, therefore coming from countries, cultures and diaspora which were either colonised or founded on imperialist, patriarchal and racist structures of domination. Instances of this trend would be Iranian Jafar Panahi's *Offside* (2006), New Zealander Niki Caro's *Whale Rider* (2002), African American Julie Dash's *Daughter in the Dust*[24] (1992) or the British-American South Asian selected films by both Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair. Thus, hybrid cinema intends to be constituted as a framework that regards these films as representing the contact/conflict found in the Diaspora Space. The definition can be used to focus on a determinate scope (as I will do with the South Asian Diaspora) although avoiding the restriction shown by Desai, for it is a description that is not restrictive to a particular diaspora or nationality. Instead, hybrid cinema enhances the overall analysis of all the *postcolonial* cultural, social and political variables involved in the Diaspora Space.

Hybrid cinema, as inherent to the subversive understanding of hybridity, then fosters a postcolonial evaluation of what bell hooks calls "interlocking systems of domination as based on race, class and gender" (1989: 21). It is in this aspect that hybrid cinema is a product of the co-existence of diasporas, where hybridity, as previously said, means the articulation of the definite postcolonial victory over the effects of colonisation on cultures and societies. Bearing this approach in mind, I will define hybrid cinema following a threefold pattern: the *hybridity* represented in the thematic subject-matter of the film, the filmmakers' personal trajectory(ies) of diaspora, the transnational mode of production and the diversity of the audience.

Therefore, a hybrid film is primarily a depiction of the complex life experience and the overlapping identities of the different postcolonial diasporas that converge in the Diaspora Space. By representing the hybridity of cultures without using hegemonic discourses, a hybrid film represents the process of identity transformation and so it

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[24] *Daughters in the Dust* (1991) was the first African American film distributed in the States. The film tells the story of a Gullah family's struggle in between the North American society. Being the first feature directed by Julie Dash, she gives a very inspiring account of both the process of shooting and writing the film in her book *Daughters of the Dust: The Making of an African American Woman's Film*, where she accounts for what she calls a "fifteen year struggle of being having your true roots denied" (ii). Hers is a beautiful account of the convergence of variables and cultural negotiation in the Diaspora Space by acknowledging that the connivance of African values and traditions in the concept of African American. In between, Gullah refers to those African American people who, living in South Caroline and Georgia have conserved their African roots very powerfully due to the abrupt location of their region in between the rocky, beach boundary that unites South Caroline and Georgia. Most of them came from Sierra Leone to work at the ice plantation and have perpetuated a form of Creole which can be traced backwards till their arrival of the slave ships through the middle passage.

witnesses the mutation of cultural identities. A hybrid film then delves in the encounter among Western and non-Western cultures and celebrates a hybrid society where specific cultural idiosyncrasies are never subordinated to any other. At this juncture, the hybrid film evaluates society from a plural perspective that was ignored by previous normative Western definitions and, as a consequence, it collects what Deborah Madsen calls "the diversity, resistance, thinking and voices of every people" (7). The term hybrid film accordingly provides the open possibility for a future cultural connivance and, by representing a hybrid society, the hybrid film fosters a place for an equal cultural empowerment among previous colonial and colonised cultures, as Jigna Desai refers to the inherent subversive power contained in the discourse of hybridity:

> [Hybridity] obscures the anxiety of the irresolvable representation of the borderline culture and, instead, it articulates its problems of identification and its diasporic aesthetics. If the hybrid world expressed in [Salman Rushdie's] *The Satanic Verses* was considered blaspheme and heresy, then blaspheme is to dream, and that is the empowering condition of hybridity (226-7).

In other words, a hybrid film allows an all-inclusive redefinition of identity in terms of both "roots and routes" (Gilroy 1993) and, in the present day age, this idea undertakes a strategy of resistance, enabling a new possibility for survival, as Kobena Mercer recognises that "hybridity means the possibility and necessity of creating a new culture so that the postcolonial subaltern can live" (3-4). To sum up, the term hybrid film guarantees the recognition of the many cultural difference found in the Diaspora Space and the enhancement of an alternative of coexistence where imperialist schemes of domination are finally overcome.

In this sense, only by keeping in mind this prospect of articulating the diverse cultural distinctiveness can the intermingling dynamics of the South Asian Diaspora, what Makarand Paranjape calls "the plurality of the Indian DestiNation" (101), be represented. This is the cinematographic paradigm from where Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair's films can be defined as descriptors of the multiplicity, contradiction and instability inherent to their personal and filmic diasporic experience. This is how, for instance, Nair's *The Namesake* (2006) and Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice* (2004) display characters like Gogol or Lalita, constantly flying across the Atlantic and the Pacific Ocean, always in transit between India and the US. Similarly, Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) represents dinner tables as gathering spaces of existences lived in both India and the US, as well as constructed in the commonality of the BrAsian network, like in Chadha's *Bhaji on the*

Beach (1993). At this stage, their films do not offer a categorising Eastern discourse such as that enunciated by Teshome Gabriel and Hamid Naficy but a description of the interrelation and conflicts found, for example, in the contact between the African and South Asian Diasporas represented in Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach* or Nair's *Mississippi Masala*.

Gurinder Chadha's *Bend It like Beckham* (2002) equally proves this point. In this film, Chadha shows the diversity of London's suburbs while evaluating the gender discrimination suffered by the diasporic South Asian woman, particularly the patriarchal structures defined in the father-daughter relationship in both White British middle–class and first generation BrAsian families. The massive audience success of the film all over the world was not a consequence of what could appeal as the exoticism of the plot (Jessminder Bhamra is a Sikh female secret footballer in love with David Beckham) but an effect of the universal relevance of the thematic arguments in the movie: idolatry (Indian-descendant Jess longs for British David Beckham while British Jules Paxton wishes to enjoy the success of American football female players), operant schemes of patriarchal and heteronormative love-marriage relationship (present in both Bhamra and Paxton families), and the contemporary hybridity of cultures (a Sikh wedding in the middle of London suburbs, an Irish coach training a female team of African, Asian and Indian descendants…). Mira Nair's *The Namesake* (2006) also illustrates how Gogol and Ashima unveil the quest for identity that is inherent to the ambivalence of the Diaspora Space. This is perfectly illustrated by the way Gogol finally makes sense of the familiar stories behind his name and Ashima (which translated from Bengali means person without borders) takes the decision to live between the US and India by going back to her personal motivations (singing and sitar playing) as an independent *woman of the world*. In this sense, Chadha and Nair's hybrid films do not only engage with the Indian diasporic audience and the Sub-Continent inhabitants, they interweave us all as active members of the current hybridity of cultures, of our own personal *palimpsestic* experience in the Diaspora Space.

It is in this context that the filmmaker's trajectory of diaspora arises as another defining trait inherent to hybrid cinemas. In this respect, the *hybrid filmmaker* either lives in the diaspora (meaning that she/he has emigrated at a certain age of conscience) or has been brought up from/within the diaspora context (as respective to being a first/second/third… born generation in the diaspora or having been brought up in a different national culture as that of her/his parents'). In relation to the South Asian Diaspora, Mira Nair, Deepa Mehta

and M. Night Shyamalan stand as instances of the former trend, while Gurinder Chadha, Pratibha Parmar or Hanif Kureishi of the latter.

From now on I will focus on films and biography Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair, whose personal cartographies of diaspora have already been studied in Chapter One. If their trajectories as "Queen of the Multi" (Desai 34) and "local storyteller at the heart of global cinema" (Nuir 1) are both perfect representatives of their global heterogeneity and how their films move back and forth across the Sub-Continent and around the world, therefore showing an exemplary number of influences (stereotypical constructions as expected from Hollywood and Hindi popular films, auteur cinema, documentaries, MTV video-clip, British social drama or American Independent Sundance-oriented).

The opening scene in *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993) exemplifies this composite of cinematographic languages. Chadha situates Asha in her neighbourhood with a travelling take (in Ken Loach's style) showing the street's displaying windows and its Nazi graffiti, the South Asian fruits and spices, alcohol on sale in the British fashion and the door of Asha's husband video-rental shop. At this point, action is chained to a hallucinatory vision in which a Hindu god addresses Asha with all the clichés inherent to Hindi cinematographic popular culture (a theatrical arrangement of space, camp music, Hindi popular dance and exaggerated gestures). After that opening sequence, the camerawork and rhythm of the film (including the acting of Lalita Ahmed in the role of Asha) conform with what the viewer has come to expect from a British film made for Channel Four (witty dialogue, social denunciation and urban suburbia shown with a steady cam) but with all the music, clothing and visual images particular of the South Asian Diaspora.

It is in this similar context that Simon Featherstone analyses Nair's *Salaam Bombay* (1988) as follows:

> [The] narrative of *Salaam Bombay* is also a hybrid of Western realism and Hindi popular conventions. Whilst its spare, fragmentary sequencing recalls the European and American documentary influences that Nair acknowledges—Chris Marker, Jean Rouch, and D. A Pennebaker—the plot itself is a staple of Hindi cinema: a child separated from his family, and driven, against his will, into criminality. It is a storyline immediately recognisable from a tradition that goes back to pre-Partition classics such as Kismet but also to the cinema of Ken Loach and even to that of Martin Scorsese (110).

In addition, this hybridisation of style can be seen in the final scene of Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) (lasting over twelve minutes), the presentation of William Darcy to Lalita in Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice* (2004) or the funny visit Mina and her Indian boyfriend pay to the African American Discotheque in Nair's *Mississippi Masala* (1991).

Therefore, Chadha and Nair address their heterogeneous Indias (heterogeneity referring back to the whole Sub-Continent), while offering the subversive nature of the hybrid cinema as an assessment of current social challenges that must be faced by all the sides involved in the Diaspora Space (whether from India, the UK, the US, East Africa or the Caribbean). As further instances of this remark, a social critique informs scenes such as the one portraying the reaction of Mina's family to her relationship with an African American man in *Mississippi Masala*, Hashima's unexpected pregnancy in *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993) or the still subaltern position of women in Hindu and Sikh families, who have no right to denounce sexual harassment, as in the case of Alice and Ria in Nair's *Monsoon Wedding*[25] (2001). The intersection of diasporas then unveils the third distinctiveness of hybrid cinemas: the transnational form of production and audience.

Correspondingly, hybrid cinemas always involve a transnational form of finances and audience. A film like Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice* (2004) clearly verifies the point. The South Asian-origin population in British or American cities like New York or Birmingham will watch the film for its commercial appeal (acting cast with figures like Aisharwiya Rai and Naveen Andrews) and non Asian-origin British/Americans will buy the ticket based on the advertising campaign and the sophomore success and fame of Chadha's *Bend It like Beckham* (2002). Obviously, Indian audiences in the Sub-Continent will crowd the screens for all previous reasons. This explains the huge economic gross of the film and that the producing details included British UK Film Council, Indian Kintop Films and American Miramax, besides worldwide distribution provided by the multinational Pathé. Furthermore, Mira Nair's *The Namesake* (2006) is also descriptive of this tendency. Nair's film enjoyed a parallel release in Los Angeles, London, Delhi and Kolkata as well as multi-production and distribution enterprise, with the participation of American Fox Searchlight Pictures and Cinema Mosaic, Japanese Entertainment Farm (EF), Indian UTV Motion Pictures, and Nair's own American-Ugandan Mirabai Films.

At this stage, producers cannot ignore the economic power and influence of the transnational market, especially in the context of globalisation and the current proliferation of broadcasting possibilities of the South Asian Diaspora (digital TVs such as Zee TV and

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[25] Tillotama Shome, the actress who plays Alice in Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding*, should also be mentioned in this study. Apart from her acting career (which also includes roles in Florian Gallenberger's *Shadows of Time*, 2001, and Meneka Das's *Little Box of Sweets*, 2005), she has also pursued one in teaching at the Creative Arts Team at City University of New York (CUNY/CAT). There she uses theatre as the means of promoting the prevention of the spread of the HIV/AIDS, as a way of denouncing domestic violence and promoting the controlled consumption of substances such as cannabis and cocaine. She develops her theories with the active assistance of prison inmates at Rikers Island (New York City) and the users of Domestic Abuse Shelters in New York City.

Sony TV broadcast Indian and Diasporic Indian productions 24 hours a day), as well as on-line TVs or streaming webpages[26]. In this context, the production, distribution and consumption of hybrid films provide the necessary evaluative background to determine, based on the significance of the cultural and artistic representation, the re-visitation of the commercial relations between previous coloniser/colonised in the scenario of globalisation which may reveal new possible structures of discrimination and segregation. Japanese American producing company Sony and Jewish American director Steven Spielberg's Dreamworks are illustrative of this analysis. On the one hand, Sony is developing an important interest in producing films from the Sub-Continent such as Ashutosh Gowariker's *Lagaan* (2001)[27], Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Saawariya* (2007), or Sarah Gavron's *Brick Lane* (2007), promoting a transnational release with very important grossing at international box offices[28]. On the other, Steven Spielberg recently well publicised a new alliance with India's Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Reliance Group (a *holding* of entertainment, health, communications, engineering working infrastructures, natural resources power with cinematographic studios in Mumbay and Kolkata) to bring back Dreamworks as independent of David Gaffen and Jeffrey Karzberg to produce at least six

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[26] Judith M. Brown, in her stimulating book *Global South Asians*, and after a very extensive survey among the South Asian Diaspora in the UK and the US, highlights the success of the following websites with streaming and shopping on-line services: www.sulekha.com and www.redhotcurry.com (192). I would also add www.nriol.com (the Indian Government's official website Non Residents India On Line, aka *nriol*) and www.tkdl.res.in (a data base for Traditional Knowledge Digital Library, aka *tkdl*, provided by Council of Scientific and Research Institute, CSRI, branch in India with the aim of offering the Indian remedies and traditions to all the members of the diaspora).

[27] Although *Lagaan* has been cited in previous pages I now consider relevant to pay attention to the transnational entity of the film. *Lagaan* tells the story of a village in Gujarat (North-Western Indian province limiting with Pakistan) back to the year 1893, where a cricket match is supposed to either condemn the Indian villagers to starve to death due to the pay of land and harvest's taxes (*lagaan* means tax in Gujarati, although the movie is shot in Hindi) to the British governance or to get it solved. The film, produced and starred by Aamir Khan with the economic support of the US division of Japanese Sony, is the most grossing film of the Republic of India and the most profitable Indian film overseas. It won an Oscar Academy Award Nomination for Fest Foreign Film in 2002, although it lost it to the Serbian production *No Man' Land*. Nevertheless, I would like to point out that *Lagaan*, which started Sony's production and promotion of Indian films, was released after a very intense advertising campaign in the year that Hollywood congratulated itself for awarding the story of social disadvantages portrayed in Ron Howard's *A Beautiful Mind* and the first year in which there was an award for both African Americans in the categories of Best Leading Actor and Actress for Denzel Washington and Halle Berry (only, Hattie McDaniel in *Gone with the Wind*, 1939, and Whoopi Woldberg with *Ghost*, 1990, the host of that year's ceremony, had previously been awarded, although in the category of Best Supporting Actress). Sony could not understand how *Lagaan* lost (as read on *The Sunday Telegraph* on March 25th, 2002). Nevertheless, critics and audience wondered why India selected *Lagaan* and not Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* (after the artistic success at Venice and commercial profitable season all over the world) as the contestant. The reasons are clear: no Sony advertising campaign and, specially, a story about the corruption of both West and East, the gender discrimination also in both sides of the *Kala Pani** and a story that, above all, talked about global equality and humanity. No doubt then why Indian politics and Hollywood producers ignored *Monsoon Wedding* in the 2002 Ceremony.

[28] If not the whole production, Sony makes sure that it has its economic benefit from the money produced by the international release of a film like Karan Jhar's *My Name Is Khan* (2010). In this case, they produced and distributed the OST, one of the best selling of 2010's first semester.

Indian American films per year. Once again, the Sub-Continent receives money-investment with a profit making endeavour[29].

Consequently, by studying a hybrid film, there is always a political evaluation and social critique of the true articulation of the hybridity of cultures and the recurrence of imperial schemes of power. I believe that this is a perfect epitome for the representation of gender discrimination and, if as Indian critic Chandra Talpade Mohanty points out that the "the study of a female voice always unveils a claiming of her voice and the complex historical and political act that involves understanding the interrelationships of voices" (1990: 89-90), then Chadha and Nair's hybrid films will lead me to evaluate the position of South Asian diasporic women in the intersection of cultures, revealing the tensions and inconsistencies through which they are discriminated not only in their personal diaspora but in the whole Diaspora Space. Correspondingly, an analysis of specific form of gender discrimination will be the basis for Chapter III of this dissertation but, before doing so and in order to allocate a whole tradition of feminist contestation, it is necessary to highlight the relevance and ever-present recurrence of postcolonial gender and feminist theory.

3- GENDER AND FEMINIST THEORIES IN POSTCOLONIAL FILM

Colonial strategies of domination are completed through structures of patriarchal, economic, racial and imperialistic control. Therefore, the social composition of both feminine and masculine roles is a factor that strengthens what bell hooks calls the "interlocking system of social domination: sex, race and class" (1989: 21). I hence consider that a gender-based academic analysis always promotes the victory over these unfair structures of social power, because gender refers to "the social constructions created for feminine and masculine in the social and individual realm" (9), as Judith Butler states. In this context, gender explicitly excludes reference to biological differences, and it only focuses on what Stephanie Garret calls "cultural differences" (vii). As a result, an analysis of present gender discrimination in the postcolonial context proves the enduring subaltern position of women in the global contact of cultures. The urgency of the feminist response

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[29] I believe that the global setting and understanding of these economic interests on the Sub-Continent should keep us all aware of neo-colonial casualties. In my opinion, methodological approaches that reformulate the notion of diaspora and hybridity in the lines proposed by the present dissertation could provide a good lens from where to evaluate the true justice of the interaction of cultures.

becomes key for, as Carol Boyce Davies points out, although "many women speak, have spoken and are speaking […] [they] are rarely heard" (21). Accordingly, this part of the dissertation introduces the feminist struggle and its theoretical recognition in the field of Postcolonial Studies so that later study how the hybrid film unveils a feminist evaluation of both the plot and the position of women as filmmakers in the context of the border interference of cultures. Hence, Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair both review the position of the diasporic woman and the challenges they face in the context of the contemporary transcultural society.

3.1 - GENDER AND FEMINISM IN POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES

Diaspora is a gendered space and the main structures of the transnational economic and cultural market remain male-dominated, which generates a discriminatory construction of the female role in society. It is for this reason that the "diasporic optics" (Moorti 362) can be used as a strategy from where to analyse the position of women and theorise the systems of domination that still operate worldwide. Accordingly, Indian American writer Esha Niyogi De states that "the study of diaspora must deal with the ways border-crossers negotiate territorial barriers and otherness, paying special attention to how borders are gendered" (329). Hereby, the coexistence of identities in the Diaspora Space brings to the surface the multiple factors that determine the subordinating role models of the global system which make diaspora a particularly gendered space, as Avtar Brah remarks:

> [For] several hundred years now a global economic system has been in the making. It evolved out of the transatlantic trade in human beings, it flourished during the Industrial Revolution, it has been nurtured by colonialism and imperialism, and now it has achieved a new vitality in this age of microchip technology and multinational corporations. It is a system that has created lasting inequalities, both within nations and between nations. All of our fates are linked on a multiple [sic] of factors: such as gender, class, colour, ethnicity, chaste, and whether we practise a dominant or subordinate sexuality, and whether we live in a rich, industrially advanced society or a poor country in the Third World. And gender enables all (1996: 84).

In accordance, the continuous flow of the diasporic experience offers a space for dialogue, a subversive opportunity where women are situated "at the crossroads" (Anzaldúa 187),

with the possibility of performing[30] a victory over prevailing patriarchal structures of power.

It is then necessary to reassess those situations that keep gendering the Diaspora Space. In this respect, Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval Davis state that, in order to "un-gender" (Butler 1999) diaspora, two factors need to be reassessed: "the double scheme of diasporic gender relations (host country-travelling community)" and "the boundaries in which women still become the carriers of the cultural symbolism that marks out the boundaries of the diasporic group" (82). Nevertheless, I believe that, in order to overcome gender discrimination in the Diaspora Space, it is essential to start focusing on specific aspects such as the high unemployment rates in middle-class jobs (as pointed out in Fauzia Ahmad *et al.*'s *South Asian Women & Employment in Britain—The Interaction of Gender and Ethnicity*, 2003, or Padma Rangaswamy's *Namasté America*, 2000); the difficulties found in the access to university education (reflected by Shamita Dasgupta in a *Patchwork Shawl: Chronicles of South Asian Women in America*, 1998, and Amrit Wilson in *Dreams, Questions, Struggles*, 2006) and both religious discrimination and degrading social structures of privilege imposed on women (as studied by Lata Mani in "Contentious Traditions", 1989, and Chandra Talpade Mohanty's "'Under Western Eyes' Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles", 2003). In these terms, feminist resistance would be committed to the encouragement of the diasporic promise of a *constant becoming*. Also, if as Sara Suleri asserts, "postcolonial feminism eminently lends to a reopening of the continued dialogue of a former parochial and patriarchal discourse" (276), then postcolonial feminism supports the worldwide women's struggle to fight for an un-gendered social equality. In this context, I think that the feminist *raison d'être* should always be that of fighting together, male and female, towards a fairer world.

So, the postcolonial feminist agenda, now globally repaginated, must reframe enduring schemes of women's subaltern position in the contemporary context of the hybridity of cultures to finally forget those visions which, in the realm of cultural representation, as Avtar Brah states, have reduced female bodies to "schematic conquered lands" (1996: 48). Moreover, as Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar ("Challenging Imperial Feminism") or Chandra Talpade Mohanty ("Under Western Eyes" and "Feminism without Borders") already recognised in the late 1980s, postcolonial feminism must depart from the

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[30] Judith Butler states that feminism must be "performative" in order to disarm the inequalities that are the consequence of gender differentiation (9). Hers is a feminism which fosters a progressive commitment to un-gender society and its dynamics.

study of the particular forms of gender discrimination in the diaspora. By so doing, the Diaspora Space can be the paradigm upon which foster the subversion of gender inequality in the diasporic community, as determined by both the receiving space and the homelands. This interdependent and feminist victory is the prevalent point of view in contemporary diasporic and South Asian based feminist thinkers such as Vandana Shiva, Amrit Wilson, Meenakhsi Mukherjee, Jigna Desai and Parvati Raghuran & Nirmal Puwar. Let me here quote Jigna Desai as a paradigm of the previous voices: "[Diasporas] maintain and consolidate connections and imaginings of the homeland by performing national identities through gender and sexual normativities" (30). In other words, women stand on the crossroads of the Diaspora Space and are likely to become the object of patriarchal control in terms of education, marriage or professional and social-private life expectation. However, they are participant subjects with the power to undermine the recurrent inequality.

At this point, the *surfacing* of postcolonial feminism must be contextualised in relation to the Black Freedom Movement in the US (1955-1965) and the emergence of African American feminist theorists and writers such as Barbara Christian or Alice Walker who denounced the submission of the black woman under a double yoke: the imperialist white supremacy and the oppressive black patriarchal hierarchies. It was in this sense that Alice Walker coined the term *womanism*[31] in her famous essay "In Search of Our Mother Gardens", stating that black women should gather in order to create self-recognition and sisterhood identification from which to denounce their dreadful situation. By so doing, the Black Feminist movement in the US gave the lead to the urgency of the postcolonial feminist struggle in the 1970s. In my opinion, by standing together[32], black women created a language of their own that guaranteed a space for common healing that would empower upcoming feminist movements.

Furthermore, if gender oppression shares a language with colonial structures of power, then women suffer the same experience of coercion that is implicit in racial discriminatory stereotypes for, as Barbara Christian points out "stereotypes are always by-products of racism" (16). In this sense, Sally Westwood's accounts how Black Feminism

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[31] With *womanism* and *womanist*, Alice Walker created an inclusive, collaborative space where the experiences of black women could provide the basis for a collective struggle.

[32] In Alice Walker's *The Colour Purple* (1983) there is a beautiful line in which Celie illustrates this abstract female collaboration in the *womanist* space. It is Celie writing about Sophie: "[T]o tell you the truth, you remind me of my mama. She under my daddy thumb [*sic*]. Naw, she under my daddy foot […]. She never stand up for herself [*sic*] […], more she stands up for *us*" (my emphasis, Walker 1983: 48.). By so doing, Celie situates Sophie as her sister in this womanist space from where they are gathered, with other women, to subvert the unfair patriarchal dominance laid upon them by both the white racist society as well as by the male black patriarchal corporatism.

would be appropriated in the late 1980s by diasporic South Asian and African Caribbean populations in Britain and came to represent "a unified, though not uncontested, oppositional identity" (198). Correspondingly, postcolonial feminism needs to discern the confrontational difference in the context of the transcultural discourse, and so highlight the differences among African American, South Asian, Chinese, African or Aboriginal women. As Barbara Christian recognises, "there are many black women and their heterogeneity must always be recognised" (17). At this point, the common fight of the postcolonial woman must thence avoid being categorised under tokenistic stereotypes such as *other women* or *women of colour* and promote the recognition of the particular needs specific to a social group.

Subsequently, it is now important to analyse the persisting socio-cultural processes of imperialism in the life-experience of BrAsian and Indian American women because their religious, linguistic and social differences require to be acknowledged in order to recognise the heterogeneous Indian plurality. It is in this sense that South Asian feminist thinkers such as Amrit Wilson or Parvati Raghuram denounce the different inherited patterns of discrimination and stereotypical representations such as the emergence of the Islamic fundamentalist male preacher, the *Hindutva** promotion of arranged marriages and the Sikh insistence on social notions of female honour (*izzat**). I therefore believe that a feminist assessment of the South Asian diaspora is indispensable because the South Asian particularity plays a very important role in the universal composite of the Diaspora Space, especially in the UK and the US. Correspondingly, Chapter III of this dissertation will illustrate, based on feminist challenges made in the films of Chadha and Nair under discussion, how the hybrid societies depicted in their films provide a myriad of gender complexities which still need to be discerned. In this sense, I will maintain, throughout the following pages, that these films convey the "transformational", "oppositional" and "evaluative" role of art as previously quoted by Carol Boyce Davies, the possibility enhanced by the hybridity of cultures for the definite insurrection of gender discrimination.

3.2- REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN HYBRID CINEMAS: THE CASES OF GURINDER CHADHA AND MIRA NAIR

The film industry is a gendered system. This is evident when looking at the scarce amount of the female names that appear as directors, producers or screenwriters in the credits of

films until the first years of the twenty-first century[33]. Conspicuously, Katryn Bigelow with *The Hurt Locker* (2008) has been the first woman[34], preceded only by other three female nominees who lost the prize, ever to be awarded the Oscar Academy Award in the category of Best Movie in the 2010 ceremony as well as in Best director, category in which she was the third woman[35] in history to be nominated. Although the situation has as a result changed, although with a great sense of controversy, the panorama has not transformed in the previous thirty years (since Lina Wertmüller's nomination for *Pasqualino Settebellezze* in 1976). So, it can be asserted that the cinematographic business has a patriarchal structure of organisation and distribution as outlined by Hajira Kumar, who evaluates the position of women in society and their participation in all cultural spheres "as the true index of its cultural, economic and spiritual attainments" (91). In this sense, although mainstream cinema in English started to offer productions directed by North American female directors such as Nora Ephron (1941-), Katryn Bigelow (1951-) or Mimi Leder (1952-) in the early 1990s, the female director never achieved the status of the star of the film (as happened with Steven Spielberg, Quentin Tarantino or Martin Scorsese, to name a few). Unlike the previous North American cases, the female director was, until the late 1990s, only a commercial appeal in the selling point of a film if she had a postcolonial background that could be used to promote the film in a kind of *Orientalism* of the female filmmaker.

This was the case in the exotic background which advertised, in the early-middle 1990s, breakthrough female film directors such as Vietnamese Trinh Min-Ha (1952-), New Zealander Jane Campion (1954-), Indian Mira Nair (1957-) or East African Indian Gurinder Chadha (1960-). Likewise, it should also be taken into account that, for further academic research, it was not until the beginning of the twenty-first century that white European women filmmakers obtained their own economic freedom of production and direction (such as Scottish Andrea Arnold, Spanish Isabel Coixet[36] or Italian Asia Argento). At this stage,

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[33] In relation to this, there is, up to the end of year 2009 not a single female director in the Sub-Continent. Only the figures in the diaspora that will be mentioned in the following pages have been granted with the access to direction and production posts.

[34] Preceding Nominated Films directed by a woman were Barbra Streisand's *The Prince of Tides* (1991) and Jane Campion's *The Piano* (1993).

[35] Preceding female recipients of the Academy Award Nomination in the category of Best Director Lina Wertmüller' for *Pasqualino Settebellezze (Seven Beauties,* 1976) and Jane Campion for *The Piano* (2003).

[36] Before Coixet, Pilar Miró (1940-1997), Spanish filmmaker and Spanish National Television director, is an exceptional case in the European and world's context. As a woman of the Spanish *Transición*, Miró trespassed the gender boundary and achieved huge critical and audience success with personal and politically committed films such as *El Crimen de Cuenca* (1979, the only film that was still banned in the Spanish Democracy, until it was released in 1981), *Gary Cooper que estás en los cielos* (1980), *Beltenebros* (1991) or *El Pájaro de la Felicidad* (1992). Miró managed to get financing and creative support in a post-Franco society which still retrieved women from posts of creative importance such as those of filmmaker and producer. Nowadays, female filmmakers, producers and screenwriters who have followed her struggle, and who must be acknowledged for their international relevance, are Icíar Bollaín and Gracia Querejeta. Films like Bollaín's

it must be said that feminist films made before the twenty-first century were directed by female filmmakers with a postcolonial background (and advertised as an exotic product such as the case of Campion's *The Piano*) or by a famous mainstream male director whom would guarantee success at the box office (such as Steven Soderbergh's *Erin Brockovich*, 2000, and Ridley Scott's *Thelma & Louise,* 1991) [37].

Nevertheless, there were some pioneering exceptions that started to hold positions of control such as producers or filmmakers in the decade of the 1990s. This is the case of female producers in studios of high relevance such as American Laurie MacDonald (with full production credits in Jan de Bondt's *Twister*, 1996; Barry Sonnenfield's *Men in Black*, 1997 or Ridley Scott's *Gladiator* 2000) or British Jane Scott (with complete production credentials in Scott Hick's *Shine*, 1996 or Ana Kokkinos's *Head On*, 1998). Besides, there were (and still are) those pioneering women founding their own producing companies such as East African Indian origin British Pratibha Parmar's Kali*,* African American Oprah Winfrey's Harpo and again, the previously mentioned companies established by Mira Nair and Gurinder Chadha, Mirabai and Umbi/Bend It Films, respectively. Once again, it is significant that out of these six producers, four of them share a postcolonial background. The conclusion is clear: although facing the double challenge of being a postcolonial voice and a female visionary they empowered a powerful space from and for women to *talk back*[38] and become an active cultural representative of the contemporary age.

Therefore, as previously seen in section two of this chapter, the postcolonial feminist vindication must be *re*addressed from the perspective of the Diaspora Space, in order to *re*assess the distinctiveness inherent of the flux of cultures and the possibilities of subversion involved in the overlapping of identities. Here, I believe that the cases of female postcolonial filmmakers already mentioned should be considered hybrid cinema filmmakers figures because they and their films subscribe to some of the theoretical traits previously sketched. At this stage, I would like to highlight the names of other prominent female filmmakers who, either in festivals or in box offices have enjoyed certain recognition. This is the case of East African Indian origin Pratibha Parmar in her facet as

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Flores de otro mundo (1999), *Te doy mis ojos* (2003) and *Mataharis* (2007) as well as Querejeta's *Siete mesas de billar francés* (2007) are now essential coursework in Gender and Film Studies. Previously mentioned Isabel Coixet is a also a very important name, with challenging films like *The Secret Life of Words* (2005) and *Map of the Sounds of Tokyo* (2009).

[37] The exception to confirm this statement would be North American Barbara Streisand's *Yentl* (1982), an important economic and critical success which deals with the physical and mental subversion of a Jewish woman against a male-dominated oppressive background.

[38] Here, I am *playing* with bell hooks' inspiring book *Talking Back*, where she *talks* exactly about the necessity for women to stand up and talk back in order to subvert the submissive position generally occupied by women. hooks talks about her own childhood and interweaves her personal story of submission at her family and her following awakening to this fact as the preface which definitely empowered her change and ulterior progress.

filmmaker (*Nina's Heavenly Delights*, 2005), BrAsian Sandhya Suri (*I for India*[39], 2005), Indian American Shilpa Sunthankar (*Biography of an American Hostess*, 2004) , Sarmistha Parida (*French Fries and Curry*, 2004), Peruvian Claudia Llosa (*Madeinusa*, 2006; *La Teta Asustada* 2009), Argentinean Lucrecia Martel (*La Ciénaga*, 2001; *La Niña Santa* 2004; *La mujer sin cabeza*, 2008) and Iranian Hana Makhmalbaf (*Buddha Collapsed out of Shame*, 2007). By recognising all these inspiring women with a common theoretical bond, I believe that the definition hybrid cinema describes the hybridity of cultures as an empowering space from where to denounce interlocking systems of domination while opening a creative open space for pioneering women with a feminist take and an agenda of contestation.

Moreover, I believe that by being acknowledged as filmmakers of hybrid cinemas these women are defying the double subaltern position of the postcolonial female filmmaker and the prominence of patriarchal and discriminatory discourses. For instance, Judith M. Redding and Victoria A. Briwnwirth's *Film Fatales. Independent Women Directors* include Mira Nair, Jane Campion, Pratibha Parmar or Trinh T. Minh-ha within their anthology, which proposes the term "Fatale Women Directors" (4). The cover of the book illustrates the line of their work: A model poses like Thelma (as starred by Geena Davies in Ridley Scott's *Thelma and Louise*, 1991) with a gun in a rather pin-up pose. In my opinion, although their study may be considered relevant because it brings *female* names to the reading of Film Studies, the authors portray the filmmakers as mere violent denouncers of the margins' inequalities, restricting their analysis only to the radical tone of their films, not regarding the films as primarily dealing with contemporary topics which go beyond the drastic social violence presented and represented from the social and geographical periphery defined by Western normative models. Their approach fails on the same ground as Gabriel's "Third World Cinema" or Naficy's "Accented Cinema" did: they do not analyse the filmmakers as articulators of the Diaspora Space's distinctiveness. Instead, they reduce the filmmakers to tangential race and sex descriptors, as if they were not key active parts in the articulation of the diversity of cultural anecdotes.

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[39] As both are concerned with the scope of this dissertation, I believe that it is important to know the story line of both Parmar and Suri's films. *Nina's Heavenly Delights* (1995) tells the story of Nina Shah's return to Glasgow after spending three years in London. The film narrates, with a great sense of comedy, Nina's sexual coming out and the beginning of a relationship with her old school friend Lisa, with who will own the Indian-Pakistani restaurant Nina's Pakistani family established in Glasgow. Furthermore, Suri's *I for India* (2005) gathers the homemade Super 8mm footage shot by her father, a family doctor, from the 60s to the 80s. The film tells how Suri's father bought two cameras and two set of projectors first day in London to send a pair to India and become a video correspondence. The takes shown in I for India informs us about how Suri's family felt after arrival and which were the problems faced (there are clips showing the daily situations of racism suffered by all Asian immigrants as well as Margaret Thatcher's patriarchal speeches). *I for India* was distributed by London-based Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) and Channel Four provides a twelve minutes clip as a part of its British Educational Services on the following link: www.channel4.com/programmes/i-for-india. The film should receive the academic and audience access it deserves.

Similarly, Susie Tharu's definition of "Third World Women's cinema" (862) reduces Min-ha and Nair's films to mere "reflections of searching the meaning of living in the Third World" (864). In my opinion, this definition highlights, once again, the hegemonic binary strategies, where the so-called Third World and *its women* are passive occupants of a subaltern position. Min-ha summarizes this point with the always energetic force of her speech: "[Why] do we have to be concerned with the question of Third World Women? After all, only it is one issue among many others. Delete 'Third World' and the sentence immediately unveils its value-loaded *clichés*" (my emphasis, 1989: 85). These are the *clichés* that normally tend to represent women as submissive victims, a tokenistic vision set to categorise women as "a unitary category" (Brah 1996: 102). At this juncture, I consider that only by including women as part of the transnational panorama can they finally overcome the social discriminatory burdens that still deny their active-subject role in the global world.

Thence, as filmmakers of hybrid cinemas, directors like Mira Nair and Gurinder Chadha weave communities in their cinematographic representations with one common goal, that of implementing the subversive possibility of living within the hybridity of cultures. By so doing, they offer a place of visual contestation that trespasses old notions of postcolonial *Orientalism* and victimisation that still permeate our society with theoretical definitions such as, for example, Laura Marks' "Multicultural Cinema of the Senses" (2009). As illustrative of Marks' restrictive definition let me quote from her book *The Skin of Film. Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses* (2009), where she defines Nair and Chadha's filmmaking as part of inscriptions of "multicultural women […] who specially represent the cultural dialectics by means of a particular haptic visuality [*sic*] which offers an only female exploration of colonial, postcolonial and neo-colonial fossils and fetishes which maintain women as passive holders of mankind's pain" (91, 124). In other words, Marks perpetuates the reducing analysis of multiculturalism that ignores that women are active subverting subjects of the double submission of diasporic women, subaltern both within the emigrant and welcoming communities.

A hybrid film then develops a double fold challenge: the articulation of cultural difference alongside a feminist vindication against gender discrimination. In this sense, women filmmakers inhabiting the Diaspora Space are able to decolonise the artistic gaze while locating their particular subjectivities and denunciation. The hybrid film thence offers an analysis of the multiple differences found among the diasporic communities, where

women must compete against race, class and gender terms. Now focusing on the particularity of Chadha and Nair's films, it can be said that there is always a general political, cultural and economic evaluation of the dynamics of the whole Diaspora Space in their work. Specific situations such as the scene in which insults are hurled at the Sohali-Community bus full of women in Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993) or the portrayal of Mina's prejudiced family in Nair's *Mississippi Masala* (1991) are emblematic of this trend.

Thus, I believe that the representation of gender discrimination in hybrid cinemas involves a de-territorialisation of surviving bigots in the Diaspora Space. Firstly, as previously asserted, the postcolonial condition facilitates the evaluation and creation of a place of coexistence. Secondly, this initial conceptualisation enables a horizontal interconnection among diasporas as opposed to a vertical disposition where a determinate cultural group would prevail over the rest. Thirdly, it locates the resultant option of the previous dichotomy homeland/diaspora in the cinematographic product. And, in this sense, home, previously territorialised as the homelands' space in the diaspora, becomes the *glocal*[40] modern suburbia where *chapattis** are served at Fish and Chips restaurants or where Thanksgiving is a Latino and African American celebration (as portrayed in Gurinder Chadha's *What's Cooking?*, 2000).

At these *glocal* crossroads, hybrid cinema provides an understanding of the complex position of the South Asian woman in the Diaspora Space, while it challenges what Chandra Mohanty calls "the monolithic version of the Third World Woman in the context of the globalisation" (1988: 65). In this sense, Mira Nair and Gurinder Chadha's commercial and critical success illustrates the double challenge of being *glocal* women and postcolonial directors. By the same token they are essential figures who demystify the diasporic South Asian woman because their personal biographies of diaspora and films illustrate the dynamics of the present-day hybrid societies while they articulate a place of feminist reconsideration and subversion. Accordingly, both Chadha and Nair are pioneering South Asian women in the diaspora, founding their production companies and gaining international respect. As Shoba S. Rajgopal points out: "Chadha is the first woman to have

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[40] First coined by Roland Robertson in *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (1992) to define the new social classes (normally middle and high class) who travel and switch place of residence often and thus reinforce the locality of the original homelands while embracing a new global rhythm of life. Thence, *glocality* enjoys a current proliferation of discourses and practices. In this sense, Thomas L. Friedman's *The World is Flat* (2006), talking about the internet's *glocal* power, can encourage people to make websites in their native languages and maintain their local roots in a context of the global, ever-changing routes. Also, the *Glocal Project* launched on the world-wide-web from Canada (www.glocal.ca) and exhibited at Surrey Art Gallery (Canada) proposes an educative approach to glocalisation by producing a collaborative digital project in which people scattered all over the world could submit their digital photographic material to be attached at the commissioned exhibition in Surrey.

made inroads into the mainstream public sphere of the West with her films" (49) and Jigna Desai states that Mira Nair "was the first South Asian-American woman director to gain access to Hollywood" (47). The subversive nuance of these two remarks also embraces Chadha and Nair's filmmaking commitment, for both challenge structures of inequality which, as experienced by themselves, are still suffered by women. Accordingly, Mira Nair states:

> [There is always a] human, political endeavour of change and subversion in all of her filming choices […]; an attempt to denounce inequality while showing that there is always an option and alternative. This is the triumph of *Mississippi Masala*'s Mina, *Kamasutra*'s Maya and *The Namesake*'s Ashima, a clear reflection of my frustration as a singer and an illustration of what Jhumpa [referring to Bengali American writer Jhumpa Lahiri] and me try to teach to the young generation of first and second born South Asian girls, as well as to any of the true WASP friends of our children (2007: 24').

Similarly, Gurinder Chadha tells that she went to university just to defy a High School counsellor that told her that she should start practising typing as she was to become a secretary. Then, she attended college and turned to cinema to tell her experiences in the world because, in her own words,

> I loved Britain but the Britain that I lived it was not the same that I watched on TV […] I started thinking that in a way, "Asian" is not right, and in a way, "Punjabi" is not right either. I'm actually from London; I can't go live in Punjab in India, because I'm not from there and it's not comfortable to me. So in that sense, I have problems with that label (1996: 158).

It is in this sense that, when invited to participate in the 2008 UK's *Entrepeneurs of the Year Conference,* Chadha stated that her films always prompted women to fight for their rights and realise that their struggle was possible. In her own words:

> My purposes of mind as a free woman who wants to change the world to a better one are the following: to have a vision and believe in it, focus on it and be as determinate and stubborn as possible to get it. This is my own story as an East-African Indian successful filmmaker, a position which has cost me a lot of energy, but that I am sure that my twins will always have on their mind (2009: 14').

Otherwise stated, Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair are practical exponents of hybrid cinemas filmmakers, inhabitants of the Diaspora Space and feminist denouncers of gender inequalities.

In this sense, a joint study of both Nair and Chadha brings out the intersection of experiences in the Indian Diaspora Space, respecting the differences and particularities of the difference of trajectories (different continents and personal, economic circumstances) to

create a common front. Thus, my intention in Chapter III of this dissertation is to use Chadha and Nair's films to look at the unions, divisions and challenges that the South Asian female immigrant faces in today's postcolonial global context because Chadha and Nair's hybrid films articulate a discourse which shows, inverts and destabilizes the world's inequalities. Previous quotations showed both Chadha and Nair's determinacy for change and this is the departing point from where to incorporate the subversive commitment of their films in the global context. It is in this sense that Gurinder Chadha states: "[What] excites me about the diaspora in terms of filmmaking is the idea of not being easily categorised, not being labelled […] [because] at the end of the day, living in England and being part of English society has enabled us to find our Indianness in a particular way" (1996, 37-38). So Mira Nair remarks: "I make films of issues that get under my skin, and I made this film [*Kamasutra*] almost directly to counter the perversity with which women are being presented in our screen, not just in India, but in the West as well" (1997: 1). Thus, after having located both Nair and Chadha within the theoretical frame of the Diaspora Space and contextualised their films as hybrid cinemas, I will now proceed to illustrate the gender conflicts represented in their films in the following chapter.

But, before turning the page let me sum up and account how this chapter has illustrated that we all live in a postcolonial world and that, by so doing, we cohabit within an encounter of cultural differences gathered in the abstract Diaspora Space. In this sense, I have offered a theoretical contextualisation of diaspora as Diaspora Space, therefore focusing on the transcultural understanding of the hybridity of cultures, where cultures are understood as always transforming, pervading and negotiating each other, while still maintaining their intrinsic distinctiveness.

Furthermore, I have focused on the significance of cinema as cultural descriptor and I have briefly introduced the relevance of the postcolonial film to analyse the specificities and modalities of the South Asian post-Partition diaspora in the UK and the US. At this point, I have proposed the term hybrid cinemas to address the particular idiosyncrasy of cinematographic representations by diasporic filmmakers like Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair, acknowledging how a hybrid film is expressive of the respective dynamic definitions of hybrid cultures in the Diaspora Space.

Afterwards, I have pointed at the subaltern position of women in both postcolonial societies and cinema and, by focusing on the South Asian post-Partition diaspora, I have stated that there are many patriarchal schemes of domination that still need to be subverted.

By all these comments, Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair have proved to be contemporary figures who, placed at the necessary theoretical background, confront the gender discrimination suffered in their personal and cinematographic cartographies of diaspora. Thence, through the practical analysis of the selected films which will be provided in the following chapter, I will confront the particular gender conflicts represented in Chadha and Nair's hybrid cinemas as expressive of the reality of the South Asian diaspora in the UK and the US as well as the peculiarities of our own interwoven hybrid existences in the Diaspora Space. It is at this point that Chadha and Nair challenge the global patriarchal systems of domination to infuse the empowerment of the South Asian Women in the Diaspora as weavers of a promising intercultural space that nurtures us all.

CHAPTER 3

GENDER CONFLICTS IN THE FILMS BY GURINDER CHADHA AND MIRA NAIR

The women say that you look very mannish." "Mannish?" said I, "What do they mean by that?" "They mean that you are shy and timid like men." "Shy and timid like men?" It was really a joke. I became very nervous […] "What is the matter, dear?" [Sister Sara] said affectionately. "I feel somewhat awkward," I said in a rather apologizing tone, […] I am not accustomed to walking about unveiled." "You need not be afraid of coming across a man here."   (Hossain[1] 12)

[We should] acknowledge the diversity and complexity of female experience, of our relation to power and dominance […] work together to confront differences and to expand our awareness.   (hooks 1987, 25)

Diaspora is a space in constant transformation where cultures are in contact and where art offers a possibility to illustrate the centripetal and centrifugal forces, "modalities and specificities" (Brah 1996: 36), which determine the experience of migration. It is in this sense that Chapter II pointed up the theoretical delimitations about "Diaspora Space" (Brah 1996: 86) from a postcolonial approach and presented Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair's as clear exponents of the dynamics of the Diaspora Space and the subaltern "interlocking systems domination" (hooks 1987: 25) imprint on the migrant woman's cartography of diaspora. At this point, the present chapter aims at recognising the *gender conflicts* found by the women of the South Asian diaspora in the UK and the US as depicted in Chadha and Nair's selected films.

By *conflicts*, I refer to those situations that emerge in the Diaspora Space as determined by the contact among cultures; conflict thence understood as the result of the cultural questioning, representational evaluation and the promotion of the socio-political transformation inherent to the artistic illustration of the hybridity of cultures. In this sense, by attributing *gender* conflicts, I intend to review the educational, socio-economic, political and relational patrons of power and dominance imposed upon the migrant women as based on the conclusions of recent studies like those promoted by the World Economic Forum[2],

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[1] Rokeya S. Hossain was a pioneering Muslim female writer in both English and Bengali in Kolkata during the early 20th century. She wrote *Sultana's Dream: A Feminist Utopia* (1905) in English. The paradigmatic feminist parable tells the story of Sultana who visits Ladyland, where no cultural, social and political prejudices are placed either on women or on Islam (as opposed to the society of her contemporary Calcutta).

[2] Klaus Schwab, founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum (WEF) asserts that the organisation's hope is that of "[leading] society, women and men, to greater awareness of the challenges and opportunities, in addition to serving as a catalyst for change in both high- and low- ranking countries" (v). Founded as an independent international organization committed to improving the state of the world by engaging leaders in partnerships to shape global, regional and industry agendas, the WEF publishes the yearly Global Gender Gap Report since 2006. This report follows the framework sketched by Augusto López-Claros and Saadia Zahidi in *Women's Empowerment: Measuring the Global Gender Gap*, 2005.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation[3], The United Nations Development Programme's *Empowered and Equal*[4] and The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs' *Millennium Development Goals to End Poverty in 2015*[5]. According to the data displayed in these four references, it can be concluded that the migrant woman suffers unequal access to academic education, lacks economic participation and job opportunity as opposed to the male rates and displays a subaltern position in terms of political empowerment and role in the family patriarchal organisation.

Similarly, I believe that the same gender conflicts articulate the plot lines of Chadha and Nair's filmmaking and so this chapter analyses how both filmmakers denounce this inequality by offering the representation of the South Asian woman in the diaspora not as a mere victim but as the promoter of social transformation and consciousness-raising about the unequal access to academic education and the lack of freedom imposed by the migrant community in love relationships. The following words by Indian Nobel Laureate economist Amartya Sen[6] prove the point:

> [The] compelling case for the notion that societies need to see women less as a passive recipients of help, and more as dynamic promoters of social transformation, a view strongly buttressed by a body of evidence suggesting that the education, employment and ownership rights of women have a powerful influence on their ability to control their environment and contribute to economic development (qtd. in Lopez-Claros and Zahidi, 3).

Likewise, it is in this sense that I believe that both Chadha and Nair propose a cinematographic description that differ from those *Orientalising* representations that reduce the migrant woman to "tokenistic representations […], bodies to be contested [or] lowest

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[3] The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) is an independent charity organisation based in the UK under the slogan "search a place to debate, demonstrate a place to innovate and influence a place to learn". The organization's main target for the year 2009-10 is that of empowering the figure of the migrant woman as a way to subvert the results shown in the study *Contemporary Slavery in the UK. Overview and Key Issues,* written by Gary Craig *et al.* in 2007 under the JRF's patronage, which showed the position of inequality and suffering occupied by the migrant woman in both the UK and the world.

[4] The United Nations' Development Programme is, as stated in the document "Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2011", "committed to supporting the capacity development of The United Nations partners to adopt approaches that advance women's rights and take account the full range of their contributions to develop strong operations and institutional arrangements for gender equality" (1). The cited document embodies the programme's aim to promote the specific actions that, in the fields of education and economic opportunity, must still be undertaken to guarantee the gender equality and the women's empowerment.

[5] Department of Economic and Social Affairs' *Millennium Development Goals to End Poverty in 2015* is a campaign launched in 2000 to eliminate all structures of poverty, racism and gender discrimination that are still present in our contemporary world. With the yearly publication of "The Millennium Development Goals Report", The United Nations evaluates world's poverty, achievement of primary education, promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, reduction of children's mortality, improvement of maternal health, struggle against HIV and malaria, sustainability of the environment and enhancement of a global partnership for development.

[6] Amartya Sen, holder of 1998 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics, belongs to the School of Developmental Economics, which proclaims that the only way to help underdeveloped countries with foreign aid is that of directly investing the money in projects that implement the education and economic impulse of the recipient country. Sen and Hungarian professor of Economics Peter Bauer wrote together the first canonical text of the School: *The Development Frontier: Essays in Applied Economics*; where they urged in the necessity to pay special attention to the gender inequality in terms of educational attainment and political participation in both developed and underdeveloped countries.

exponents of difference as a gendered phenomenon" (Brah 1996: 14-5), "abstract identities" (Min-ha & Chen 320), "silent victims and disenfranchised speakers" (Spivak 1995b: 68) or "carriers of the cultural symbolism that marks out the boundaries of the diasporic group" (Anthias & Yuval Davies 36). Instead, and as filmmakers of hybrid films, Chadha and Nair empower a description of the diasporic women not as "abstract identities" but as active subjects in the abstract Diaspora Space.

Subsequently, the definition *hybrid film* once again appears as a powerful way of "disseminating ideas, opportunities and other images" (22), paraphrasing the words that for cinema were offered by first critic of feminist cinema, US citizen, Claire Johnston. The hybrid film then enables what Claire Johnston's disciple US citizen Mary Ann Doane calls "another body of representation" (88), a subversive space of struggle where cinema challenges hegemonic and reducing visions of the migrant woman. Here, Chadha and Nair's selected films not only emerge as benchmarks that recognise the contemporary gendered construction of the Diaspora Space but as alternatives that subvert the dominant stereotypical portrayals with "metaphorical mirrors" that, as Pratibha Parmar states, "interrupt the discourses of dominant media with a strong counter discourse and corrective denouncement of gender inequality" (2000: 378).

Therefore, this chapter will focus on three particular representational situations repeated in the films by Chadha and Nair that are representatives of a gender conflict and its subversion. The chosen conflicts will describe how the migrant woman occupies a subaltern position, both under the dominant yoke of the receiving country (the UK or the US) and the patriarchal organisation of the South Asian community. Correspondingly, I will firstly start evaluating the description of the troubles entailed to the refusal/access to academic education as an illustrator of the posterior possibility of economic and political participation; I will secondly analyse the burdens imposed by both the family and the social community in the arranged marriages and interracial relationships; and, thirdly, I will examine how both directors represent the creation of an all-women collaborative space (a *nurturing* space) from where, women create a stronger bond to the subversive hope of their final empowerment in the diaspora[7].

As a result, let me recall the relevance of film as a paradigmatic field of representation with feminist E. Ann Kaplan's anthological quotation: "[Film] offers a meta-terrain where questions about women, the unconscious, the social imaginary and women's discursive

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[7] The same situational conflicts are described by other filmmakers of the South Asian Diaspora such as Indian Canadian Deepa Mehta, BrAsian Pratibha Parmar and Sandhya Suri or Indian American Sarmistha Parida and Shilpa Sunthakar.

construction show the different cultural and social valences […] and, in so doing, feminist film study may change cultural attitudes towards women, and may even deepen our understanding of meanings have traditionally born in patriarchal cultures" (2). This is the analytical recurrence of the present chapter as entailed from the postcolonial, feminist and subversive reading of the *hybrid films* previously reviewed. I believe that it this is the representational academic path from where to take inspiration for the reversal of the gender inequality that still rules our lives.

1- EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN THE DIASPORA

Educational attainment is a gender conflict and so Augusto López-Claros and Saadia Zahidi's *Women's Empowerment: Measuring the Global Gender Gap* (2005) defines it as "the main framework for capturing the magnitude and scope of the gender-based disparities" (3). In the same sense, The United Nations document "Taking Action Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women" states that "education guarantees the vision of a world in which men and women work together as equal partners to secure better lives for themselves and their families" (29). Equally, The United Nations' *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2009* recognises the "urgency" and "commitment" that is required to guarantee the equal access to academic education by 2015" (18). Correspondingly, touchstone studies on the South Asian Diaspora[8] also reflect how the access, refusal and imposition of an academic education acts as an artistic and creative evaluator of the contact among cultures and the subaltern position of the migrant woman.

Hence, I will be evaluating in this section the characters of Mina and Kinnu in Mira Nair's *Mississippi Masala* (1991), Asha and Hashida in Gurinder Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993), Ria in Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) Jess in Chadha's *Bend It like Beckham* (2002) and Ashima in Nair's *The Namesake* (2006) because they are clear exponents of the gendered nature of the referred academic conflict found by the South Asian Women in the Diaspora Space. Hereby, it is my intention to show the complex experience of Nair and Chadha's characters (no matter their economic or educational background because they are all under the same structures of patriarchal control) as

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[8] Works of reference include Parvati Raghuram *et al.*'s *Tracing an Indian Diaspora*, Nasreen Ali *et al.*'s *A Postcolonial People. South Asians in Britain* Sunil Bhati's *American Karma* or Padma Rangaswamy's *Namasté America*.

alternatives to the contemporary stereotypes of the high skilled Punjabi IT worker at Manhattan, the Muslim Bangladeshi woman dressed with a hijab or the Hindu wife cooking *chapattis** and daily visiting the Mandir[9] in the North of London.

So, let me start by analysing the character of Mina in Mira Nair's *Mississippi Masala* (1991). Mina was born in Uganda but, as the beginning of the movie shows, her family firstly moves to the UK and latter to Mississippi (US). Mina is the daughter of Jay, an Indian barrister who feels Ugandan at his heart, where he was employed as a British officer following the Indenture system already explained in Chapter I. Nevertheless, the whole South Asian Community must leave after Ugandan new president Idi Amin's *Indictment against Indians* (1972) and Jay, reluctant to abandon "his home-country" (7') must cope with the idea that his Law education might be of no use beyond the Ugandan frontiers for, as he mentions: "I only know about Ugandan Law" (8')[10]. For that reason, and after having enjoyed a privileged socioeconomic background in East Africa, the family moves to the UK and then to Mississippi in the US. In Mississippi, Mina and Jay work as clerks for a cousin's motel business. Here, Jay's academic formation is useless and Mina must be employed as receptionist until she can afford an upper academic education, as she explains to Jay in the lunch scene at the Chinese Restaurant (48'). Thence, in the US it is only Kinnu, Mina's mother, who has a work of her own: she runs a *dukawalla** (a shop selling South Asian products) which, ironically, advertises the cheapness of American alcohol as opposed to the excellence of expensive British spirits.

The paradox of the situation trespasses this description because Jay represents the paradigm of a highly skilled migrant in the US who does not get an appropriate job, unlike Kinnu, who is academically uneducated but, in the diaspora, feeds her family although still obeying both her family and Jay's will. Accordingly, the only prospect drawn for Mina is to marry an Indian migrant as Namita, the woman set to marry Anil (Mina's cousin). However, Mina will afterwards defy this burden imposed by her family and community by falling in love with African American Demetrius, illustrating that there is another possibility beyond that domination, as it will be analysed in next section. The community's reaction to Mina's affair can be summarised in the scene where Mira Nair and Sooni Taraporevala (screenplay writer of *Salaam Bombay* and *Mississippi Masala*) themselves star as the two gossipers talking on the phone about Mina dating Demetrius: "[Can] you imagine dumping Harry Patel for a black? [...] These modern ideas spread like a disease.

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[9] The Mandir is the name given to the Hindu Temple in the London district of Wembley, a traditional South Asian area in the North of the British metropolis. See Image number 8 in the *Appendix of Images*.
[10] From here on, I will use the symbol (') to refer to the minute of the movie from where the quotation is taken.

Better send her back to India, get some ideas and be back to find a decent suitor" (21'). But Mina also stands under the white-normative yoke as, for instance, she is insulted by two white policemen who scream at her "you black whore, […] you shut up or I arrest you for being a whore" (38') when she is discovered by the police and her Indian cousins in the hotel room with Demetrius. It is straight after this scene when Mina tells her father that she needs to be free and then "pursue an academic education" (48'). At this moment, I consider that she is denouncing the double submission she suffers both as a migrant and as a woman.

Mina is, as Sinijita Bhatia[11] remarks, an "emigrant twice displaced" (qtd. in Binita Mehta 187) who challenges the limitations that, in terms of educational attainment, are imposed on her for, and as previously said, being both migrant and woman. Illustrative of the first statement is Tyrone's lines (Demetrius' brother) at Dexter's birthday party: "You cannot be dark and have money, no matter whether you are black, brown or yellow, we are not white" (38'). Likewise, Jay's words to Mina that "you are a girl and so must accept your responsibility [with the family]" (52') are representative of the second.

Bearing in mind this subaltern context, it is also noteworthy that none of the female characters portrayed in the film have access to a university education, probably under the dictation that they must stick together around the family's motel and keep the good Indian customs, as I previously quoted the characters of the gossipers (21'). Nonetheless, this statement is subverted by Mina, who fights against her imposed fate in order to afterwards challenge that unequal traditional system, as represented by her call at the end of the movie, when she tells her parents that she is running away with Demetrius to pursue a "future of herself" (104'). In my opinion, this is Mina's opposition against the double gender burden imposed on her as, and paraphrasing the previously referred scene, she does not want to "spend [her] whole life working at a liquor store […] [but] think that [she] can change the world" (104'). This beautiful image (alongside the whole interracial relationship that will be analysed in next section) clearly represents Mina's desire to break the gender norm imposed on her educational future. Furthermore, Mina's economic unfeasibility to access university education is clearly linked to her possibility to get an economic opportunity beyond the limits placed by her community. Here, the fact that the US occupies the twenty seventh position on the previously referred *Gender Gap global Report of 2009* in terms of

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[11] I consider that Bhatia's essay is an essentialist reading of the stimulating essay by Parvinder Bachu's "Twice-Born Migrants". On the one hand, Bhatia only acknowledges "the particular idiosyncrasy of the twice, thrice, and quadrant migrant experiences of the South Asian diasporas around the Asian, African, Caribbean and British/American shores" (183) and defines *Mississippi Masala* as a mere "story of emigrants twice displaced by issues of race, colour and identity which never trespasses the idea of integrating Mina and Demetrius' families within the prospects of a common future beyond [Mina's] motel and [Demetrius'] cleaning enterprise" (187). On the other hand, Bhachu recognised the connivance of the four cultures and the possible formation of a hybrid identity.

educational attainment proves that *Missississpi Masala* (1991) is nowadays very relevant. If Mina represents a change towards progressive subversion as compared to Kinnu, so do Asha and Hashida in Gurinder Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993).

Bhaji on the Beach opens showing the displaying windows of a street in Southall with Nazi graffiti, hybrid supermarkets (as the baskets of a grocery store exhibit "coriander and mangoes from India" alongside British pomegranates and French apples) and the typical South Asian video rental shop with formulaic Hindi Popular cinema (*Bollywood**) billboards. The camera vision enters into the shop and the action switches to display Asha's nightmares. Asha, a woman in her forties and the assistant at the video rental shop, is scolded by Rama, the Hindu god who killed Sita, the paradigm of the good-wife to be followed by Hindu female believers. In these nightmares that are repeated throughout the whole movie and that BrAsian feminist critic Geetha Ramanathan refers as "Asha's extradiegetic visions" (67), Rama always reminds Asha that she "must be a proper Indian wife and follow [her] traditional education, what it is expected from [her]" (6'). It is here that the film will later inform that Asha's true aspirations were not those of working at her husband's video shop but being a *Bollywood** actress, as Asha herself tells the English gentleman in Blackpool: "I wanted to become a *Bollywood** actress but, after getting married, I quitted my singing and acting" (78'). It is at this moment that Asha realises that, as Kinnu in Nair's *Mississipi Masala*, she is the one feeding her family because her husband is never over the counter at the video-rental shop, as it is hinted in the third nightmare (58'), where her husband gives orders about how to work at the shop and cook warm *chapattis** while he socialises at the bar. When she says goodbye to the English man in Blackpool, she grumbles: "Maybe I should get back to my education and change my mind" (80').

It is at this moment that Asha comes to terms with the gender restriction that she herself, as one of the community's aunties, is also imposing on characters like Hashida, a character who faces a triple yoke. Firstly, Hashida cannot study an Arts degree because her family and her community have already decided that she must become a doctor. Secondly, she has a secret interracial relationship with Oliver, a black man who studies Arts and that, obviously, will not be welcomed by her South Asian family. And, thirdly, she has found out that she is pregnant scarcely before starting the trip to Blackpool, something that will be discovered by the rest of the women in the trip, who will later insult her with statements such as "we thought that you could cure our community [referring to her prospects to become a doctor] but you only infect us" (68'). I hereby consider that the parallel created

by both Gurinder Chadha and her screenplay writer Meera Syal in the character of Hashida is very important to understand how education is interwoven in the triple axis of Hashida's discrimintaion as illustrative of the unequal position of the migrant woman in terms of economic participation, social opportunity and political empowerment.

In this sense, it is remarkable that out of all the women in the trip to Blackpool, it is only Manjit (the woman in charge of the Non Governmental Organisation that organises the trip) and Hashida who have certain prospects of education attainment[12]. At this juncture, it is proven that the choice of academic education done by the South Asian woman in the diaspora is very much dependent on her family's hopes, especially her father's[13]. In this regard, Gurinder Chadha recognises the gender-designed barriers in both education and subsequent access to employment to promote the integration of Hashida within the possibilities of the Diaspora Space, where both women and men, migrant or not, can be economically active and politically participative.

Also, it is under these subversive terms that, after the final scene at the male striptease club (when they all discover that Ginder has been mistreated by her husband and so the aunties had all been wrong accusing her of just leaving her husband), Asha changes her mind and enhances the construction of a collaborative space with the rest of the women where Hashida and Ginder can find empathy and spiritual comfort. It is in this so-called *nurturing* space that will be analysed in the third section of this chapter that Asha states to Ginder's husband: "[Leave] us all alone" and so she afterwards encourages Hashida to do "what the heart tells [her]" (89'). The scene is very moving because the rest of the women smile complicity at both Ginder and Hashida before setting their journey back to their daily routines in Southall. And at this point, once they are back on the bus to return home, they talk about how Hashida is a modern woman that will help the rest of the women of the community, "either becoming a doctor or an artist (90'). They all trust the subversive opportunities that Hashida has ahead of herself in the Diaspora Space, a space from where the South Asian women on the trip have constructed a parallel mutual alliance against patriarchal and social limitations. Now, Hashida has a future of her own by being able to choose the Arts Degree she longs for and so Ginder or Asha recognise themselves as

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[12] It is very important to note that both Manjit and Hashida are the only women in the trip who support Ginder who, having left her husband because he abused her, is rejected by the rest of the South Asian community.

[13] The following academic references illustrate this statement referring both the UK and the US: Jonathan Beaverstock's "Rethinking Skilled Labour Migration: World Cities and Baking Organisations" (1994), Fauzia Ahmad *et al.*'s *South Asian Women and Employment in Britain: The Interaction of Gender and Ethnicity* (2003), Ernst Spaan *et. al*'s *Asian Migrants and European Labour Market* (2005), Tariq Modood *et al.*'s *Ethnicity, Social Mobility, and Public Policy: Comparing the USA and UK* (2005), Joel Kuortti's *Writing Imagined Diasporas: South Asian Women Reshaping North American Identity* (2007) or Yasmin Hossain's *Moving on Up: South Asian Women and Higher Education* (2007).

common inhabitants of the subversive hope inherent to the Diaspora Space. Hope here defined following Henry A. Giroux's article "When Hope Is Subversive", where he defines *hope* as follows:

> [Hope] is more than a politics, it is also a pedagogical and performative practice that provides the foundation for enabling human beings to learn about their potential as moral and civic agents […] Hope is anticipatory and mobilizing[,] is a subversive force [that] pluralizes politics by opening up a space for dissent, making authority accountable, and becoming an activating presence in promoting social transformation […] Hope [is] a subversive force, a defiant practice that provides a link, however transient, provisional and contextual, between vision and critique on the one hand, and engagement and transformation on the other (38-39).

Accordingly, the character of Ria in Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) is a further illustration of this confrontation that, in terms of educational choice, appears between what it is expected from a woman and what she truly desires.

In *Monsoon Wedding*, Ria is the only female character in the Varma family that decides to undertake an academic education and so she challenges the schemes dictated by her aunt-mother (Ria is an orphan), who constantly tells Ria and her cousin-sister Aditi that "there will be a time when all of you will fly out when your wedding is arranged" (12'). Nevertheless, Ria decides to oppose this fixed idea in between the preparations for Aditi's arranged wedding. At this stage, and considering how Aditi must choose between the affair she is having with a married man and her arranged own marriage, Ria decides to speak out and inform all the family that she wants to study Creative Writing in the US "to make sense of all her life" (44'). Soon all the men in the family gather to decide what to do. The choice taken is that Ria can go to the US under the patronage of her uncle Tej, the economic successful man of the family who has flown to Delhi from the US for Aditi's wedding.

However, Ria's expression of disgust is clear. She keeps silent until right before the ceremony, when she decides to *talk back* and denounce that her uncle Tej abused of her when she was a teenager, something that "he is probably doing now to the little cousin Aliya" (46'). Ria asserts that, at a moment when she has decided to fight "for a future of [her] own", she needed to "take all [her] conflicts out, break all the decisions that for [her] future have been laid upon [her]" (49'). At this moment, all the family members grumble back at her and complain about how "being a spinster has definitely troubled her mind" as well as accusing Ria of "always [being] a little envious of her cousin Aditi" (52'). Right afterwards, when they are settled to take the family snapshot before the wedding's ceremony, Lalit Verma (Aditi's father and Ria's uncle-father) decides to reject uncle Tej in the photograph arguing that "Ria is my daughter as much as Aditi and she has decided to

fight for her own and I support her and I believe in her. You [to uncle Tej] go out" (61'). It is then that, under the prospects of starting academic education, Ria subverts the assigned gender-expectations sketched by her family by being the first woman in the family to follow an academic education, as compared to the interest that Lalit has always posed on his son Varum's educational expectations for the fact of being a man because "he is going to be the man of the family" (36'). Consequently, Ria's educational attainment subverts previous family expectation, and it enables her to embrace a future of her own, as she states to Aditi that she "will be a writer of the world" and that that her "[writing] will give me happiness and my own future, and I will be able to show the path to other women" (74').

This exemplary quotation clearly matches with the opening of Mira Nair's *The Namesake* (2006) when Ashima first encounters, on the threshold of her Kolkata's home, a pair of sparkling shoes made in the US while she listens to her own mother stating: "[Ashima] loves to cook. She knits very well. Kids are crazy about her. She has been learning classical music since she was a kid. She goes to college and her best subject at is English poetry" (14'). Ashima tries Ashok's shoes on and listens to Ashok's mother stating: "My son has been living abroad for the last two years. He is in New York. He is doing his PhD in the field of Fibre Optics" (16'). Ashima ushers into the room, meets Ashok and recites a poem by Tennyson. Immediately, Ashok's mother asks Ashima: "My child, have you ever flown in a plane? Will you be able to live in the other half of the world? Live in a cold city with freezing winters? Leave your house, far from your parents?" (17'). Ashima answers: "But he'll be with me, no?" (17') as illustrator of her expectations about an Indian arranged marriage: to stay at home and share her life with a man. However, as the action moves to New York, Ashima gives birth to her son Gogol and realises that she is to wait every afternoon for Ashok to come back from work, taking into account the fact that she is not able to do anything in the US because Ashok is used to doing everything by himself.

It is in this context that Ashima realises how she gave up her education and how she has lost her possibility to become an active part in the economic dynamics of the Diaspora Space. Nevertheless, once her children Gogol and Sonia leave for college, she starts to work at a local library and enriches her private life talking with American women, recovering the idea of resuming her education as a singer[14], as she herself claims to her US

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[14] It is interesting to point out that the characters of Ashima, Asha, Ria and Hashida all want to become artists despite their husband's or the family's opposition. Further academic studies could prove how these four women struggle to become free women who fully participate in the dynamics of the Diaspora Space by opening new creative spaces that empower other women. Lakhi, in Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice,* also how an attitude prone to Arts academic education as she constantly talks about art and her own possibilities and she even takes Wickham to the British Film Institute branch at London's Southbank to find "some other perspectives in art" (18')

friend Sally: "I could have been a very good singer and an excellent English writer[15]" (69'). This space that both Ashima and Alison have created at the library soon emerges as an alternative place to the assumed family and social expectations previously sketched for Ashima, who now shares confidences and personal stories with Sally. It is out of the strength of this collaborative friendship that Ashima recognises to Sally: "I am starting to understand my life between two cultures and two countries, and I may have chosen by myself now that I have the power" (82'). Mira Nair's "Director's Commentary" in the British and Spanish DVD edition for *The Namesake* illustrates this remark. In Nair's own words: "This is the first moment where Ashima clearly has an opportunity to express and act as herself" (12'). Thus, the next decision taken by Ashima would be that of selling her American house and live between India and the US. In India, she will go back to her family home in Kolkata, where she will start back her music lessons. In the US, she will live with her children and keep on with her "English passion" (84').

The scene clearly illustrates the cycle Ashima unveils to embrace the nature of her own name (Ashima means "without borders, limitless") and her own existence, as she explains to her children: "I want to be free [that's why] [...] I have decided to sell the house. I am going to do what your father and I had always planned. Six months in India and six months in the US. Then I can go and sing in Calcutta. That is if any guru wants a forty-five year old student. I want to be free" (89'). At this moment, I consider that Ashima embraces the transformative dynamics of the Diaspora Space and a corresponding life dependant only on her own choices. Once Ashima is able to be part of the economic system, she resumes her education and enjoys a much wider social opportunity that grants her with the possibility of living as she truly desires.

Similarly, the character of Jess in Gurinder Chadha's *Bend It like Beckham* (2002) serves as the perfect corollary to illustrate and summarise the interconnection among educational attainment, economic participation and social opportunity opened by the theoretical recognition of the Diaspora Space. Gurinder Chadha herself asserts: "*Bend It like Beckham* illustrates how women need to acknowledge their own role in the dynamics

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[15] In this sense, I consider significant to point out that the film starts and finishes with an image of Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of the Arts who, as explained in the *Upanishads*, destroys Vritasura, the God who had stolen all the water and knowledge of the world. Here, Saraswati is represented with four attributes, a dish with holy water (as exponent of the power to purify and give life), a *mala* (a necklace representative of the meditative power), a book (which is an anachronism explained by the fact that print books only arrived at the Sub-Continent with the British Empire occupancy) and the Sitar (illustrative of the search for perfection and the constant transformation of every artist in the quest for freedom-*nirvana**). Consequently, it is not a matter of coincidence that Nair chose that Ashima trains as a sitar singer and that her name means without frontiers. Ashima is then the exponent of a woman in constant transformation who benefits from the power of art along her path towards the *nirvana**. Image 9 in the *Appendix of Images* represents Saraswati with the four attributes previously described.

of the world, bend the world to them, as we wanted to transmit by the title of the feature" (2006: 2). Chadha's words clearly connect with Amartya Sen's previously referred statement, where Sen proclaims: "[Societies] need to see women less as passive recipients of help, and more as dynamic promoters of social transformation […] suggesting that the education, employment and ownership rights of women have a powerful influence on their ability to control their environment and contribute to economic development" (qtd. in Lopez-Claros and Zahidi, 3). Here, the fact that Jess, together with white British Jules, finally accomplishes the same opportunity of education and economic participation as that given to male football players clearly proves the necessary commitment that must be taken towards the performance of gender equality. Once again, the subversive hope of the role of the migrant woman in the Diaspora Space is implicit, since the opening scene of the film when, in Jess dream, Mrs Bhamra is interviewed on TV and asked: "Could Jess be the answer for England's pressing needs?" (4'). And, in fact, Jess establishes herself as the paradigmatic figure from where to review the cultural and racist reasons that generate the gender inequality of women in the Diaspora Space.

Jess is a first generation Sikh Punjabi, seventeen-year-old girl who dreams about becoming Beckham, the paradigmatic anti-macho footballer born in a low-class family of the North of London. Jess daily sneaks out to play football with some of the male South Asians in her neighbourhood and then works hard to pass her A Levels (equivalent to the High School Leaving Certificate necessary to enrol a university degree) to fulfil the family hopes. In this sense, Jess will be "the first to go to college and study Law or Medicine" (9') because her father works at Heathrow Airport and her sister Pinky at Lutton (probably as members of the crew and the handling company respectively), meanwhile her mother is always, as she herself exclaims, "too busy trying to keep the Indian values over my girls" (4'). This objective is partly fulfilled by Pinky's love marriage with, in the words of Mrs Bhamra, "a true Sikh with the beard and turban" (8'). However, Jess' feelings towards her sister's wedding stand on the opposite: "I am sick of this wedding and it hasn't started" (12')

After this remark, it is significant to point out how the action changes to show Jess running to the park to meet Jules, who invites Jess to join her all-girls football team. Jess answers: "I didn't even know that there were girls' teams" to which Jules replies by exclaiming that her dream is, in her own words, "[to] play professional in America. You know, they have got a pro-league, stadiums, money, respect and they provide an academic

education at the same time [*sic*]" (14'). Jess accepts the invitation and tells her parents. Mrs Bhamra's reaction unveils as it follows:

> Jessminder, I don't want shame on my family [...] You have to start behaving as a proper woman, ok? I don't want you running around people half-naked in front of men, look how dark you have become playing under the sun. No family will want a daughter in law who plays football non-stop. You can go and play round football but you can't make round chapattis. Once your exams are over you are starting to learn how to cook a proper Punjabi dinner (16').

In this sense, Jess's educational attainment is corroborated as a family expectation, something that she cannot choose for herself as already explained when describing the character of Hashida in Gurinder Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993). Afterwards, Jess tells Jules that she is "ready to surrender to her culture and quit football" to which Jules reacts: "That's bollocks; my mother does neither want me to play [*sic*]. You can't take a no for an answer. There is an American scout coming over to see us playing Jess, you can't turn an opportunity for a future of your own. Tell your mum you are working at" (22'). At this moment, Jess decides to embrace a fate of her own and defy all those patriarchal, cultural and racial expectations placed on her. Chadha paradigmatically decides to underscore the moment with British singer Mel C's song "This is my Independence Day", from which I quote the chorus: "I know I make mistakes/I will have to live and learn/Sometimes you play with fire and sometimes you get burned [...] I've got to find my way and my independence day" (28'). By so doing, Jess has decided to reject the educational expectation placed on her as the means to choose what she really wants.

Further in the film, and by finally being selected by the American scout alongside Jules, Jess performs a social transformation. She will be the first South Asian woman in a Professional League, as opposed to her father, who had to quit playing cricket once he arrived in England because, in her own words, "I did not want to challenge my racist mates and my conservative father so I just did what my father told me to do [...] There were no visible Indians boys out there in the limelight" (78'). Jess will suffer the same problem when insulted "Paki bitch" (68') in one of the matches, but she will act in response and, although overreacting, spit back at her rival. This is what she also does at the end of the film, when she talks back to her community and family to inform them that she is going to America to study and play football. In Jess's own words:

> I played the best and I was happy because I wasn't lying to you and sneaking [...] I didn't ask to be good at football, Nanak would have blessed me [...] There was a scout from America and he has offered me a place at a top university with a full scholarship and a chance to play football

professionally. And I really want to go. If I can't tell you what I will like to do now I won't ever be happy (89').

Thus, Jess opens an opportunity for herself and, by so doing, she challenges the whole interlocking systems that were placed on her as both being a woman and a migrant. Accordingly, Jess is a character that promotes awareness and fosters the challenge inherent to the transformative power of the Diaspora Space.

The previous pages have illustrated how both Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair offer a representation of the subaltern position of the migrant woman by focusing on the topic of access and choice of academic education and so I have analysed the characters of Mina, Asha, Hashida, Ria, Ashima and Jess as illustrators of Chadha and Nair's denouncement on the gender limitations that are still placed on the migrant woman. Here, the previous study has proved how Chadha and Nair recognise the subversive possibility inherent to the Diaspora Space as a true impulse from where to contest gender discrimination inherent both to the South Asian community and to the UK/US normative expectations. Therefore, and strictly derived from the previous point, both Nair and Chadha portray characters who share a collaborative space where migrant women meet together so as to finally negotiate the subversive power of their hybrid, diasporic identities. This is the point of departure for next section, where I will study the gender conflicts associated to the arranged marriages and the interracial love relationships described by Chadha and Nair as a way to show the transcultural possibilities of the South Asian women in the Diaspora Space.

2- ARRANGED MARRIAGES AND INTERRACIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE DIASPORA

There is no doubt that the imagery surrounding the South Asian wedding has been one of the most popular icons of the Noughties decade (2000-2010). Taking into account Nicole Kidman Hindi bride's apparel in Baz Lhurman's *Moulin Rouge* (2001), London based Department Stores Harvey Nichols's displaying windows in the summer of 2002 (decorated following the arrangements of a Punjabi wedding) or the world-coverage of the British model and actress Liz Hurley's transnational marriage with Indian entrepreneur Arun Nayar (April 2007), there has been an *Orientalising* representation of the Hindu and Sikh wedding as promoting the "fastuosity of an exotic tradition" (12), as British scholar R. Lewis

mentions when referring to the treatment given by fashion and gossip magazines to the photographs of South Asian women in her excellent *Gendering Orientalism-Race, Feminity and Representation* (1996). Nevertheless, this discourse of exotic sparkle is counteracted by another *Orientalisation* of marriage: that of identifying the South Asian woman as the victim of arranged matrimonies or crimes of honour (*izzat** crimes) based on, among many sensationalist portrayals, the portrayal of an alcoholic husband throwing acid on his young bride. In my opinion, although these terrible crimes must have their cinematographic representation (as portrayed in noteworthy films like Jag Mundhra's *Provoked*, 2006, or Shekhar Kapur's *Bandit Queen*, 1994), there is a danger of creating a whole tendency of gender-based essentialist and racist descriptions about the South Asian women that only promote the victimization of the collective, as also sketched in the previously referenced visual work by Indian American artist Annu Palakunnathu Matthew[16].

It is then remarkable that Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair's diasporic films (but for *Bhaji on the Beach*) all portray a South Asian wedding in the diaspora. The statement is extensive to other films like those by BrAsian Pratibha Parmar and Indian Canadian Deepa Mehta, as well as to literature (Indian American Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters* or BrAsian Bali Rai's *(Un)Arranged Marriage*) and the visual arts of, for instance, the BrAsian Singh Twins. Accordingly, my research has shown (as confirmed by the references above mentioned), how the weddings and the love relationships in the diaspora are alliterative representational tropes of the cultural negotiation between the Diaspora Space's resultant hybridity and the consequent conflicts that are inherent to the South Asian diasporic distinctiveness. It is also remarkable that the depiction of the rituals always underlies a gender conflict where the South Asian female migrant occupies a subaltern position, both under the domination of the white and the South Asian male yoke. Here, it is my intention to analyse this similar representational situations in the selected films by Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair with the aim of examining much more explicitly these conflicts of gender inequality.

At this juncture, let me anticipate that Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair offer an idiosyncratic illustration of the conflict, relating not only the cultural problems associated to the wedding ceremony but also to the interracial love relationship, taken as an example of the *hybrid* performance of the Diaspora Space intermingling of cultures previously described in Chapter II. Therefore, it is in this interracial encounter of cultures where both Chadha and Nair circumscribe their different and subversive hybrid films by using the

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[16] See Image 10 in the *Appendix of Images* for some instances of Annu Palakunnathu Matthew's visual work.

representational tropes of the wedding and the love interracial relationship as evaluators of the encounter between racial differences and the subaltern position that, both individually and socially, is occupied by South Asian woman in the diaspora.

So, I will firstly analyse the representational situations of arranged/love marriages by focusing on the characters of Namita in Mira Nair's *Mississippi Masala* (1991), Aditi in Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) and Ashima in Nair's *The Namesake* (2006). Secondly, I will evaluate the gender inequality associated to the interracial relationships between Mina and Demetrius in Nair's *Mississippi Masala* and Hashida and Oliver in Gurinder Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993), with the purpose of unveiling the hybrid possibility that is granted by the performance of the Diaspora Space's transcultural coexistence.

To start with, there is no doubt that the traditional notion of marriage in the many South Asian cultures (whereas following Hindu, Sikh, Muslim or Punjabi rituals) is a social scheme controlled by men, as expressed by French feminist Luce Irigaray's definition of marriage as "a system of exchange organized by patriarchal societies […] modalities of productive work that are recognised, valued and rewarded in these societies as men's business" (174). In this regard, the notion is that *a man can choose* among a variety of potential options, meaning that *a woman must wait to be chosen* for she has no possibility to arrange a future for herself. Nazneen, the main character in Monica Ali's novel *Brick Lane* (2002) illustrates the trend when she asserts: "[My] fate does not belong to myself. It is [my husband's], it is my family's and it is God's" (4). Similarly, US anthropologist Lewis Hyde[17] defines the general submissive position sketched for the wife as he points out in his thought-provoking *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property*: "[The] woman who is given in marriage similarly takes on typical functions of the gift. She also establishes a bond (between clans or families), and as a part of an ongoing system of kinship, she, like any gift, becomes an agent of the community's cohesion and stability" (99). The role of the wife is then sketched as a mere passive role "to be fulfilled", paraphrasing Monica Ali's words.

The figure of married South Asian woman thence becomes *Orientalised* as a silent and powerless victim, pretty much like in those caricatures offered by British officers in India which, during colonial times, represented all Indian women as Hindu widows eager to

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[17] Lewis Hyde is one of the founders of the Gift Economy Discipline, a socioeconomic school of thought that proclaims that more anti-capitalist measures should be developed by contemporary democratic governments. The Gift Economy grounds its lobbying campaigns in boasting that collaborative economies such as those of the Kula Ring (Papua Guinea), the Native Americans or on-line free encyclopaedia Wikipedia are the most advanced socio-political organisations in the contemporary world.

jump into a pyre[18]. The contemporary readings of such a stereotypical representation are extensive to the women in the South Asian diaspora, where the migrant wife is portrayed as "only a subject to suffer an *izzat** crime or a crime of honour" (my emphasis, 26), as recognised by BrAsian feminist Amrit Wilson. In this sense, let me keep referring to Wilson as she continues: "I have argued that the State [and media] […] interventions have in general strengthened South Asian patriarchal relations" (95). Wilson's remark clearly summarises the essentialist representation normally sketched for the South Asian diasporic woman also as a passive victim. It is exactly from this point that I want to introduce the depiction provided by Chadha and Nair about arranged marriages as based on the possibility of subverting the presupposed submissive role of the bride and the limiting Western evaluation given to the Eastern cultural tradition.

Respectively, the selected films show arranged marriages that make a possible subversive choice for characters like Namita in Nair's *Mississippi Masala* (1991), Aditi in Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* (2001)and Ashima in Nair's *The Namesake* (2006). Subversion here means transformation towards the recognition of the idea that a woman's fate should be only of her own as well as the acknowledgement that the Diaspora Space empowers the option that another reality is always achievable.

Likewise, Namita (the Indian woman whose marriage is arranged to provide some company to Anil, Mina's cousin and the owner of the motel business) says "no" (36') to Anil insistence on having sex with her because she realises that he is using her to obtain personal pleasure from where to counteract the stress caused by Demetrius' sue. Here, and reversing the fact that in the beginning of the film Namita blamed herself for Anil's own incapacity, she will turn to laugh at him and reject having sex with him, something that she did not dare to do before. Namita, therefore, subverts her initial description as the submissive wife brought all the way from Jaipur (India) to provide some "company and calm to Anil" (18'). Now, Namita knows that she is not to be blamed for Anil's sexual impotence. Actually, she is a clear representative of the transformative power that the Diaspora Space opens for marriage and love relationships, because Namita will later challenge the social and family expectations that had been placed on her as a reaction against the general opinion of the aunties in the South Asian community in Mississippi, as the same gossipers assert in another part of the film: "[All] these proper Indian women are

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[18] Indian scholar Santosh Singh describes why the Hindu widow had to undertake *sati* (the jumping of the widow into the pyre as following her husband's death) as told by the *Upanishads* (sacred texts of early Hinduism, written in Sanskrit and already references in Chaper I). In his own words: "[A] woman, unable to bear the pangs of separating from her deceased husband, considers her life futile without him, ends her life […] to perform every form of penance and atonement for the sins committed by her which had caused her husband's death and made her a widow" (12).

getting too many radical ideas from American women like Mina. We'd better send them back to India" (71'). Consequently, not only does Namita awake to the gender restrictions that have been laid upon her but she also embraces a possibility to live for herself through her arranged marriage, as inspired by the path already opened by the much more subversive relationship of Mina with African American Demetrius. Similarly, Aditi in Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* turns her arranged marriage into a possibility of weaving a future of her own.

Aditi is trapped in a secret affair with Vikram Mehta, one of the most famous TV presenters in India, believing the common story of "I will soon leave my wife and children" (21'). Aditi continues to see Vikram the days before her arranged marriage ceremony with Hemant Rai, an Indian doctor resident in Houston Texas (US) where they are supposed to settle down after the wedding. Nevertheless, on the day before the ceremonies, Aditi and Vikram are discovered by the Police in Vikram's car in a rather indecent pose. The Police soon recognise Vikram's face and Aditi's hands, painted in henna as a symbol of the incipient wedding. Alarmed by the great offence they are committing (no sexual intercourse is allowed before the Hindu marriage is performed), Vikram leaves Aditi out of the car while he tries to bribe the police. In the meantime, Aditi gets insulted by the some of the officers. Vikram keeps on screaming about his wife and pays no attention whatsoever to the assault they are infringing on Aditi. Aditi looks at Vikram, and kicking the policemen, understands that Vikram has been using her, that she has been but a mere mistress. After such a paradigmatic incident, she arrives back at her home with the firm intention of confessing the love affair to her fiancée Hemant. So, she tells him all about her secret affair: "This is the first time I am speaking myself aloud, that I am taking a decision for myself: I want to marry you and try America" (48'). At that point, Aditi chooses to speak for herself and so she reconciles with her inner self. This is the moment where she thinks about the arranged marriage in terms of a "suggested date" (58'), as she will afterwards tell Ria, adding that the marriage will open a new possibility where she "will be but herself" (61').

Subsequently, Mira Nair sketches the concept of arranged marriage far from victimising and *Orientalising* representations of the South Asian woman. Instead, Nair depicts the arranged marriages as a tradition that does not have to be derogative as compared to the West's traditional notions. Accordingly, Nair depicts how Aditi accepts the arranged marriage as a completely valid option that is part of their traditional culture. The same happens with Moushumi (in Nair's *The Namesake*) who, as a successful independent woman, accepts the arranged dates with Gogol and ends up marrying him to later get the

divorce. For this reason, Nair dismantles the stereotypical Western discourse laid upon arranged marriages as a prison for the South Asian woman and reinforces the idea that, depending on the way the marriage proposal is designed, the woman has an option to decide for herself. In this sense, Namita and Aditi recognise the gender burdens imposed on themselves and come to terms with the possibility of subversion inherent to the acknowledgement about their possibilities as women of the world, the woman without borders that the paradigmatic character of Ashima represents in Nair's *The Namesake*. Thence, by demystifying the notions circumscribed to the arranged marriage, Mira Nair succeeds in representing these three women as performers of a new path that opens up from the Diaspora Space.

It is at this point that the convergent study of both Chadha and Nair's diasporic films provides a much more insightful analysis of the South Asian distinctiveness[19] because, besides proposing the possibility of the South Asian woman's active role, they also enhance a stronger reading of the current transnational dynamics by means of presenting interracial love relationships that evaluate the transcultural environment and the diversity of us all citizens of the the contemporary world. Here, let me start by stating that Chadha and Nair offer two kinds of interracial relationships in the selected movies. On the one hand, there is the usual dichotomy that defines the relationship between a white man and a South Asian woman with a two-fold representation: Firstly, a successful, rich white man appreciated by the South Asian family as a good match and a South Asian woman who is rejected by the white family considering it that is not a proper option in terms of economic status (as in the case of Lalita and Mr Darcy in Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice*); and, secondly, a white man of low social status rejected by the South Asian family, as the relationship between Punjabi Jess and Irish Joe shown in Chadha's *Bend It like Beckham*[20]. On the other hand, the paradigmatic affair between a black man and a South Asian girl, an interracial breakthrough cinematographic portrayal opened up by both Nair's *Mississippi Masala* and Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach* in the early 1990s. However, all different love matches describe a gender burden placed on the South Asian woman: she is either to submit to family expectations and cultural prospects or to subvert them according to her own will. Thus, Chadha and Nair propose female characters that choose the second option and, by so doing,

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[19] Both Chadha and Nair portray South Asian love marriages where differences of class and religion are obviated, as represented by *Bend It like Beckham*'s Pinky and Sonny (Pinky from a middle-class family and Sonny from an upper-class economic position) or Maya and Balraj in *Bride and Prejudice* (their story similarly interwoven from the Austen classic story of the middle/low class girl in love with the wealthy man of the province).

[20]A third option could be subject of study in a further academic research, that of the rich white family that finds exotic to meet other cultures and so approves of their children having a relationship with a migrant, although always under that *Orientalist raison d'être*, as seen in the affair between Gogol-Maxine in Nair's *The Namesake*.

I believe that they empower the transformation of the South Asian woman and her possibilities within the context of the hybridity of cultures, as illustrated by Mina and her interracial relationship with Demetrius in Nair's *Mississippi Masala* (1991).

Significantly enough, this was the plot line from which bell hooks and Anuradha Dingaway addressed *Mississippi Masala* as a film that offered "only stereotypical portraits of Southern whites and blacks" (42). In my opinion, this was a truly essentialist analysis that clearly ignored the interplay of interracial mediations suggested by Nair and screenplay writer Soni Taraporevala at the moment the film was released. Actually, I think that hooks and Dingaway's review obviates the interracial alternative proposed by Mina and Demetrius' relationship, as the unconventional model that, in the early 1990s, Nair proposed to represent the problematic of race, colour and identity. In fact, I consider that this interracial relationship between a woman of an Indian background and an African American self-made man (Demetrius runs his own Cleaning Services business) works as a common space both built and shared by Mina and Demetrius to undertake a double-fold evaluation: the negotiation of postcolonial identities in the diaspora and the subaltern position held by the migrant woman, as Mina must cope with the social and family expectations that are imposed upon her.

In this sense, Mina, as an Indian woman who has never been to India, thinks about her *masala** identity and realises that she shares a common history with African Americans, as both Tyron and Williben discuss at Dexter's birthday lunch:

> [Mina] is just like us. We are from Africa but we have never been there, although there is where our loyalty and love is. Well, although she was born in Africa. [...] [Well], black, brown, yellow, at least you are no white. The problem is that you cannot be dark and have money! (24').

After the pleasant meal, both Mina and Demetrius go for a walk along the beach and they talk about how race has undetermined their opportunities. Mina complains about how "many people come to the motel, look at us and say to us, ugh, another damn Indian" (26') and Demetrius assumes that "being black, I have achieved all I could ever long for: my own cleaning service enterprise, although all dependant on a white's loyalty loan" (28'). Nevertheless, as they walk together in this emblematic liminal space, race is not a burden for them, as Demetrius tells Mina: "Well, Miss Masala, race, or as they say now, tradition, is passed down like recipes. The trick is to know what to eat and to leave on the plate", to which Mina answers: "[Otherwise], we will be hungry for ever" (30'). However, race is a burden for Mina's family, as they still believe that they do not belong to the same social

strata as Demetrius because, for them, Indians are *above* African Americans, an idea inherited from the Indentures system already explained.

It is here that the interracial relationship between Demetrius and Mina embraces the possibilities of the Diaspora Spac, because they can enjoy a life only dependant on themselves and so Mina will be able to have an education of her own far from the Motel business. Together, both Mina and Demetrius illustrate the transformative possibilities of the cultural *hybrid identity*, as Mina recognises her roots and the new possible routes that lay ahead of her by acknowledging that she is "a mixed masala […] a bunch of different spiced mixed up together" (26'). Accordingly, she tells her family in the end of the film: "[Now] I am in America and I want to choose by myself" (81'), an option that is opposed to that her father Jay and the South Asian community, for both keep stuck to the "recipe" of racism that previously constrained Mina's life because Jay is reluctant to see beyond the opposition of races.

It is only after Mina's subversive relationship with Demetrius that Jay feels the necessity to go back to Uganda and question what his roots and routes are. It is at that moment that his wife Kinnu enlightens him: "Mina is like you, Jay. She can't grow up [in the motel] anymore. You must go now, you think of Uganda all the time. Go and see for yourself what is like" (94'). In my view, this is the new juncture opened by both Mina and Mira Nair's hybrid cinema, as both refuse presupposed descriptions of a powerlessness woman but they congratulate the possibilities of the *masala** identity, of the mixture of different spices without a fixed recipe. It is so that Mira Nair presents Mina as a subversive performance and performer of the Diaspora Space, a point of departure to break away with previous clichéd descriptions sketched for the South Asian migrant woman, a new character constructed beyond static racial distinctions. It is from this challenging portrayal that the final words uttered by Mina to her family reinforce her as a woman without boundaries in an interracial world, as she answers to both Kinnu and Jay when asked to return to the Motel: "I am not going back, I am with Demetrius. I can't. If I don't leave now I never will" (92'). In my opinion, this is the moment when Mina has finally challenged both the racist and gender burdens imposed on her. She is creating a new route that is to be followed by other women of her community like Namita or her own mother, as well as to any other member of the South Asian social group, as represented with Jay's last decision to go back to Uganda. Furthermore, this is same path undertaken by Hashida in Gurinder Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993), where both Chadha and screenwriter Meera Syal also describe

an interracial love relationship as the means to evaluate the patriarchal and imperial burdens that keep the subaltern position of the South Asian migrant woman in the diaspora.

Let me start remembering that, as stated in the previous section, Hashida is caught up between her family and community's expectations of becoming a "triumphant doctor" (16') although what Hashida truly wants to study is Art and paint, an activity that "makes [her] feel free" (17'), as Hashida herself asserts to Ginder on their way to Blackpool. Alongside her creative aspirations, Hashida has an interracial relationship with Oliver, an Afro Caribbean man born in Jamaica who already studies Art at college. Only Manjit (the head of the Saheli Group, the Non Governmental Organisation for the welfare of the South Asian Women in the Diaspora) knows about Hashida's true educational interests and love affair and so Hashida turns to her seeking comfort when, early that morning, she phones Oliver and ends up arguing because, as Oliver tells her: "[You] depend too much on your community, for fuck's sake, do what you want with your life […] You are gonna [*sic*] give up Art like you've given up everything else. Look at you. You are always playing the perfect bloody daughter […] You don't want hassle" (12'). What Oliver ignores is that Hashida has just discovered that she is pregnant and that if she cannot tell her family what she truly wants to study, it is very difficult that they will understand that her son will be the child of a black man.

This is the feeling that makes Hashida run to meet Manjit and join the day-trip to Blackpool "to have a little bit of free atmosphere, far from that family of yours" (14'), as told by Manjit. On the bus, Hashida receives the good looks from the South Asian women who all say about her: "[You] are our hope […] we hope you find a proper match for your possibilities" (17'). Hashida plays the good Indian woman as opposed to Ginder who, as previously said, left her husband and his family because he hit her, a fact ignored by all the aunties who blame Ginder for "breaking the peace and izzat of the family" (19'). Ginder is accompanied during the trip by her son Amrik, and it is significant that Hashida decides to sit with them as opposed to the rest of the aunties, who are only gossiping and criticising Ginder's lack of honour. It is in this sense that when all are sat waiting for Manjit to start the journey to Blackpool, Auntie Pushpa, the oldest of the group, states in a loud voice:

> [At] least some of our girls we can be proud of, yes Dr Hashida, she is a credit […] Shall we warn Hashida not to talk too much to her [pointing at Ginder]? She might teach her bad habits. You know? She ran off, left her family, took her son, even though she had chosen the husband herself. And she has brought the British courts in (20').

She is soon interrupted by Manjit who greets them in their different South Asian languages, therefore acknowledging the diversity of the group, and defines what the true meaning for this day out in Blackpool means:

> *Hello* sisters, *namaste* [Hindi], *sat sri akal* [Punjabi], *salaam a lekum* [Arabic]. It's not often that we women get away from the patriarchal demands made on us in our daily lives, struggling between the double yoke of racism and sexism that we bear. This is your day (my emphasis, 21').

After these welcoming words, it is noteworthy that Ginder says to Hashida, as if she was echoing Manjit's message: "So they say you are going to be a doctor. I gave up college to get married. You are not going to be that stupid" (23'). Hashida looks absent-minded at Amrik and asks Ginder, clearly wondering about herself and her recently discovered pregnancy: "How are you gonna [*sic*] manage, bringing him up on your own", to what Ginder answers: "I've done so far […] supposing I'd put up and shut up I'll be more popular though". And Hashida adds: "Yeah, it's so hard knowing what's right any more. Look, you'll never please everyone, so please yourself" (25'). After these words, Hashida is depicted as lost in thought, probably wondering about her pregnancy and getting herself ready to later phone Oliver to inform him that she cannot cope with the reaction that her family and community will bear against her when, besides the pregnancy, she tells that she expects the baby of a black man. Ladhu and Madhu, two women on the trip, listen to Hashida's conversation and they soon tell the aunties who, above all, refuse the idea of Hashida seeing a black man and the impossibility of becoming a South Asian doctor if she bears "the child of an African slave", as Bina and Pushpa exclaim (48').

It is at this moment that Gurinder Chadha explores the double subaltern position occupied by Hashida who, on the one hand, is dominated by the British society that spit and insult the Saheli bus at the gas-station and, on the other, by the South Asian community that imposes her with an education and a possibility of future only within the South Asian community. Hashida recognises the subaltern position she occupies by means of her repressed desire to be with Oliver, have the child and study Art and so she decides to have a coffee to make up her mind, as she informs both Manjit and Ginder (52'). A few minutes later, and now within the coffee shop, Hashida listens to the aunties talking about herself:

> [These] modern girls can't adapt. Those with jobs are worst. My own daughter, I was telling her it's the woman who makes the family. I was teaching morals back from home. […] Want progress? Like Hashida? She comes from a decent family, still ends up pregnant. Shameless,

disrespectful, whore […] Wait nine months then you see how many aunties you have left. Black? Hai Ram[21], now chaos has come! That will kill your family (54').

At that moment, Hashida *stands up* for herself, both in action and in metaphor, and throws the boiling coffee to the aunties saying: "You are not my fucking sisters" (65'). In other words, she speaks aloud that she is not part of the old traditions of the South Asian community and that she is to lead a life where she can choose what she truly desires. She then runs to the Blackpool Museum and Academy of Arts (which significantly displays an exhibition entitled *Race and Britain*), sits down and mumbles to herself: "I'm on my own now. I'm in control" (68'). It is at this significant moment that I consider that Hashida definitely comes to terms with her subaltern position, discerning both the British and South Asian structures that impose her to reject the man she is in love with. Hashida then makes sense of those gender and racial norms both Ginder and Manjit have been, respectively, been talking about during the trip. She looks at the portrait she drew of Oliver and, correspondingly, Oliver enters the room. He states: "I am here with you, we will do what you want" (72'). At this stage, Hashida recognises that she is a woman set only to live her life for herself, as Ginder told her on the bus journey (21').

It is so that Hashida realises about the subverting possibilities inherent to the Diaspora Space as illustrated by the fact that, on the one hand, Hashida can do what she truly wants, without any cultural domination; and, on the other, Blackpool is celebrating the lighting of the Hindu, Buddhist, Jainist and Sikh festival of Dwivali[22], and the city looks like any other South Asian or British city. Therefore, Hashida has come to terms with her hybrid identity and, embracing the dynamics of the Diaspora Space, repossesses her own future where she will live, paraphrasing Mina from *Mississippi Masala* (1991), as a mixed *masala**.

Meanwhile, and parallel to the climax to the story of Hashida and Oliver, the South Asian aunties discover, at the scene in the male striptease club, that Ginder was mistreated in her connivance with her husband Ranjit, who threatens her at the door of the pub. At this moment, all of them help Ginder and so Ranjit literally has to run away to escape from the violent and powerful reaction of the all-female group. After this climax and with a feeling of victory, all the women on the trip get on the bus to see the Dwivali lightings along Blackpool's main street as the same time as they discover Hashida and Oliver hugging each other while admiring the lightings. It is at this moment that all of them wave to Hashida and

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[21] Hindi for "Oh God".
[22] Originally Dwivali (taking place from October 21st to November 18th) commemorated the entry of a new year as told by the story of the victory of Lakshmí (Goddess of Prosperity) in the *Upanishads* and so it was integrated within the Hindu faith and later in the Buddhist (Divali), Jainist (Deepawali) and Sikh (Deepavali) tradition with different nuances, all celebrating Lakshmí's final attainment of the illuminating/illuminated knowledge (*dharma**).

smile. They all have definitely performed the recognition of their subaltern position and the possibility of interweaving a new collaborative space for women from where to promote their final empowerment as equal participants of the world.

By means of recognising the empathy shared in this new space, these characters are empowered and empowering women of the world because both Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair's selected films unveil the patriarchal control imposed by the South Asian community together with the racist attitude showed by the UK and the US structure. By so doing, characters like Mina, Hashida, Aditi, Ashima or Namita *challenge* these interlocking systems of domination from the possibilities opened by the connivance of cultures that define the Diaspora Space.

Up to this point, I have therefore illustrated how both Chadha and Nair use the image of the South Asian wedding and the interracial in the diaspora relationship as an original discourse that subverts the Western tokenistic interpretation of, for instance, the notion of the arranged marriage. Accordingly, I have explained how both Chadha and Nair depict the Diaspora Space as still ruled by racist and sexist principles but with an intrinsic possibility of subversion. And here, and as it will be developed in next section, is where I believe that both Nair and Chadha's selected films offer a different cinematographic representation because they describe their female characters as *weavers* of a new common all-female space where they identify their common possibilities and understand each other's roots and routes. Thence, the resultant collaborative space is born out of the transformative role inherent to the Diaspora Space where women nurture each other towards the empowerment of the South Asian women in the diaspora that departs from a mutual subversive hope that allows them to definitely *talk back*.

3- WEAVERS OF A NURTURING SPACE:
THE EMPOWERMENT OF SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN IN THE DIASPORA

As seen throughout this dissertation, diaspora is a space continually woven by different human, cultural, religious, socio-political and economic variables. Similarly, it has also been expressed that women in the diaspora suffer a double yoke of racist and patriarchal discrimination. Bearing in mind these previous remarks, the present section describes how Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair portray women that create a new alternative space out of

the transformative possibilities enhanced by the dynamics of the Diaspora Space. This new space is the consequence of the encounter of the gender inequality experiences that the South Asian women share in the diaspora and it materialises in a nurturing collaboration and a mutual understanding based on the bonds of empathy created among these women. I believe that it is out of this shared recognition that these women empower themselves to embrace the hybrid possibilities inherent to the Diaspora Space that, for instance and as related in the two previous sections, are granted in terms of educational attainment and love relationships.

At this juncture, and before analysing four examples of these nurturing spaces taken from Chadha and Nair's selected films, I consider very relevant to define empowerment as following The United Nations Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality's document *Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women*:

> The core of empowerment lies in the ability of a woman *to control her own destiny*. This implies that to be empowered women, they must not only have equal capabilities (such as education and health) and equal access to resources and opportunities (such as land and employment), they must also have *the agency* to use those rights, capabilities, resources and opportunities to make strategic choices and decisions (such as are provided through leadership opportunities and participation in political institutions) (my emphasis, 63).

In other words, empowerment entails a process of transforming gender relations by means of promoting a necessary process of awareness that will challenge the existent gender inequality. In this regard, African American women can be considered pioneers in their feminist struggle towards empowerment, as Alice Walker coined the term *womanism* formerly referred in Chapter II and defined within the lines of the previous explanation. Similarly, but more recently, The United Nations' "Programme of Guidelines on Women's Empowerment" (2008) has defined empowerment as a social force that encompasses "[women's] sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a fairer social and economic order, nationally and internationally" (qtd. in *United Nations Development Programme* 71). Consequently, it is my purpose to describe how Chadha and Nair's selected films represent the achievement of women's empowerment as dependant on the creation of these alternative nurturing spaces that, as defined by Spanish scholar Olga Barrios, are "healing spaces" (my translation, 2008: 294)

from where the migrant women recognise the power that lies within themselves to control their own destiny.

These new spaces represented by Chadha and Nair not only subvert the racist and sexist previous existing structures but also enhance the possibilities to come to terms with their hybrid identities and their transcultural options. Therefore, Chadha and Nair's female characters portray the alliance of women in the diaspora as an illustration of their commitment to eradicate the contemporary gender conflicts, as it has already been explained in the common contestation against Ginder's husband in Gurinder Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993) or in the collaborative strength of the all-female team in Chadha's *Bend It like Beckham* (2002). In this sense, not only Chadha and Nair describe empowered characters but empowering alliances that provide a global identification of all those alternatives that make women stronger towards their own empowerment.

The present section then intends to illustrate *how* and *what for* Chadha and Nair weave these nurturing spaces of healing and contesting action. So, it analyses the correspondence laid between the Diaspora Space and this new space of collaboration created by the South Asian migrant as the means to control their own lives. In order to illustrate these points, I will focus on four[23] scenes chosen from the selected films that are case of study in this dissertation and that are expressive of the *nurturing* quality of this *womanist* space created in the Diaspora Space: Mina and Kinnu talking by the swimming pool in Mira Nair's *Mississippi Masala*; the journey undertaken by Lalita, Maya and Lakhi from India to the US, with a stopover in London, to attend Mr Kholi's wedding in Gurinder Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice*[24]; the all female *sangeeta** in Nair's *Monsoon Wedding;* and the last scene in the changing room in Chadha's *Bend It like Beckham*. The conclusion to be sketched out of these scenes will prove that the new collaborative space created by these

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[23] Other referenced scenes that portray the subversive power of this new collaborative space interwoven by the South Asian women are the end of Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach*, where all women defend together Ginder from her husband or the relationship established by Ashima and Sally in Nair's *The Namesake*, a liaison that allows Ashima to see that she is a free woman in a free world, as unveiled by the possibilities that Alison shows to her. There are other examples of this new transformative space created by the subversive union of women in the diaspora but I will leave it for further and more extensive studies. These examples would include the beautifully shop scene of the shopping of Aditi's wedding dress in Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* (where Aditi, Ria, Pimmi Verma and Ayesha share confidences and memories while choosing colour and fabric) or the same situation in Chadha's *Bend It like Beckham*, where Pinky and Jess choose the most suitable sari for Pinky's wedding while they criticise the isolating attitude of the rest of the South Asian women in their neighbourhood. They all get stronger by sharing secrets and worries, gathering together to subvert their imposed subaltern position in the dynamics of the Diaspora Space.

[24] It may be argued that little attention has been paid to Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice* during this dissertation. As I pointed out in the Introduction, I consider *Bride and Prejudice* a diasporic film because it reflects how the South Asian diaspora reciprocally connects back with the Sub-Continent in the same trend as Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* (2001). Although this is the first time that I deeply analyse a scene from Chadha's feature, the importance of the film and its plot lines have been recurrent inspiration for this dissertation and will definitely be enclosed in the future possibility of a Doctoral Thesis. It is in this sense that *Bride and Prejudice* was mentioned in the second chapter to illustrate the multinational production and setting of the hybrid films as well as earlier on when I introduced the issue of arranged marriages and interracial love-relationships.

female characters assembles the subversive notions of hybrid identity and guarantees the definite empowerment of the South Asian women by means a common struggle that corresponds to what Avtar Brah defines as "the feminization of the diaspora" (1996: 179).

Let me then start by referring to the scene in Mira Nair's *Mississippi Masala* where Mina and Kinnu stand talking by the swimming pool at night time. Kinnu oils Mina's hair, a tradition from the Sub-Continent, with a tonic made out of Bhinjarag's oil[25]. Kinnu and Mina chat after Mina's incident with the Police and Kinnu's argument with Jay due to his "inadaptation [*sic*] to the fact that [he is] no longer in Uganda but in the United States of America" (66'). They comfort each other by the liminal place of the swimming pool, using the Indian oils while laughing at the fact that they do not really know what the fact of being holders of a Green Card entitle them to. This recreated space of healing, where both Kinnu and Mina occupy a multi-location crossroads that integrates both their cartographies as Indian and US citizens, resounds throughout the rest of the movie as a way of challenging the restrictive attitude imposed by the rest of the South Asian women, who concentrate more on the division and prosecution of each other. As an instance of this division, the two gossipers propose sending Namita and Mina back to India so that they can remember "the honesty of the traditional values" (78').

It is at this point that the connection established between Kinnu and Mina deliberately opposes that sense of confrontation promoted by the gossipers. Despite the fact that Kinnu is trying to arrange a new date between Mina and Harry Patel, as she suggests by asking her when she will be seeing him again (69'), both Mina and Kinnu have established a connection based on the empathy[26] created by their personal stories of feeling displaced in the US and discriminated by both the US white citizens and the South Asian men. Furthermore, Mina asks Kinnu about their "history in Africa" and about her relationship with Othello[27] back in Uganda (71'), as illustrating her desire to integrate her African roots into her hybrid identity. It is then that Kinnu calms her daughter by oiling her hair and tells her: "We are here now and we are together, we are much more free in the US [*sic*]" (70'). This beautiful image resounds of the classic scene in Steven Spielberg's adaptation of Alice

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[25] The main quality of Bhinjarag's oil is, according to the *Ayurveda**, that of providing shiny looks that revitalise women's internal and external complexion.

[26] US scholar Carol S. Jeffers, in her recent article "On Empathy: The Mirror Neuron System and Art Education" (2009), gathers scientific results about how the creation of bonds of empathy enhances an amplification of the perception about the "world of objects" (1) and the "world of others"(1) at any age and by any social group. Hers is an interesting point of analysis that, settled on the theoretical grounds of the Art Therapy, can be linked to the subversive notions I have used when defining the concept of Diaspora Space, hybridity and "hybrid films".

[27] Othello is the Ugandan black man who teaches Swahili to Mina and who rescues Jay when he is imprisoned after denouncing Idi Anim to the BBC.

Walker's *The Colour Purple*, where Celie comforts Shug by singing her a melody that Shug also ends up humming.

At that moment, Shug is calmed by Celie's voice in an instant when she feels absolutely alone in the world, without any support. It is in correspondence with this scene that later in the film Shug will sing back to Celie the self-composed "Miss Celie's Blues" as a way of thanking the strength given by Celie in the intimate alliance created in the previously referred scene. Hitherto, same as Shug recognises her own power, Mina discovers that she is not alone in this Diaspora Space and that, in spite of her sometimes dominating position as a mother, Kinnu shares with her the same subaltern position and the same option to subvert it now that they both are in the US. Here, the new prospects ahead interweave not only Mina and Kinnu as individuals, but Mina plus Kinnu as illustrative exponents of the collaborative gathering of female experiences that defines the new reinforcement created in the diaspora, an alternative all-women space from where to cure and empower the personal and spiritual mutual possibilities as citizens of the US.

Similarly, this nurturing alliance created by the swimming pool corresponds to the collaborative coalition represented in the referenced scene in Gurinder Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice* where the three sisters (Lalita, Maya and Lakhi) travel all the way to the US from Amristar (North of India and the sacred city in Sikhism). In this transoceanic journey, they overcome old familiar squabbles that had been caused by love misunderstandings and jealousy in order to build up an alternative space of collaboration from where to respectively counteract their mother's insistence on an arranged marriage with Indian American Kholi (an hypocritical chauvinist), Catherine Darcy's neo-colonial impulse to create a hotel business in Goa (that would ruin a sacred area) and Wickham's deceiving intentions on both Lakhi and Lalita.

In this sense, the moments shared in the plane correspond to the liminal space by the swimming pool depicted in Mira Nair's *Mississippi Masala*. In the case of Chadha's film, the journey itself acts as a multi-location alternative space that, both in and out India, the UK and the US, allows the three sisters to share confidences and weave a space of collaboration from where they reinstitute their familiar and spiritual bond. Same as Mina and Kinnu create a similar place of personal communication where they speak their inner selves aloud and renegotiate the possibilities opened by the Diaspora Space, the three sisters assemble together to create this alternative space of mutual understanding.

By so doing, Maya, Lakhi and Lalita empower each other to face the limits that had been placed on them. Thus, Maya discovers that Balraj is in love with her since their first

meeting in the wedding celebrations that open the film, something that she could have not done but for that collaboration created among her sisters, as Maya herself proclaims that "but for my sisters insistence, I would have never dared to try and ask you" (78'). Furthermore, it is from the association established by the sisters that they will be able to rescue Lakhi from Wickham's attempt to kidnap her when they meet in London.

It is thence very clear that the relationship created by the sisters impulse a personal and spiritual tie, besides the obvious familiar bond, that makes them stronger in the challenges ahead them, as the dilemma placed upon Lalita and her affair with Mr Darcy, a relationship that must challenge against the neo colonial schemes depicted by Mr Darcy's mother attempt to construct the hotel in Goa, Mr Darcy's ignorance about Indian and Sikh cultures and Lalita's refusal towards anything coming from the US. The dilemma resolves itself when Mr Darcy appears in the same flight and Lalita, as encouraged by her sisters, start talking to Mr Darcy about the three previous explained burdens. They reconcile with each other and confess their love symbolically in the air while they travel among continents. And they do so after Lalita gets the necessary force to resolve the conflicts from the strengthening impulse she gets from their sisters' support.

Moreover, it is from this sense of reciprocal comprehension and solidarity that the three sisters weave this space of cooperation, feeling closer and more connected than ever despite the fact that they are to live in three different continents (Lalita in the US, Maya in the UK and Lakhi in the Sub-Continent). So, and despite their mother mourns that "they are all to be separate" (84'), they will keep nurturing each other from that common space that reminds them about the confidence of knowing themselves as a part of a larger group. Consequently, it is from the previously defined space of friendship and comfort created in the journey that Lalita, Maya and Lakhi finally gather the necessary power to challenge and subvert Mr and Mrs Bakshi's patriarchal reluctance to let them choose a life of their own.

This collaboration among women is also the background for the all-women *sangeeta** ritual[28] performed in Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding*. In the visual arrangement of the scene, Ria stands next to her cousin-sister Aditi while they are both surrounded by the rest of the women who "support the bride in her last moments of freedom" (76'), as asserted by Aditi's mother. The scene is an exponent of the joint space woven by Aditi and Ria as they both have just spoken their secrets aloud: Ria has told the rest of the family that Uncle Tej had abused her when she was a child and Aditi has told Hemant all about her previous

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[28] The sangeeta is a part a part of the wedding ceremony where women dance and sing together to honour both the bride and themselves as companions of the bride, following the *sangeeta** artistic particularities already explained in Chapter II and in the *Glossary of Terms*.

affair with the TV presenter. It is at this point that, while celebrating the *sangeeta** formed by women from all different parts of India and the world (there are guests from the US, the UK, different regions of the Sub-Continent and Australia), all women unite together around Aditi and Ria and so they construct an alternative space where they feel stronger throughout the comforting and therapeutic power of the singing, clapping and dancing ritual that accompanies one the *sangeeta**'s song "Mehndi / Madhorama Pencha"[29]. The *sangeeta** scene is therefore the illustration of the all-female alternative space, an abstract sphere from where women talk back and contest those structures of inequality that, as illustrated by the asymmetrical possibilities in the access of academic education and love relationships described in the previous two sections, have been placed upon them as merely based on gender reasons.

Similarly, the scene that follows the *sangeeta**, where all the members of the family stand to be part of the wedding snapshot (where the men occupy the places in the foreground), reinforces the corollary of the empowering new possibilities revealed by this all-female realm. While all members of the family pose for the photograph, Aditi and Ria hold hands and see how Lalit Verma (Aditi's father and Ria's uncle-father) tells Uncle Tej to leave the Varmas mansion following Ria's accusations. All the women assemble together around Ria and remain beside her in the new disposition that for the photograph is afterwards required. The new family order in the photograph, that now mixes men and women, clearly subverts the original division as well as it depicts how the women now support Ria as opposed to their previous reluctance to accept Ria's confession, accusing her of merely being jealous of Aditi. Besides, this new space not only comforts Ria but also Aditi, who feels relieved and calmed by the dirty jokes told by her aunts Pimmi and Shashi, who both share anecdotes back from the times they were newly-weds. In this moment of exchange of confidences, Aditi discovers that she is not the only one experiencing the uncertainty of not knowing what her life is going to be once she is married. At this point and by means of the therapeutic power of her aunties's storytelling, Aditi feels that she is not alone but held up by all those bustling women.

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[29] The song's title, originally in Punjabi, means "we ask Madhorama while we paint our hands with henna". "Medhi" refers to the ritual of applying henna to the bride and "Madho Rama" is the affectionate name to refer to Punjabi elders. The song is one of the most famous folk chants of the Punjab Province where the main singer asks the audience who they are to marry to receive comic and burlesques answers. In the scene in Nair's film, the women sing as if they were men and so they make fun of the typical men's choices. For instance, they sing: "Whom shall I marry? /The Fat One/But the Fat One is always too fat for the bed […] Whom shall I marry? / The Fair one, like butter, so she can sleep on the roof". The subversion provided by the ritual is finally accomplished when Lalit Varma and C.L. Chadha try to enter, in their own words, "into the harem" (78'), and they are literally expelled by all the women.

In this sense, the *sangeeta** clearly opens a new space for all the women attending the ceremony, an alternative outlook to the previous family disposition that always placed them in the background, as earlier related while talking about the wedding photograph. Consequently, this different space reconciles the women in the family as a united collective, integrating their different geographical origins and heterogeneous cultural, religious and socioeconomic distinctiveness into the common alliance formed during, for instance, the performance of the song "Mehndi / Madhorama Pencha". It is consequently this union that portrays how all women nurture each other while opening the possibilities to empower themselves as active members of the family and, by so doing, with full prospects of becoming free women of the world, as exemplified by Ria and Aditi's upcoming academic career and experiences in the US.

It is at this point that the scene in the changing room at the end of Gurinder Chadha's *Bend It like Beckham* (2002) can be sketched as the corollary of the nurturing association interwoven by the South Asian women in the diaspora. I believe that the scene is very important because it illustrates how this alternative space constructed by the gathering of women in the diaspora can integrate any woman no matter her religious, social, education or economic distinctiveness. This is relevant because it could be argued that the three previous descriptions of nurturing spaces were all formed by family members. It is not the case in this scene that closes *Bend It like Beckham* as well as other previously related scenes where women stand together regardless of their cultural or religious background as already explained in the ending of Gurinder Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach* and the interracial friendship circumscribed by Ashima and Sally in Mira Nair's *The Namesake*.

Then, let me go back to *Bend It like Beckham*'s referred segment. The scene starts when Pinky (Jess's sister) is about to celebrate her love wedding's ceremony at the same time as the final of the football championship where Jess is supposed to play and be spotted by a US citizen scout who is tentative to offer her a scholarship to study at an American college together with Jules. The scholarship would allow Jess and Jules to study the degree they desire while they play football in a professional league with, as Jules recognises, "so much attention and money as the Premier League[30]" (16'). Nevertheless, Jess has submitted to her family's will and she opts to attend the wedding despite the fact that she knows that, on the one hand, she is dumping her group of female friends (the football team) and, on the other, she is definitely rejecting the possibility of doing what she really wants: to study at college and to earn a life playing football. By choosing the first option, Jess performs the

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[30] The Premier League is British male most important football competition.

traditional role assigned by Sikhism to the bride's sister: that of comforting all the guests, while her team gets ready for the final.

However, it is remarkable to note that, the previous night, Jess had informed her coach Joe that she would not play in the final because she has chosen to surrender, in her own words, to her "family's traditional Indian values" because she cannot "turn them all down the day of her sister's wedding" (78'). And she is interrupted by her father, who barges in when Joe states to Jess that "at least [she] should try to do what [she] really feels like" (79'). And this is recurrent because the day after, during the wedding dance, Mr Bhamra tells Jess that if "[she is] not going to be smiling at [her] sister's wedding at least [she] should be playing football, providing that at least [she is] back for Pinky's farewell" (83'). Here, Jess represents a subversion of the previous designated schemes, as her father had to abandon a promising career as a cricket player for England because the white British players bullied him. It is after this change of mind that Jess arrives at the second half of the match and scores the goal that gives victory to her team. At these moments, the camera pauses on Mr Bhamra, astonished when he sees how her daughter is cheered and supported by the British audience.

This is the hopeful atmosphere that surrounds the next moment, when all the female players help Jess in getting dressed with the sari and arrive back to her sister's wedding on time. Jules frays the lowest seam, Mel (African descendant) clutches the top and so every member of the team takes part in such an inspiring scene. This is the instant at which Mel speaks up and asserts "we have won, altogether!" (86'), as highlighting that this is the epitomising creation of the alternative space that these women interweave together to comfort each other when they are injured because, in this case in a literal sense, if someone is wounded or absent there is always another girl to help and replace her, to encourage her to go on, to keep the group's working towards their own empowerment as a female team. In this sense, if both Jess and Jules have been reclaiming equal conditions for a female professional league as well as the same economic and educational opportunities as those granted for men during the whole film, their team's final victory represents how, by feeling and working as parts of a larger group, they are stronger and so they are able to trespasses the gender and cultural burdens that had been placed upon them.

Therefore, it can be claimed that the all-female football team, as a parallel to that alternative space created only by women, defeats both British and South Asian, patriarchal and cultural, misconceptions and so all the players' families, with different roots and cartographies of diaspora, celebrate together the new route opened by the victory at the

Championship. Likewise, the following scene at Heathrow airport is a further example, as the Bhamras and the Paxtons joke together before Jules and Jess leave for the US, despite their previous reluctance. Moreover, in the next scene, Mr Bhamra and Irish coach Joe play cricket in the same team against a white British squad in an image that can be considered a direct consequence of the cultural negotiation opened in the Diaspora Space by the new collaboration opened by the bond established by the female players.

However, the most important achievement of the team is that all female players have recognised the patriarchal limitations that had been laid upon them. It is then that, as previously asserted, the team feels *empowered* because they have discovered that by means of a common contestation, they have the same capabilities and rights as those granted to men and so *they can overcome* the gender difference that had been formerly imposed. The team is also *empowering* because now they have acknowledged that they have the opportunity of playing professionally, that *they can subvert* the previous familiar and cultural limitations and that *they can choose* and decide only for themselves. At this stage, the fact that Jules and Jess are awarded with the American scholarship sketches the final illustration of the *empowerment* that lies ahead of them as inhabitants of that new shared space, the performance of "the ability of a woman to control her own destiny" and "the agency of the group of women to use those rights, capabilities, resources and opportunities to make strategic choices and decisions" (63), as paraphrasing the previous definition given by "The United Nations Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality".

Similarly, and as a conclusion for this section, it can be stated that Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair depict characters like Hashida, Asha, Mina or Ashima as weavers of an alternative space that emerges from the collaboration of the South Asian women in the diaspora. This association enhances an experience of empathy and collective consciousness that empowers the subversive possibilities previously granted by the definition of Diaspora Space as a space of "confluence" and "subversion" (Brah 1996), where the diasporic dynamics illustrates the constant "transformation" and "possibilities" of the diasporic identities (Hall 1992). Here, and after having described the previous four instances of women's association, I have explained that this new alliance opened by the South Asian women strengthens their challenge and their contestation against the patriarchal and racist limitations that created specific gender conflicts as those analysed in previous sections in relation to academic education and love relationships.

Thus, it is in this sense of gathering and empathy that the resultant new space corresponds to the nurturing power of the intrapersonal relation created by the South Asian female experience in the diaspora. Accordingly, and as weavers of this comforting mutual space, these women feel stronger when they recognise each other's problems and limitations and, by so doing, they embrace the sense of shared and mutual understanding as seen in, for instance, the all female *sangeeta** in Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* or the scene in Gurinder Chadha's *Bend It like Beckham* when the female team dresses Jess with the sari.

Furthermore, it can also be stated that Nair and Chadha apprehend the contemporary position of the South Asian women and their gender conflicts by recognising that there is an inherent subversive hope to be undertaken from those transformative possibilities intrinsic to the definition of the Diaspora Space. In order to illustrate this concept, both Chadha and Nair represent situations as the scene by the swimming pool in Mira Nair's *Mississippi Masala* or the transoceanic journey in Gurinder Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice* with the aim of promoting the consciousness-raising about the prevailing gender inequality that defines our society while they also foster the importance of being aware about the possible contestation to be developed by the South Asian women. Subsequently, as they represent other alternative spaces of collaboration as those in Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach* or Nair's *The Namesake* from where women share and talk back together, both Chadha and Nair propose that another reality is possible when they come to terms with the idea that, still nowadays, "woman is not born but rather becomes a woman" (de Beauvoir 269).

CONCLUSION

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

It is a fact that, as Henry Giroux remarks, our contemporary age needs "cultural, educational and artistic mediators who encourage deep *changes* in the construction of the personal and social identity from the deepest human values" (my emphasis, 2001b: 7). So, I consider that those *changes* involve an *evaluation* about the political discourses and artistic representations to which we are daily exposed. Accordingly, this dissertation has focused on the South Asian diaspora and the modern day gender conflicts that, as represented in Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair's diasporic films, are suffered by the South Asian woman in the diaspora. By analysing the selected works, I have illustrated how Chadha and Nair's films involve a necessary reconsideration that, about the South Asian migrant woman, needs to be undertaken in historical, theoretical, postcolonial and feminist terms. In this sense, where Jigna Desai claimed that "we are still waiting for a film about diasporic South Asians which will go further than merely *acknowledging* the existence of older Asian women to create characters who are ambiguous, complex and driven with contradiction [and such] *a film* would inevitably question and multiplicity of power relations and, in doing so, would overturn the assumptions of the film and TV industry" (my emphasis, 138) I have proven that not only Chadha and Nair offer that cinematographic representation Desai demands, but that they imagine new possibilities of subversion to the racist and patriarchal structures that are still imposed in both the identity of the South Asian diasporic woman and the transcultural dynamics we all share.

At this global stage, Chapter I provided the necessary historical background to understand why the selected films by Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair are confirmed as alternatives to the still prevailing misconception and ignorance about the South Asian Sub-Continent and its diaspora. Here, and following the enlightening words by Antonio Gramsci with which he states that "the starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is knowing thyself as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory" (324), I have illustrated the diversity of cultures in the Sub-Continent and its diaspora together with the cultural impositions undertaken by the British colonialism or the current *Hindutva** post-Partition nationalism. Hence, I have demonstrated how Chadha and Nair represent the *ambivalence* and *complexity* demanded by Desai and so I have presented their films as

dismantlers of the many stereotypes inherent to *The Many South Asias of the Mind*. Likewise, I have studied the cultural heterogeneity displayed by, for instance, the historical contextualisation of Mira Nair's *Mississipi Masala* (1991), which traces the South Asian identity back to the its presence in East Africa, or Gurinder Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice* (2004), which conversely recognises the current transnational economic presence of India in both the UK and the US.

In this regard, and as corroborated in the examples given in Chapter I, it can be stated that both Chadha and Nair place their stories in the historical interstice of diaspora where identities are, paraphrasing Stuart Hall, always "creating, reproducing and transforming themselves anew" (1980: 328). By so doing, both Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair *acknowledge* the existent cultural diversity together with the ambiguity and complexity of the South Asian diasporic distinctiveness. Therefore, and as a corollary taken from Chapter I, it can be enunciated that Chadha and Nair's films offer ambiguous characters that defy those static representations of the South Asian Sub-Continent and its diaspora and so describe true inhabitants in and from the Sub-Continent.

From this historical point, I have contextualised diaspora as "Diaspora Space" (Brah 1996: 34) in order to subvert those old multicultural reductionist readings of diaspora such as Samuel Hutchington's *The Clash of Civilisations* (1998, 2004). Here, I have considered the contradictory and enriching nature of Brah's concept and so the dissertation has highlighted the subversive possibilities inherent to that theoretical abstract space of contact and transformation that is depicted in Nair and Chadha's cinematographic portrayals of the South Asian uniqueness. Furthermore, I have proved that, in respect to categorising their experiences of filmmaking as mere postcolonial cinemas, there was a necessary new definition to be coined and so I have proposed *hybrid cinemas*. At this point, I have defined the new term with examples strictly taken from Chadha and Nair's films and I have confirmed that both filmmakers place their characters at the transcultural crossroads of our world in order to promote an evaluation of the hybrid identities that would later overturn the neo-imperial assumptions of theories such as that of Huntingdon's.

Meanwhile, by further contextualising Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair as hybrid filmmakers of the world, I have also been able to state a three-fold confirmation. Firstly, that art is revolutionary because it always provides another possibility of understanding and representing *other* realities. Secondly, that cinema is a collective artistic practice that evaluates the transnational dynamics of the world and so it corroborates the existence of an

important inequality in terms of race and gender if the economic and political structures are to be observed. Thirdly, that Chadha and Nair embrace the subversive power inherent to that revolutionary nature of art and that their hybrid cinema is engaged with a clear feminist and antiracist commitment. Consequently, it can be stated that, both as women of the world and filmmakers of hybrid cinemas, Chadha and Nair are cultural and artistic mediators who challenge racist and patriarchal power relations, overturn stereotypical assumptions and offer the subversive hope of empowerment to the South Asian women in the Diaspora.

Afterwards, I have described the gender conflicts that, in terms of the educational attainment, arranged marriage and interracial relationships, are faced by Chadha and Nair's characters. I have confirmed that both Chadha and Nair depict the South Asian migrant woman as an active participant of the dynamics of the Diaspora Space, consequently opposed to other tokenistic representations of migrant women as powerless victims. Subsequently I have corroborated that characters like Mina, Hashida, Jess, Ria, Lalita and Ashima challenge the imperial and patriarchal burdens placed on their lives by both the South Asian community (whether in the Sub-Continent or in their diaspora) and the receiving countries (the UK and the US). Similarly, this analysis has confirmed how Chadha and Nair's hybrid cinemas destabilise the patrons of gender inequality by means of encouraging the possibility of struggling for the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities as those granted for men. The study of how characters like Ashima in Mira Nair's *The Namesake* (2006) or Jess in Gurinder Chadha's *Bend It like Beckham* (2002) come to terms with their subaltern position have proved that Chadha and Nair's films encourage a subversive representation of the South Asian woman in the diaspora.

It has been from this cinematographic site of cultural interaction, always in transformation and constantly in progress, from where I have stated that Nair and Chadha challenge the gender difference by acknowledging the diversity and complexity of the female South Asian experience in the Diaspora Space. Likewise, I have shown, in the last section of Chapter III, how Chadha and Nair represent female characters that, out of the Diaspora Space, create all-female alternative spaces of collaboration where they feel the empathy that makes them aware of their power as a group. It was at this point that I have claimed that these healings spaces of comfort and empowering association foster a process of consciousness-raising about the subaltern position occupied by the South Asian woman in the diaspora. In this sense, I have pointed out how Chadha and Nair create these mutual and nurturing spaces as a different and subversive option for the South Asian woman in the

Diaspora. The descriptions given about the Saheli day-trip to Blackpool in Gurinder Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach*, the football team in Gurinder Chadha's *Bend it like Beckham* or the all-female *sangeeta** in Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* have been clear representatives of this revolutionary trend because they all identify the subversive possibilities that are inherent to the alliance of the South Asian women in the Diaspora Space.

As a result, I believe that this dissertation has confirmed that we all live in an abstract Diaspora Space and that we are all examples of the hybrid identities there configured. Hitherto, and as I consider that the role of the artist is that of making ourselves aware of other realities in order to come to terms with ourselves, this study has proven that Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair's films display the heterogeneous idiosyncrasy of the South Asian Diaspora that is very much ignored in the contemporary academia as well as they portray how the migrant woman occupies a subaltern position that condemns her under racist and gender prejudices that need to be contested. It is by this token that the resolutions taken by characters like Hashida, Mina, Jess or Ashima, alongside Chadha and Nair's own activity of filmmaking, can be considered as subversive forces of disagreement that implement the necessity of art and the artists as a "rehearsal for revolution" (my translation, 2010: 20), as Olga Barrios paraphrases Brazilian pedagogue Augusto Boal in her inspiring study *La mujer en las artes visuales y escénicas. Transgresión, pluralidad y compromiso social* (*The Woman in the Visual and Performing Arts, Transgression, Plurality and Social Commitment*).

Consequently, it can be said that our contemporary world needs filmmakers such as Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair because they denounce the wrongs of society and remind us of the possibility that we all have within us to perform that transgression, plurality and social commitment Barrios talks about. It is at this vital crossroads that Chadha and Nair's revolution is a rebellion that proposes a historical reconsideration of structures of social and economic inequality, a postcolonial assessment of the racist structures that dominate our world and a feminist evaluation of educational prospects and familiar traditions.

Furthermore, and by portraying women in the diaspora, Chadha and Nair reinforce the idea that more attention should be paid to the migrant woman, whether from an academic, professional or social perspective, because they are subjects to occupy a subaltern position where they are the potential target of racist and gender discrimination. In this sense, the analysis of Chadha and Nair's female characters has then provided an

encouraging denunciation and a starting point of departure in the visualisation of all those female artists that have been historically trying to subvert the pre-established white and male creative regulation of the art production. It is at this point that these pages have also settled the theoretical and practical framework for a future Doctoral Thesis that will recognise the feminist agenda and postcolonial recurrence of contemporary female artists from the South Asian Diaspora who, from the 1990s onwards, open new cinematographic and dramatic hybrid spaces from which depict the challenging possibilities of subversion that are to be embraced in the Diaspora Space. These coetaneous women include famous filmmakers of hybrid cinemas like Gurinder Chadha or Mira Nair, but also other female directors who are struggling hard to get their films produced (like Sandhya Suri or Shilpa Shuntakar) and a whole movement of female-directed theatrical companies that are still invisible both in the UK and the US (such as the work carried out by Tamasha Theatre Company, Kali Theatre Company and Rasaka Theatre Company).

To end with, I believe that these are the empowering women who, like the previously quoted Bengali writer Rokeya Hossain, need to be acknowledged if the patriarchal assumptions and power relationships are definitely to be overturned. And, also, I think that these women not only create new artistic spaces that allow all women to definitely talk back but cultural sites of connivance that empower us all as hybrid citizens of the world. It is in this sense that, as illustrated by this dissertation and the promise of a further academic work, we need to be aware of these transnational artists that open up hybrid possibilities and subvert the blindness of the global world. In relation to this awakening, and with mediators like Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair, I believe that we could all bend it like Beckham.

Ahimsa. (Sa[1]) *Ahimsa* refers to the philosophical attitude of *no violence* that is inherent to the calm that follows an intense spiritual reflection. It will be the base for Gandhi's *satyagraha**.

Aparigraha. (Sa) Jainism adopted the principle of *non-possessiveness* (English translation from Sanskrit *aparigraha*) to guarantee the acceptance of only the necessary thoughts, words and actions as a state of spiritual comfort and mental balance. The idea of *aparigraha* would later be confounded with *karma** in some yoga schools, which radically reinterpreted *aparigraha* as the free state of mind of absolute *no-hoarding*.

Apauruseya. (Sa) The Sanskrit *apaur-* refers to the capacity for revealing and transmitting the doctrines contained in the *Vedas*. Then, the *apauruseyas* enhanced the passive role of the listener, the annihilation of any comprehensive faculty, a clear rendition to the *samsara** and the prospect of an infinite *dukha**.

Ayurveda. (Sa) A whole system of psychological and medical knowledge based on alternative medicine and holistic therapies**.**

Bhangra. (Pu) It is a kind of music and dance originated in the Punjab region, as the farmer's folk dance which commemorated the coming of Spring (*Vaisakhi*), also sharing traits with the South of the Sub-Continent, Afghanistan and Iran. With the Partition (1947), Sikh and Hindu in the Northern parts of the Punjab (borders of Pakistan) adopted bhangra as their folk dances and music to counteract Pakistan Islamic influence. Technically, Bhangra is considered "a total hybrid performative event" (Ali 2004), enlarged by its proliferation in Hindi popular films, on TV programs watched by the Indian diaspora across the world and on the theatrical popular representation.

Biraderi. (Pe) The literal notions of Persian *biraderi* refer to the kinship networks established among labourers. After Partition, Pakistani notions of *biraderi* were used as synonym of brotherhood and clans emigrating to UK and USA to be reduced into the category of Muslim Gang.

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[1] Abbreviations stand for the oldest etymological root where the word is referenced. They refer as it follows: (Be) for Bengali, (En) for English, (Hi) for Hindi, (Pa) for Pali, (Pe) for Persian, Pu for (Punjabi), (Sa) for Sanskrit and (Ur) for Urdu.

Biraderi is then the main discourse of media (BBC, <u>The Times</u>…) to address the construction of the stereotype of the bad, radical and chauvinist Muslim.

Bollywood. (En) The 1990s congratulated the so-called Bollywood (a retake of Bombay and Hollywood) as a popular manifestation of Indian colourful saris and Ancient grandiosity. Nevertheless, the label Bollywood normally involves a certain *Orientalist* and simplistic reading of the Indian culture, in the fashion of exoticism (such as the Selfridge's exhibition in the summer of 2000) and propagandistic cultural simplification. Thence, the Bollywood label normally involves the description of the Hindi movies that, from the British introduction of cinema in India in 1930s, continue to write stereotypes of *Hindutva** conservativism. The popular Hindi movies still continue to present classic melodramatic stories in which India is depicted as a society split in castes (not varnas) inheritor of the Aryan grandiosity where women are to be victimised. Films like Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Devdas* (2004) or Ashutosh Gowariker's *Lagaan* (2005) are perfect instances of the Bollywood film that must be comprehended from the stereotypical gazed expected from Bollywood. The songs and dances are a key part of the movie, normally with propagandistic purposes (both political and economic).

Buddha. (Sa) Although *Buddha* normally addresses the historical Buddha for antonomasia, Siddharta Gautama, the Buddha, *buddh-* (from its Sanskrit root) refers to the acts of understanding, seeing and blooming that is inherent to the *Pratitya samutpada**. Raimon Pánikkar asserts that the comprehension of the linguist root of *buddh-* leads to the true Buddhist awareness, that which "un-chains knowledge rather than the acts of (re-)chaining religious or philosophical restrictive definitory parameters chains" (my translation, 175).

Chappattis. (En, from Hi *capati* & Pe *chapati*). Flat, unleavened and typical bread from the Punjab (North of the Sub-Continent). It is cooked on a griddle out of wheat flour. It is currently present in all British restaurants as *chappati or any other regular bread.*

Chutney Music. (En) *Chutney* is the general term which refers to the condiments and species that accompany every South Asian meal. For instance, there are fruit, vegetable and even meat or fish *chutneys* served alongside a rice or chicken dish. There is not a defined pattern in which *chutney* has to be arranged. Likewise, *Chutney Music* stands for the music and songs which appeared in the Caribbean (especially Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago) as a consequence of the Indian indentured diaspora of the 19th c. As an outcome of this migration, Afro calypsos and songs became in contact with *Indian* instruments such as the Sitar, the Dholak or the Dhantal. Nowadays, Chutney Music is still very important in the Caribbean. Artists such as Rikki Jai, Rakesh Yankaran, Devanand Gattoo,

Heeralal Rampartap and the late Ramdew Chaitoe sing and compose in Hindi, Guajarati or English, adding new South Asian beeps, old calypsos from East Africa and typical *Bollywood** artistic direction in the video-clips.

Coolies, Coolitude. (En) *Coolitude* comes from the Tamil *kuli* meaning to hire, payment for occasional menial work. *Coolitude* and *coolies* now refer to the 19th c. indentured Indian diaspora to the Caribbean and East Africa, probably because they called themselves *kulis*, as they were hired labourers. In this sense, *coolitude* was appropriated by the British patrons adding the pejorative nuance *The Oxford English Dictionary. A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (3rd edition in 1978) informs about as it follows: "[The] name given by Europeans in India and China to a native hired labourer, normally as cheap labourers" (960). The basis for the racist nuance *coolie* was then strengthened in the UK and the USA. In this sense, even one cricket round receives the name *kuli*. Obviously, the round refers to a mistake in the game.

On the other hand, *coolitude* is used as a synonym of *creolisation*, responding to the blend of cultures. In this sense, Carter and Torabullyan define *coolitude* as "an aesthetic blend, a kind of a complex culture, bringing to the imaginaries a part of the other. It calls to attention 'Indianness' in relation with 'otherness' as a premise which leads to a transcultural awareness. This is in keeping with the fundamental attitude of creolisation" (168).

Dharma. (Sa) In its strict Sanskrit roots, *dharma* defines the eternal and universal phenomenon and teaching norm which leads life to be unveiled and unveil itself under the notion of *pratitya samutpada**. Furthermore, *dharma*, in its Buddhist reconsideration, addresses a more complex meaning involving absolute condition for the object of *knowledge* (both physical and mental), the doctrinal path towards *nirvana**, the absolute principle towards the supreme honesty or the mental teaching for the physical and mental teaching. Nowadays, self help books promote the notion of *Chö*, which is the Tibetan translation of *dharma*, agglutinating both the Sanskrit and Buddhist understanding.

Dukawalla. (Sa) *Dukawalla* is the Sanskrit term with which the south Asian immigrants in East Africa referred to their trade occupancy and regency of the first South Asian diasporic shops. After WWII and their migration to UK and USA, *Dukawalla* will be used by Westerns as a derogatory term for Non-White commercial settlements.

Dukha. (Sa) Sanskrit root *dukh-* refers to the suffering of being ignorant, the lack of revelation and knowledge that characterise the *samsara** and the *pratitya samutpada**.

Gurudwara or gurdwara. (Pu) Name given to the Sikh temples which literally translates as *the door to the gurus*. The most famous is the Golden Gurudwara of Amristar, in the Punjab (North West of India). In the Sub-Continent, Sikh credo announces that a film starting with an image of a gurudwara guarantees the good luck of the movie. Gurinder Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice* (2004) opens with an image of the Golden Gurudwara in Amristar. Gurinder Chadha herself, in the Director's Commentary to the Special Edition DVD of the film explains the previous belief of "prosperity and economic success for a film" (1').

Hindutva. (Hi) *Hindutva* refers to the political actions and national thoughts undertaken for the creation of a free and independent Republic of India. The term is taken from the political pamphlet published by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in 1923, pamphlet entitled "Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?", where a cultural Sanskritisation of India, a total rupture with anything Muslim and the radicalisation of Indian Hindu were enhanced as the only guarantee to get independence from the British Empire.

Izzat. (Ur) Persian *izza* refers to the *glory* of a person. Thence, *izzat* (Urdu reconversion of Persian *izza*) stands for the notions of honour which are expected from a person in relation to, for instance, a good marriage or a proper attitude of life. Notions of *izzat* are, in determinate Muslim communities, rather strict with women and so domestic violence is normally defined as *izzat abuse* o *izzat- crime*

Kala pani. (Sa) The Brahmanical prejudice against crossing the *kala pani* (Sanskrit for *black water*, the ocean) because the Ancient peoples in the Sub-Continent (pre-Aryan invasion) considered seagoing a sort of recklessness only produced by greed. As A.V. Kumar Babu points out, the Inscription of Ganapatideva in the Motupalli Pillar illustrates the attitude towards the Kala Pani, "Foreigners who have incurred the great risk of a sea voyage with the thought that wealth is more valuable than life" (188).

Karma. (Sa) *Karma* means, from its literal Sanskrit translation, *act*. Then, *karma* is the universal principal which binds everything to the principle of interdependent causality. *Orientalist* rewritings of positive or negative *karma* (colloquially understood as good or bad *vibs*) come from the idea that all the beings can have a good or bad *karma* in the ever-existent rewritings involved to the *samsara**.

Lagaan. (Hi and Ur). *Lagaan* refers to the percentage of the harvest or money obtained through it that, as a form of tax or revenue, must be handed to the owner of the land where the production takes place. In British colonial times it was normally double, and the agricultural workers had to provide revenues both for the South Asian chief of the land and the British administration.

Masala. (Pu) The *masala* is a Punjabi cooking sauce, made out of many different species to obtain a hot and spicy flavour. Beyond this, and within the Hindi Popular Cinema commercial market, a Masala is a type of commercial film in Hindi which combines long and spectacular action scenes with comedy moments and an archetypical love story.

Moksha. (Sa) Sanskrit literal reference for *release* and *liberation. Moksha* is attained throughout *nirvana** and it conveys break with the eternal cycle of causal re-births bound to the *samsara**.

Nirvana. (Sa) The literal translation of *nirvana* within its roots is that of *ultimate revelation*. In these regards, *nirvana* takes place when the human, animal or physical being realizes about the conditioned existence of the *pratitya samutpada** and the *samsara**. Likewise, the awareness of *nirvana* leads to the final liberation from both the *pratitya samutpada* and the *samsara*, the final illumination (*buddh-*) and liberation from all *dukha**.

Pratitya samutpada. (Pa and Sa) The Buddhist consideration of human experience as interconnected with everything that surrounds reality. *Human existence* understood as an agglutination of every aspect of *life,* the mutual interdependence of *everything* as the base for the conditioned origin of *existence*.

Samsara. (Sa) Sanskrit *samsara* is normally translated into *existence*, a simplification of the term within mere philosophical or religious terms. Nevertheless, we must remember that it is very difficult to find, in the South Asian context an only philosophical or religious doctrine but a mixture of both. Thence, I enclose Ramón N. Prats's definition for *samsara*, because I believe that his words summarise with clear exactitude and amplitude of understanding scope the notion of *samsara*,

> *Samsara* is the never-ending migratory cycle of the innumerable existences – human, animal, divine… – to which all beings have their karma condemned to; a condition which leads the instinctive and psychological tendencies to be re-born or reincarnated in a determinate condition or predisposition (my translation, 341).

Sangeeta. (Be) Sangeeta refers to the popular performance that joined music and drama in the centre of the villages and cities of the Bengal Province. It normally consisted on a dramatisation of religious or folkloric texts by a figure similar to the well-known African griot.

Satyagraha. (Sa) Gandhi adopted the *satyagraha* as his main emblem. It consisted on the devotion to the truth, based on a pluri-religious understanding and a civilising appreciation of the human

existence. The *satyagraha* also involved the no-violence principles that defined Gandhi's active but peaceful revolution.

Sikhism. (Pa *sikkha* and Sa *sisya*) Sikhism is the fourth religion in the Sub-Continent although it is one of the most visible in the South Asian Diaspora, as *Encyclopedia Brittanica* positions Sikhism as "the fifth organised religion in the world" (284). It was born in the fifteenth century by Guru Nanak referring to the condition of disciple (from Pali *sikkha*) and instruction (from Sanskrit *sisya*). It emerged as a devotional scission from brahmanical devotion, therefore rejecting the Brahmin hegemony over the ritual and caste system. Guru Nanak first refused this hegemonic structure by pointing at how he had been educated in both Hindu and Muslim belief but that none of them were true but the core bound to both. In his own words, as quoted by *Brittanica* "There is no Hindu, there is no Mussulman, there is only a God of many names and an only reality [called *om* as taken from the Aryan Vedas], accessible through the repetition of his name, the hymns of praise and meditation; all the rest is illusion (*maya*)" (281). Sikhism therefore was a reaction against the Hindu sectarian social differentiation.

During the British occupancy in the Sub-Continent, Sikhs were granted with many privileges that ensured the English control over the Punjabi region. After 1947 Partition, there was a movement that claimed at creating a Sikh nation, Khalistan, in the area around Amristar. The radicalisation of this movement ended up with the assassination of India Prime Minister's Indira Gandhi in October 1984.

Sramana. (Sa) The Sanskrit *sram** relates to *performing, exerting and labouring*. Furthermore, the *sramanas* were those who performed their own doctrinal knowledge. Siddharta Gautama (the *Buddha**) and Mahavira (founder of Jainism) were the first *sramanas*, who denounced and defis the revealed knowledge (*apauruseya**) of the Brahmanical doctrines.

Tarikh-i-hind. (Pe) The decimal system transmitted by the Arab civilisation throughout Asia, Africa and Europe has its roots in the Punjab and was referred as *tarikh-i-hind,* the system therefore referring to the valley of the Hindu Valley.

Varnas. (Sa) The structure of work in the Aryan Society of the Sub-Continent had, as read and illustrated in the *Rig Veda*, a four-fold possibility: The *Brahmans*, the *Kshatryas*, the *Vaishiyas* and the *Shudras*. As read in the *Rig Veda*,

> When gods prepared the sacrifice with Purusha as their offering /its oil was spring, the holy gift was autumn, summer was the wood/ When they divided Purusha how many portions did they make? What do they call his mouth, his arms? What do they call his tights and feet? [...] The

> Brahman was his mouth, of both arms was the Rajanya (Kshatrya) made/His tights became the Vaishiya, from his feet the Shudra was produced (xi, 90).

This labour division was later enhanced by the British dominion to create the notion of chaste (which, in Sanskrit has a different word, *jati* that refers to the hierarchical structure of society) and strengthen the social inequalities among the different groups. The *varnas* (Sanskrit word for colour) referred the four colours which characterised the clothes of each of the categories. Although each province/kingdom had its own *varnas* system, we can say that the common roles were as following: the Brahmans transmitted the *Vedas* to the society an their true Aryan status was very far from the economic subtlety and refinement described and praised by the British, they survived through donatives, and sometimes the Brahmanical condition was that of "hunger and shrugs" (my translation, Agud 24). Furthermore, the *Kshatriyas* agglutinated the governants and army officers, the *Vaishiyas* were merchants, artisans and cultivators while the *shudras* were farmers and ploughmen. The *pariahs* or *dalits* (commonly known as *untouchables*) were out of any *varna*, outcasts, doing the contaminating works (butchery, cleaning of dead animals, assassins).

Yoga. (Sa) Sanskrit word for *control*. Hence, *yoga* is the collection of activities which enable the mental, physical, sensitive, spiritual and energetic control of one's self to overcome and resist the *dukha** involved to the *pratitya samutpada** and the *samsara**.

Mira Nair's *Mississipi Masala* (1991)

"Can you imagine dumping Harry Patel for a black? [...] These modern ideas spread like a disease.
Better send her back to India, get some ideas and be back to find a decent suitor" (21').

Jay, Kinnu and Mina are an Indian family living in Greenwood, Mississippi (US). They used to live in Uganda, where Jay worked as a barrister for the British Empire, although they were expelled from Kampala following General Idi Amin's *Indictment* of November 1972, where Amin fostered that "Africa should be for black Africans" (6'). Now in the US, Jay collaborates with the South Asian Community in the management of a family Motel business and helps her wife Kinnu run a liquor shop. Mina is their only daughter, a mid-twenties girl who is also employed at the same Motel business.

While Jay keeps on thinking that one day his family will return to Uganda and Kinnu dreams about Mina getting a promising marriage with Harry Patel (a successful man from the same South Asian community), Mina falls in love with Demetrius, an African American man who runs his own cleaning company. However, their interracial love-story is rejected by Mina's family and community in the fashion of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. It is here that both Mina and Demetrius must overcome the racial prejudices imposed both by the white US society and the South Asian community. It is in this context that Mina, as a mixed *masala** and an Indian woman who has never been to India, embraces the possibilities of the "Diaspora Space" (Brah 1996) to subvert the extra burden that, based on the existent gender discrimination, does not allow her to pursue an academic education and have a relationship with whomever she desires. At this crossroads, Mina and Demetrius' final getaway will illustrate that there is another alternative to the racial and gender intolerance, that of embracing an interracial possible identity, that of recognising the mixed *masala**.

SUMMARY
OF SELECTED FILMS

Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* (2001)

"I will be a writer of the world […] [and] my writing will give me happiness and a future of my own,
and I will be able to show the path to other women" (74').
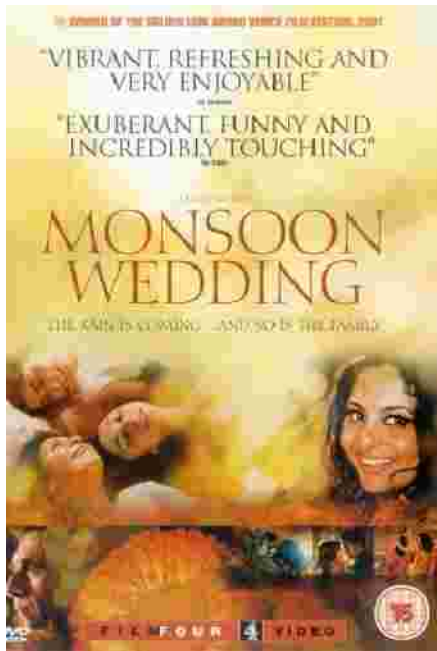
The Verma family gathers at Delhi for Aditi's arranged wedding to Hemant Rai, a very successful Punjabi doctor working in Houston-Texas (US). Nevertheless, while Mr and Mrs Verma welcome relatives from "every corner of the Continent, Australia, the UK and the UK" (4'), Aditi conceals her love affair with a famous TV married presenter. At the same time, Ria (Aditi's orphan cousin) wonders how to announce to the whole family that she wants to be the first woman of the family to attend university and study Creative Writing. This is the stage at which, as the Punjabi wedding celebrates its many rituals (combining Sikh, Hindu or Buddhist commemorations), both Aditi and Ria finally decide to speak for what they truly want.

On the one hand, Aditi discovers that her lover is not in love with her after an incident with the Police from where she obtains "all the necessary courage" to start living a life "of [herself] now that [her] marriage with Hemant is going to take place" (48'). Then, Aditi confesses to Hemant that she has been having an affair that is now finished but that she needs to tell him all about it to guarantee that she "will speak truth for what she really feels in the upcoming years" where she wants to "enjoy what you and the US can offer" (72'). On the other, Ria tells the whole family that she wants to pursue an academic education studying what she truly desires. Soon, Tej Puri (the successful uncle in the US everybody congratulates on arrival at the Verma's home) assumes the patronage of Ria's education. While all look happy, Ria feels miserable but assembles the necessary courage to denounce that Tej Puri abused of her when she was a child, something that he will be probably repeating with Aliya, the youngest cousin in the family. In this context of reconciliation, both Ria and Aditi challenge the previous patriarchal order and silence imposed by the family to embrace the hopeful prospects announced by the wedding celebrations. It is at this moment that the monsoon bursts out and irradiates a new opportunity for another life to flourish elsewhere.

Mira Nair's *The Namesake* (2006)

"I want to be free [that's why] […] I have decided to sell the house. I am going to do what your father and I had always planned. Six months in India and six months in the US. Then I can go and sing in Kolkata. That is if any guru wants a forty-five year old student. I want to be free" (89').


Mira Nair's *The Namesake* is the cinematographic adaptation of Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2002). It tells the story of Ashima who leaves Kolkata giving up her singing and academic education to fly to the US with Ashok Ganguli, an Indian physician working in New York, with whom her marriage has been arranged. Shortly afterwards, Ashima gives birth to Gogol and Sonia and devotes her life to bring them up in the US while Ashok teaches at college. Nevertheless, after Ashok unexpectedly dies and both her children have left home, Ashima renegotiates the path of her life under the influence of having had access to a job as a librarian at her neighbourhood's community library.

After these events, Ashima decides to sell the familiar detached house at New York because it had always been her and Ashok's dream "to go back to India and end up their days there […] living six months in India and six months in the US" (89'). By so doing, Ashima embraces the true nature of her name which, translated from Bengali, means *without frontiers*. She has now become a fully independent citizen of the world with the same prospects ahead as that laid upon both Gogol and Sonia, an existence caught up in the subverting promises of the Diaspora Space. By so doing, Ashima will resume her education back in India while enjoying her empowerment as a woman of the world who can choose a life of her own.

Gurinder Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993)

"*Hello* sisters, *namaste* [Hindi], *sat sri akal* [Punjabi], *salaam a lekum* [Arabic]. It's not often that we women get away from the patriarchal demands made on us in our daily lives, struggling between the double yoke of racism and sexism that we bear. This is your day" (my emphasis, 21').
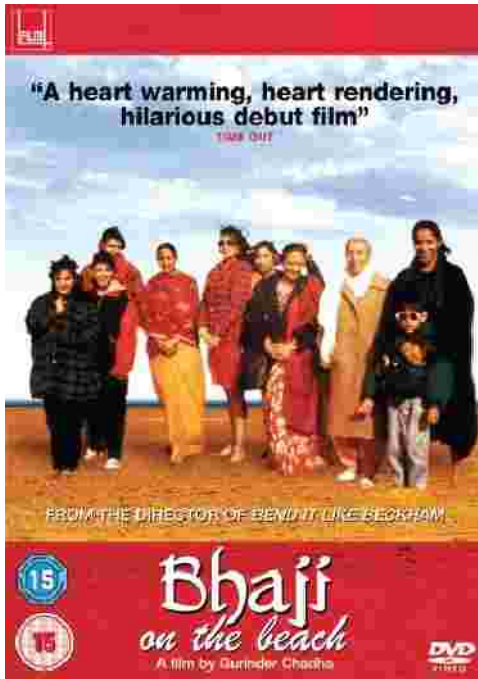
The Saheli Group (a non Governmental Organisation for South Asian migrant women settled in Southall, UK) has organised a trip to Blackpool to share a day-out and see the Dwivalli's lightings. Thus, women of different ages but with a common geographical and social background gather to enjoy the trip. Nevertheless, the ideal premise is not such, because the oldest aunties start to bully Ginder for her lack of honour (she has run away from her husband) and praise doctor-to-become Hashida (until they discover that she has a black boyfriend and she is pregnant).

However, as the day goes on and both Ginder and Hashida start to act as individuals who are not dependant on the community but as women who react against the aunties' judgements, the film describes the racist and gender yoke that all these women have to bear in England. Likewise, they are insulted by white British men and patronised by the men in the South Asian communities, while they have no room to speak for themselves, as illustrated in the character of Asha and her visions. But, as the day-trip finishes, they realise that together they are stronger and so they defy Ginder's husband (after they discover that he mistreats her) and smile at the possibilities that Hashida embraces for the community. As these events take place (alongside the group's visit to a male striptease club), it is their mutual understanding and association what will truly make them comprehend what a day out of their duties truly means.

Gurinder Chadha's *Bend It like Beckham* (2002)

"I played the best and I was happy because I wasn't lying to you or sneaking out […] There was a scout from America and he has offered me a place at a top university with a full scholarship and a chance to play football professionally. And I really want to go and if I can't tell you what I will like to do now I won't ever be happy" (89').

Jessminder Bhamra (Jess) dreams of becoming a footballer while she studies to pass her A Levels and plays in the park with the boys from her Sikh community in South-West London. Soon, she meets Jules, who invites her to play in an all-female team with the prospect of participating at an official tournament where there will be an American scout. Jess tells her parents, who disagree completely with the idea although they are too busy planning her sister Pinky's love-marriage with a Sikh man. At this stage, Jess lies to them and keeps on playing with the team until they reach the final, which collides in day and time with the main ceremony of her sister's wedding.

Nonetheless, Mr Bhamra finally takes Jess to the match in the middle of the ceremony because he recognises his own frustrations as he himself was a cricket player for England in East Africa but had to quit once in the UK. Jess's team wins and she is offered a full scholarship in America together with Jules. Even so, she must return to her duties as the bride's sister, those of comforting all guests. Yet, once the ceremony is over and all the family is at the Bhamra's living room elaborating plans for Jess wedding prospects, Jess gathers the necessary courage to tell the truth to all her family and inform them about what has also happened that day. To her own surprise, she soon encounters her father's support, who explains to the rest of the family that Jess has to accept the scholarship and all the possibilities that it opens for her as a woman of the world. It is at that moment that Jess starts to overcome her subaltern position and she bends, as paraphrasing the title, the still existent racist structure of contemporary UK as well as the unequal opportunities that for female footballers are sketched as opposed to those offered for men.

Gurinder Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice* (2004)

"Just imagine if Maya would live in UK. We could visit her all the time. It will hurt me to have my daughters far but they will earn more there, perhaps we should have drowned one or two once one Indian fellow went to America […] [The] girls who are born there, they have totally lost their roots. Ours are very traditional. In US all of them are outspoken and career orientated and some have even turned into a lesbian" (38').

Gurinder Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice* is the cinematographic adaptation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), now settled in India, the UK and the US. Lalita, Maya and Lakhi star as the Bakshi sisters who, correspondingly, fall in love with William Darcy, Balraj and Johnny Wickham. While the three sisters live in Amristar (sacred city for Sikhism sited in North of the Punjab), the three men come from *abroad*: William Darcy is a rich US entrepreneur of the hotel business about to open a new touristic complex in Goa (West coast of India), Balraj is a prominent Indian doctor in the UK and Johnny Wickham is a British resident, although born in the US, whose main activity is to "travel around the world" (34'). The six meet, following Austen's original story, at a wedding, although in this cinematographic adaptation the ceremony is placed in Amristar, where the characters rejoice together under the gaze of Mr and Mrs Bakshi, who are trying to arrange the marriage of their three daughters.

It is at this stage that the three couples start three love relationships that frustrate once the celebrations are over and the three men have to go back to their places of origin. However, and with a familiar journey to the US (with a stop-over in the UK) the three sisters will be able to resume their love affairs once they discover that they were under a patriarchal and racist burden that was imposed on their lives and that did not allow them to choose what they truly want to do with their own lives. At this moment, Lalita, Maya and Lakhi together recognise the familiar and cultural limitations that were placed on them for the fact of being women. And, significantly, they do so when they are to start their own lives along the three continents (Lalita in the US, Maya in the UK and Lakhi in India) and after having realised about the power that lies inherent to their mutual understanding of their possibilities within the dynamics of the contemporary world.

APPENDIX OF IMAGES

LIST OF IMAGES

IMAGE 1
Map of the South Asian Sub-Continent

IMAGE 2
Demographic Charts

IMAGE 3
Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva

IMAGE 4
Sarah Maple's *Haram* (2007) and other significant visual work

IMAGE 5
Paintings by the Singh Twins Sisters

IMAGE 6
Reproductions of a real Banyan Tree

IMAGE 7
A colonial reproduction of a Banyan Tree

IMAGE 8
Shree Swaminarayan Mandir, London (UK).
Photograph taken by Jorge Diego Sánchez

IMAGE 9
Hindu Goddess Saraswati
(Popular reproduction after colonial times)

IMAGE 10
Excerpts from Annu Palakunnathu Matthew's *Bollywood Satirized* (2004)

IMAGE 1
Map of the South Asian Sub-Continent

© *Vanguardia Dossier* 27 Abril/Junio 2008, p 23.

IMAGE 2
Demographic Charts

Language Diversity in India
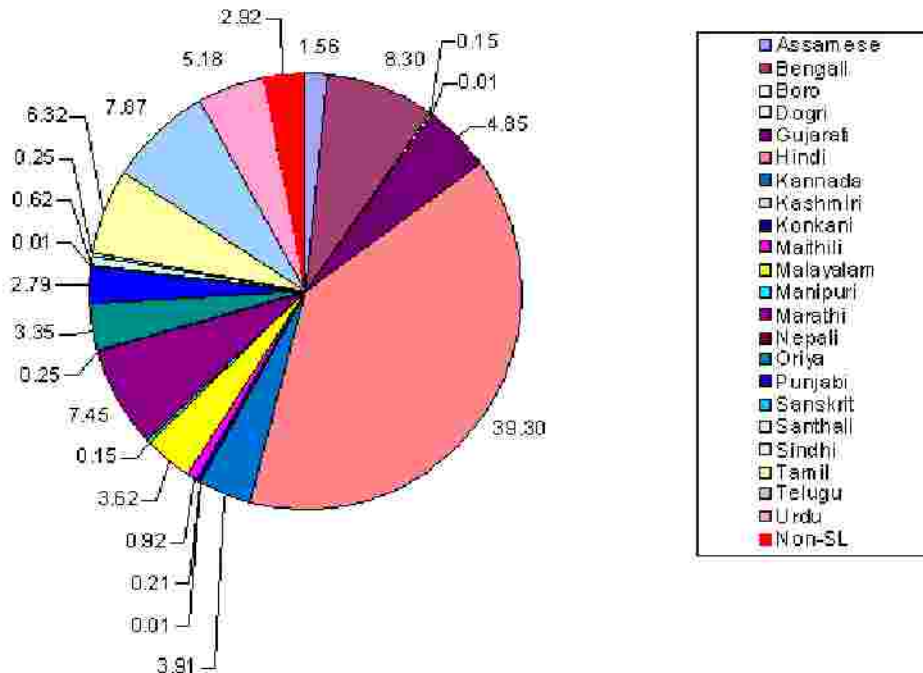
From "Linguistic Majority-Minority Relations in India" (Mallikarjun 8).

Religious diversity

Religious group	Population %	Growth (1991–2001)	Sex ratio (total)	Literacy (%)	Work participation (%)	Sex ratio (rural)	Sex ratio (urban)	Sex ratio (child)
Hindu	80.46%	20.3%	931	65.1%	40.4%	944	894	925
Muslim	13.43%	36.0%	936	59.1%	31.3%	953	907	950
Christian	2.34%	22.6%	1009	80.3%	39.7%	1001	1026	964
Sikh	1.87%	18.2%	893	69.4%	37.7%	895	886	786
Buddhist	0.77%	18.2%	953	72.7%	40.6%	958	944	942
Jain	0.41%	26.0%	940	94.1%	32.9%	937	941	870
Animist, others	0.65%	103.1%	992	47.0%	48.4%	995	966	976

Retrieved from www.wikipedia.org, "Religions in India", according to the information provided by the *2001 Census of India* undertaken by The Indian Census Office.

IMAGE 3
Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu
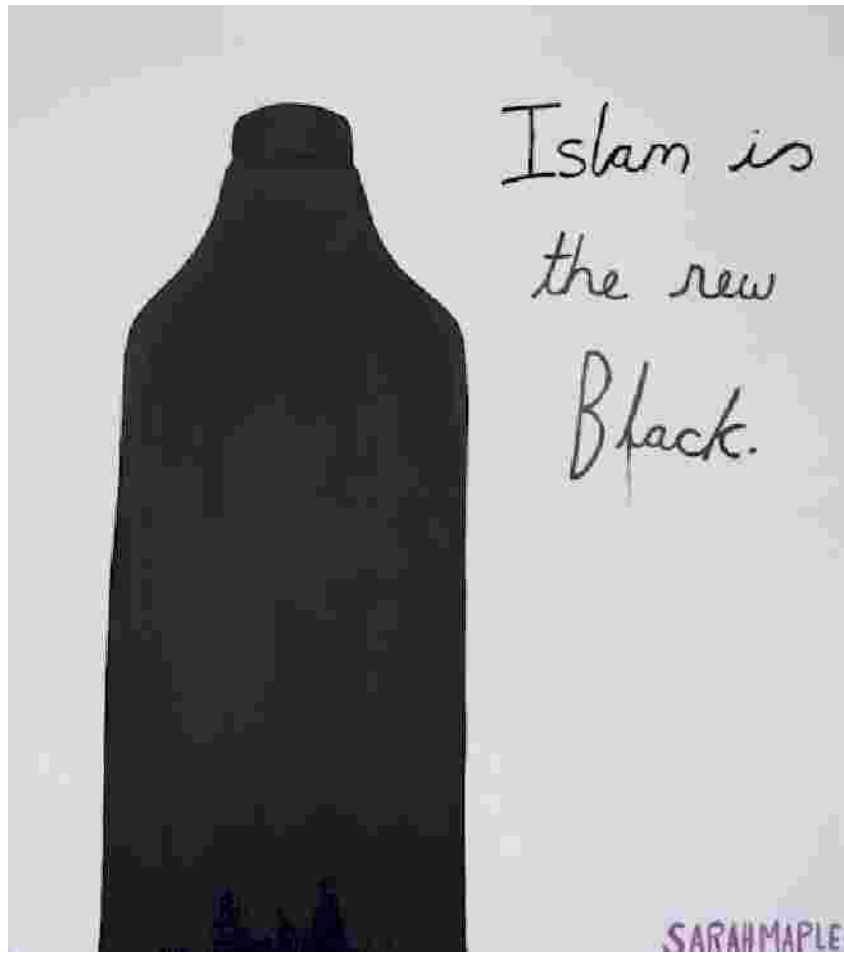**(Popular Representations)**

Templates taken from www.zazzle.com and www.hullquist.com.

IMAGE 4
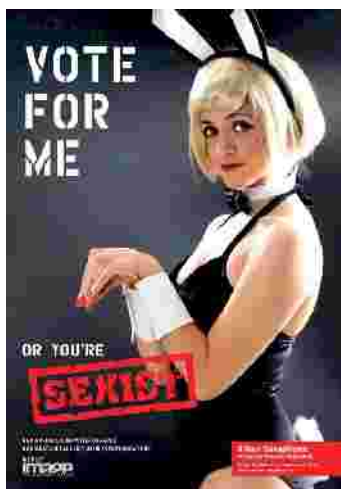**Sarah Maple's *Haram* (2007) and other significant visual work**
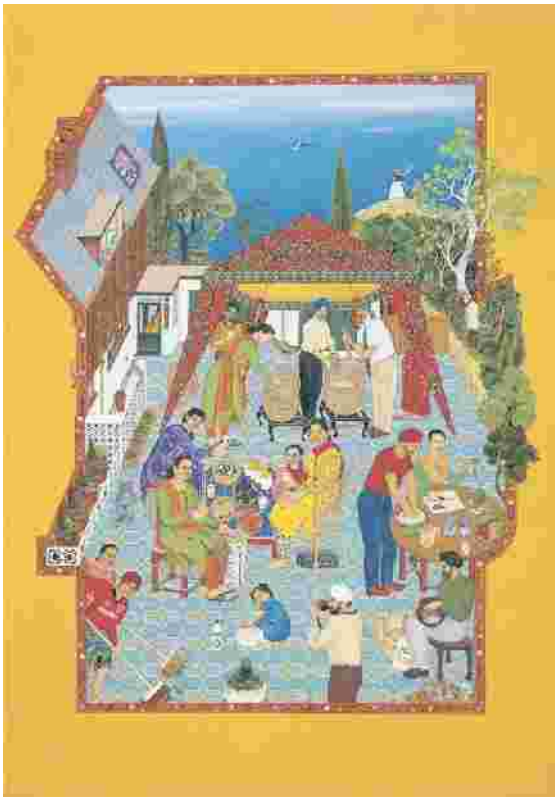

Haram (2007)
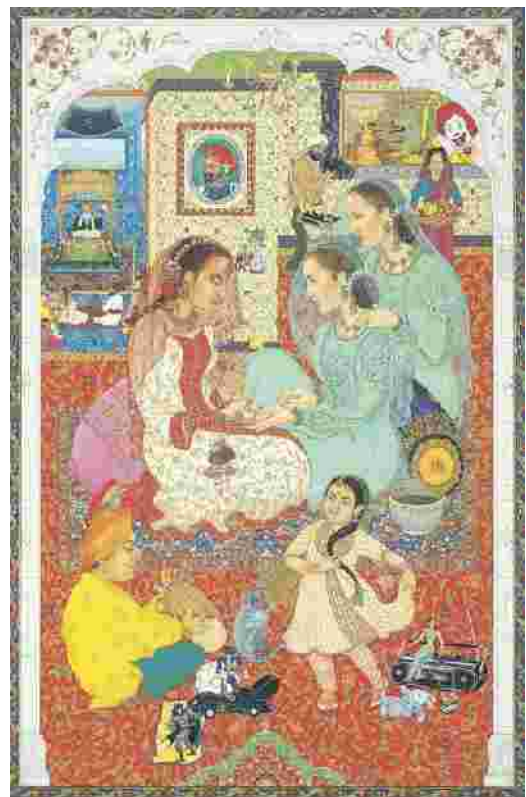
"Islam Is the New Black" (2006)

Passport (2006)

Vote for Me (2006)

Winner of Four Sensations Graduation Prize (2006),
promoted by Channel Four and Saatchi Gallery.
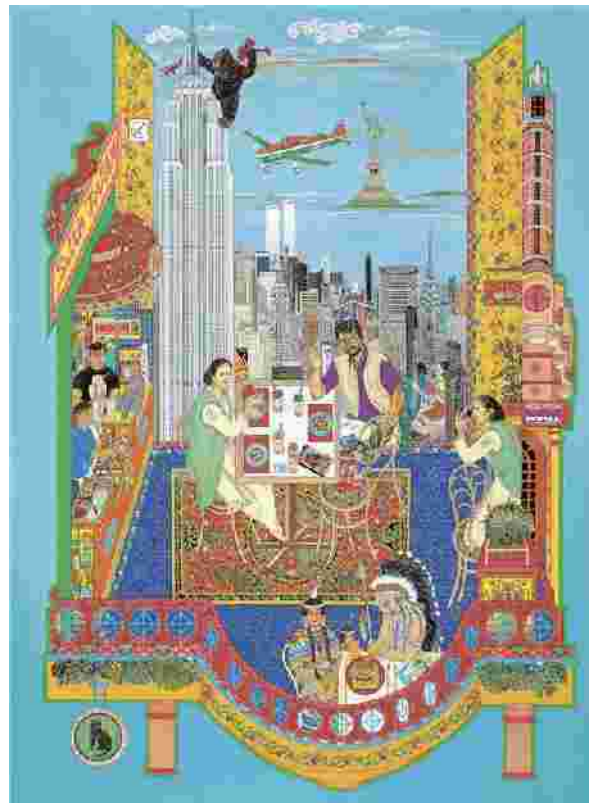
IMAGE 5
Paintings by the Singh Twins Sisters

All Hands on Deck (2004)

Nyrmla's Wedding (2004)

Some Like It Hot (2004)

Manhattan Hall (2006)

IMAGE 6
Reproductions of a real Banyan Tree

"Banyan tree at Botanical Gardens, Calcutta" (1880)
Source: www.ebay.com, auctioned in April 2008.

"Banyan Tree, Botanical Gardens, Calcutta. A photo in late 1800s"
Source: www.ebay.com, auctioned in April 2008.

IMAGE 7
A colonial reproduction of a Banyan Tree

"The Banyan Tree from a Sketch by Captain Sherwill"
Source: *The Illustrated London News*. August 30th, 1856.

IMAGE 8
Shree Swaminarayan Mandir, London (UK)

Photograph taken by Jorge Diego Sánchez
04/04/2007 15:26

IMAGE 9
Hindu Goddess Saraswati

(Popular reproduction after colonial times)

Taken from http://www.salagram.net

IMAGE 10
Excerpts from Annu Palakunnathu Matthew's
Bollywood Satirized **(2006)**

The Acid Thrower

Alien

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