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Racing Through Adolescence:
Becoming and Belonging in the Narratives of
Second Generation South Asian Girls

By
Mythili Rajiva, B.A., M.A.

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario

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Abstract

This dissertation argues that modern western adolescence is a crucial period in the making of racialized subjects. It contends that age is a relation of power that intersects with other social relations (i.e. gender, race, or class), to create certain types of marginalized selves. None of the existing literature on youth has provided an adequate framework for examining how everyday interactions position certain subjects as being outside the bounds of normative adolescence. In countless ways, subjects have to negotiate being “spoken into difference” by the gaze of the peer group. Despite a surface recognition of the importance of peer relations in adolescence, scholars have not explicitly theorized how racialized identities are formed during this developmental period. In part, this is because of a mistaken reliance on the *identity/difference* binary. This tired dualism constructs a fixed ontological relationship between self and other that takes for granted the existence of a fully formed subject who exists in relation to clearly identified Others. However, children and adolescents are in the process of identity formation and, thus, have a fluid and incomplete understanding of themselves and others. In modern western societies, adolescence, in particular, has been constructed and lived as a period where subjects are intensely concerned with carving out an identity, while at the same time trying to be part of peer culture. Therefore, one of the central contributions of this thesis is to reconceptualize *identity/difference*, as a more agonistic relationship between *becoming* someone and *belonging* somewhere. In order to explore how this interaction plays out in everyday contexts of difference-making, I constructed a framework of analysis that combined post-structural concepts of discourse and subject positioning with a notion of selfhood as a narrative or biographical project. As my case study, I chose to examine the adolescent experiences of second generation South Asian girls in Canada. This group offers a particularly rich vein of exploration for researchers interested in the complex links among race, gender, age and generation. Although there has been a great deal of feminist research on immigrant South Asian women in Canada, not enough work has been done on the experiences of non-immigrant women and girls, whose struggles to be ‘Canadian’ are compromised by mainstream racializing practices, as well as their gendered location in diasporic communities as the “bearers of culture”. Using feminist qualitative methods, I conducted 10 in-depth, unstructured interviews with subjects who had experienced or were currently experiencing adolescence in a Canadian cultural context. My analysis of the interviews offers critical insights into racialized girlhood in the following areas: the specific discourses through which girls are positioned as Other; the turning points or “boundary events” where this Othering happens; the strategies that girls use to handle being Othered; the role of family and community in the creation and maintenance of difference; and finally the significance of adolescent experiences of difference-making in terms of adult subjectivities. These insights reveal the tightly woven relationship between *becoming* and *belonging* that characterizes the process of racializing in adolescence.

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Table of Contents

<i>Abstract</i>	i
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ii
<i>Introduction</i>	1
 <i>Chapter One</i> <i>Betwixt and Between: Theorizing Adolescence in the Social Sciences</i>	
Introduction	13
Developmental Psychology	16
Sub-Cultural Theory	23
Feminist Theories	30
Cultural Studies	38
Education	49
Conclusion	62
 <i>Chapter Two</i> <i>"The Uncontrollable, the Incongruous and the Ambivalent": Social and Academic Narratives of Adolescence</i>	
Introduction	65
The Journey of the Hero: Pre-Modern Conceptions of Youth	67
Adolescence and the Rise of Industrial Capitalism	71
Stories for Boys: Adolescence in the Early to Mid 20th Century	76
The Consuming Desires of Post 1950s Youth	82
Postmodern, Postcolonial, Postfeminist – or just Postal? The Lunatic Subjectivities of Contemporary Adolescence	86
Conclusion: Becoming What? Inserting Adolescence into the Identity/Difference Debates	96

Chapter Three

Unsafe Passages: Becoming a Minority Girl in Adolescence

Introduction	102
Selfhood: A Framework	105
Language, Subjectivity and Difference:	
The Discursive Positioning of Minority Girls	113
Turning Points or Boundary Events in the Narration of Raced Girlhood	123
Living Inside the Gaze:	
Enemy I's/Eyes, Voiceovers and Forms of Strategic Otherness	131
Metanarratives of Otherness: Reflexivity in the Presentation of Self	145
Looking Back in Anger:	
Memory, Selfhood and the Haunting of Adolescence	151
Conclusion	160

Chapter Four

Race, Gender, Generation and Age: Narrating South Asianness in the Canadian Landscape

Introduction	163
South Asians Pioneers in Canada	167
Inserting Gender: the Story of South Asian Immigrant Women	180
Generation and the South Asian Diaspora	188
Age as a Relation of Power	208
Conclusion	222

Chapter Five

Methodology

Introduction	225
Combining Narrative with Feminist Methods of Research	227
The Research Design	231
The Interview Process	233
Transcription, Translation and the Space In-Between	253
Feminist Researcher or Born-Again Hindu?	
The Writer as Creator, Preserver and Destroyer	263
Conclusion	282

Chapter Six***Brown Girls, White Worlds: Adolescence and the Making of Racialized Selves***

Introduction	284
Entering the Realm of the Narrated Self:	
A Brief Biographical Sketch of the Subjects	285
The Role of Discourse in Subjects' Narratives	288
Boundary Events	320
Strategies of Accommodation, Denial and Resistance	350
Metanarratives of Otherness	368
The Importance of Memory: Remembering and Forgetting as Strategies of Self	375
Conclusion	396
 <i>Conclusion: Stories for Girls</i>	 398
 <i>Appendix A: Interview Prompts</i>	 407
 <i>Appendix B: Consent Form</i>	 408
 <i>Bibliography</i>	 410

Introduction

The main concern of this dissertation is to highlight the importance of age as a relation of power that intersects with other social relations such as race, gender, and class, to produce certain kinds of subjects. My central argument is that the periods of childhood and adolescence are directly implicated in the production of racialized subjectivities¹ in countries such as Canada, the United States and Britain. Using post-structuralist concepts of discourse and positioning in conjunction with feminist and narrative theory, I construct an analytical framework that allows me to ask the key question: how do lives “acquire race” in adolescence? More specifically, what is it about the narrative of modern adolescence in western societies that makes it a crucial turning point in the production of difference? As a case study, I chose to examine the processes through which second generation South Asian girls in Canada become racialized in adolescence: I conducted qualitative interviews with ten second generation girls and women and analyzed their narratives in order to gauge the importance of experiences of being singled out as different, at a time in their lives when ‘fitting in’ is so important.

¹ While I do use the term *race* at points throughout the dissertation, I want to emphasize that this is not a reification of *race* as a biological category of identity. I use it with the awareness that within western societies it is a socially constructed category, which comes out of historical and contemporary struggles among certain groups over economic, political and cultural resources. Furthermore, whenever possible I use the concept of *racialization* (and its attendant terms, *racializing*, *racism*, *racialized*), which conveys a more explicit recognition of how certain groups are constructed as distinct from the equally constructed norm of Whiteness. As Valverde (1992) points out, at various historical moments in western societies, Whiteness as a concept and set of discourses has excluded particular groups who are now considered to be white ‘ethnics’. Whiteness also continues to exclude subjects whose socio-economic status in North American societies is so low that despite their social location in the category ‘white’, they are implicitly racialized through such labels as ‘White Trash’ (See Bonnett, 1998; Hill, 1997; and Hartigan, 1997).

Adolescence and Difference

Although there has been a great deal of scholarship on race and identity, none of this work directly addresses how lives become raced through *developmentally* specific experiences of Othering. By this I mean to suggest that western childhood and adolescence need to be scrutinized more closely for the ways that they reproduce difference among subjects who are in the process of constructing selves. Even research that is specifically on non-adults assumes the *existence* of difference, rather than questioning how the construction of a self and the location of that self within a public context (peer culture) is crucial to the *making* of difference. Adolescence, in particular, has been constructed and lived as a critical turning point within the western developmental narrative of selfhood, as well as a 'life-stage' where the gaze of the peer group becomes all-consuming. In both academic and mainstream discourses, adolescence is perceived to be a period of intense physical, emotional and cognitive changes, where subjects are wrestling with two burning questions: 'who am I?' and 'where do I fit in?' The centrality of these existential concerns to the period of adolescence has been talked about *as nauseum* in the literature but, strangely, without any accompanying recognition of their significance in terms of the asymmetries of power in adolescent peer culture, which are based on, but not reducible to, relations of gender, race, class, sexuality and so on.

It is my contention that this myopia is sustained, in part, through an implicit reliance on the dualism of *identity/difference*, which seems to be the default position of many social theorists when looking at both local and global modes of interaction amongst individuals and groups. This formula may still be useful when analyzing social relations

in adult contexts, although, even there, I suspect that it has become a cliché that encourages theoretical shortcuts rather than pushing scholars to go beyond standard assumptions about the self and its relationship to others. I do, however, strongly assert that this pairing, which implicitly assumes the presence of a fixed identity existing in relation to other fixed identities, does not apply well to non-adults, who are in the process of both constructing their own identities, and making or identifying differences in other subjects. Therefore, a key contribution of my dissertation is to reconceptualize *identity/difference* as a more contingent and incomplete relationship between *becoming* someone and *belonging* somewhere. The main difference between the two dualisms is that the latter contains the post-structuralist recognition of identity as an agonistic process rather than a static object. However, I push this insight much further: by using the term *becoming*, I want to argue that the construction of modern western adolescence as a passage between childhood and adulthood, means that it is lived as a suspended mode of subjectivity. Adolescence is constructed and lived as a period of liminality or profound ontological uncertainty. Family, peer groups and mainstream culture assert the end of childhood, yet subjects are still not able to claim the rights, responsibilities and status of adulthood. Following Lesko (2001), they are in a kind of temporal imprisonment: they have a past to draw upon and a future to look forward to, but they do not really exist in the present. My argument is that this suspended mode of subjectivity (or *becoming*) directly informs (and is, in turn, informed by), the taken-for-granted social hierarchies (or struggles around *belonging*) that characterize modern western adolescence. These hierarchies are constructed through differences that are part of (but not reducible to), social relations of class, gender, race, etc.

The Case Study

My aim in this dissertation is to re-examine racializing practices in adolescence through this tightly knit relationship between *becoming* and *belonging*. In order to ground my discussion in 'real-life' experiences, I conducted 10 unstructured interviews with second generation South Asian girls and women across the ages of 16 to 34. The adolescent experiences of this group offer a particularly exciting area for a researcher for several reasons: to begin with, South Asian girls have been relatively invisible in mainstream stories of girlhood, nor have they had much of a presence in the literature on minority girls. Moreover, in the Canadian context, there is still not very much work available on the second generation and almost nothing on how they experience adolescence. Canadian feminist research on South Asian females has almost exclusively focused on immigrant women and although that is now changing, there is still a great deal that we do not know about second generation experiences. Generation is one of the key aspects of identity work for South Asian girls and women, because they have to negotiate a specific set of struggles around belonging that arise from their experiences of 'growing up' different. This means that they are neither part of their parents' past cultural landscapes, nor are they completely part of the 'Canadian' mainstream. Their complex negotiations in the latter context are mediated both by dominant constructions of belonging that conflate Canadianness with Whiteness, as well as familial/community demands that they maintain the 'heritage and traditions' of the ethnic group to which they belong.² This is especially so for females who are expected to be the bearers of culture

² Anthias (a 1998: 524) describes ethnicity as a "highly contested term" because, as she points out of the number of possible ways that this category can be mobilized: a strategic identification among "interest" groups jostling for a greater share of cultural, economic and political resources; an identity claim based on a belief in some primordial sense of shared origin; or as a positive reclamation of an identity that has been

in diasporic contexts.³ While researchers such as Handa (2003), Aujla (2000) and others have offered a point of entry into some of these questions, there is still a great deal that we do not know about experiences of *becoming* and *belonging* in the lives of second generation South Asian girls. My research makes an important empirical contribution to this growing body of knowledge.

The Framework of Analysis

Exploring how South Asian girls negotiate *becoming/belonging* also requires an explicit recognition of the 'everyday' as a meaningful terrain for the playing out of larger social inequalities. Although sociologists are aware of the individual lives that make up the 'society' under study, generally their focus remains on macro structures. Despite claims about how important it is to undermine the micro/macro distinction, the individual subject seems to disappear from the stories that many sociologists tell about the world. As Abrams points out, "individual action in general is absorbed into the field of

constructed as outside the cultural norms of a particular society. For the purposes of this research, I use ethnicity (and its related terms, ethnic, ethnicized and ethnicization), to talk about members of groups in western societies who have been constructed as culturally different. This can also mean that they have been constructed as racially different as well, although this does not necessarily always follow. However, in the case of South Asian girls, they have been both ethnicized (defined as culturally different from the norm), and racialized.

³ The concept of diaspora recognizes similarities of experience for members of certain ethnicized and racialized groups that cut across national borders, and create new identities, cultural forms and places of belonging. I use Anthias' (b 1998) discussion of diaspora as a concept that draws upon the notion of 'ethnic' (and in the case of certain groups, 'racial'), identity but goes beyond the nationally bounded nature of ethnicity by raising the importance of transnational processes, i.e. both forced and voluntary migration, re-settlement, the maintenance of strong ties to both countries 'of origin' and other places defined as 'homelands'. Here, the emphasis is more on the metaphoric rather than the territorial; according to Anthias, "the group need not be identified with a nation state but must constitute itself as a population category" (1998: 562). I would also argue that the group need not necessarily constitute itself as a distinct population to be considered a diaspora. If it is constituted by others as being a distinct population, then it can be considered a diasporic community. While I use the term to talk about shared experiences of racialization among South Asians in countries such as Canada, the United States, and Britain, I should point out that, as with ethnicity and racialization, the concept of diaspora and the identification of diasporic communities are a matter of some heated debate (see Anthias b 1998).

sociological knowledge, but only in a way that surrenders a crucial, and inviolably individual, area of experience and action, the inner life of meaning of particular individuals, to the biographer or the psychologist as somehow either inaccessible or irrelevant to sociology" (1982: 239). To this end, both feminists and narrative theorists have made a major contribution to theories of knowledge by their strong assertion of the experiential as an important way to understand the 'bigger picture'. As Stanley (1993: 214) points out, legitimizing the experiential as an important basis of knowledge requires recognizing that our knowledge of the world comes from our place in it as "inquiring...experiencing and therefore knowing subjects". In sharp contrast to masculinist scientism, which constructs 'knowers' through gendered, racialized and classed assumptions that place Knowledge out of the reach of 'ordinary people', both feminist and narrative theorists validate the everyday as an important site of negotiation, conflict, resistance and transformation.

One of the ways in which theorists approach the experiential is through the narrative or biographical realm. Taking up narrative as a concern in research involves recognizing the 'storied' nature of culture. Following Stanley (1993), our lives have beginnings, middles and endings; they are characterized by major events, turning points and so on. We tell stories to ourselves and others, about our experiences, who we are, who we were and where we belong in the world. As Stanley puts it, "narrative is a sinuously plastic form capable of subtlety as well as power. It has the hold that it does because its basic form reflects the symbiosis of time and the tides of our lives, and our perceptions of the impinging reality of these" (1993: 214). Moreover, if narrative is the mode through which we experience life, the auto/biographical is the form through which

we, as individuals, tell our stories. Subjects understand the world and their place in it by drawing upon a variety of familial, community and cultural narratives that shape how they perceive themselves and how they are perceived.

A large part of the analytic framework consists of concepts found in the literature on minority girls. However, I also add to this repertoire in a number of ways: I expand on Twine's concept of the "boundary event" (1996) (which she defines as turning points in girls' awareness of their racial difference), by distinguishing the event from both the boundary *moment* (which I define as a more fluid or processual experience of difference-making), as well as boundary *work*, (the efforts made by family and community to create and sustain girls' awareness of their difference from western cultural norms). As another example, I build on Robinson and Ward's categories (1991), by identifying the strategies of accommodation, denial and resistance that girls use to deal with race; the latter include what I call 'voice-overs', stories that girls tell, which actively challenge or interrupt dominant cultural narratives of racial belonging. Finally, by examining the significance of adolescence in adult women's accounts, I identify how subjects use strategies of remembering and forgetting to deal with the memory of becoming Othered.

Contributions of the Research

As a feminist researcher, I strongly believe in the importance of the experiential; it is also my contention that for researchers interested in questions of race and racialization, the narrative realm is an invaluable resource that has not been fully mined. As Knowles argues, the lived experiences of race and racism are not reducible to their structural or systemic operations. Narratives of race add a much needed existential

dimension to the analysis of race. Examining how race is “acquired” and lived by subjects allows us to comprehend the effects of race and racism on peoples’ bodies and identities in ways that cannot be achieved by more abstract forms of analysis (1998: 48; 64).

There are other reasons why people’s stories about race need to be both *told*, as well as *listened to*: to begin with, on a day-to-day basis, people live with, experience and talk about race in ways that both sustain and undermine, more systemic forms of racism. For example, some of the subjects that I interviewed claimed that race was not present in their adolescent interactions. Yet I found that these subjects told stories about race even when they claimed that race wasn’t part of their stories, confirming Best’s argument that race is an “emergent” feature of talk: “language in its ordinary and situated uses, performs or produces the very actions or subjects it claims to simply describe.” (2003: 903). As Best points out, narratives about race do not simply describe race, they also produce, challenge and re-inscribe it in multiple ways. People do not ‘have’ race in some *a priori* fashion; instead, they are ‘actively raced’ as they interact in social contexts and draw upon the language of race to make sense of their surroundings.

Furthermore, one of my central aims in this dissertation is to provide a forum for ordinary people to tell stories about difference. To this end, I locate my research agenda in the political space occupied by theorists such as Frankenberg, Best and many others whose work I draw upon throughout the dissertation. Such narratives break the silences around race that mainstream cultural discourses impose on both dominant and marginalized subjects. Despite the presence of race in everyday conversation, it is not generally talked about in an honest and meaningful way. ‘Multicultural-speak’ in

countries such as Canada, Britain or the United States closes down space for talking openly about difference. Race becomes a dirty word that engenders accusations of reification and sometimes racism, even against those who are trying to establish an honest dialogue about race. For instance, Best (2003) describes trying to raise the issue of race with a participant, only to be accused of being a racist herself. Similarly, Frankenberg (1993), in her study of white women's perspectives on race, found that women with race privilege felt uncomfortable using the language of race, even when they held what might be considered racist views. Frankenberg describes struggling to find ways to talk about race that did not lead to her subjects becoming defensive or guilt-ridden. While people implicitly draw upon racial categories to talk about the world, for a researcher to ask directly about race is a transgressive act that unsettles the invisibility of racial hierarchies. Naming race raises the question of racial privilege and the painful spectre of racism for members of the dominant group. If silencing racialized subjects is an epistemically violent act, then it may be equally violent, but necessary, to respond by speaking openly about everyday experiences of race and racism to an audience that does not necessarily want to listen.

The insertion of race narratives into this dissertation is also a choice that reflects my concerns with the politics of empowerment through voice: one cannot underestimate the political importance of creating an arena for the silenced to speak, in a work that is about the effects of race and racism. For minority subjects, breaking the ban on talking about race allows them to articulate feelings that they have been discouraged, in subtle and not so subtle ways, from speaking about. To mention such feelings or the experiences that caused them, is to risk being considered 'ungrateful' and 'paranoid' by members of

the dominant culture. It is also to risk exposing what Giddens (1991) describes as the corrosive effects of humiliation on a subject's sense of self. There is still a great deal that we do not know about how girls negotiate being racialized, how they experience racism, and what existential implications these experiences might have in terms of developing a positive sense of self. However, judging from the narratives of Okano (1993), Woo (1993), Qureshi (1992) and others, the denigration of one's self through categories of race can be a traumatizing experience, with long term effects on a subject's ability to sustain a positive racial/ethnic identity. The internalized racism in some minority subjects' narratives cannot be dismissed lightly, since it suggests the presence of deeper psychic wounds. This dissertation highlights that a crucially important part of feminist and anti-racist praxis is to *listen* to girls speak about their painful struggles in a racialized society with, and against, the desire to "wear imaginary pale skin" (Ohye, 1999).

Chapter Outline

In chapter one, I do an extensive review of the major social science paradigms on youth and adolescence, in order to demonstrate that none of these approaches, by themselves, can accommodate my particular research agenda. Despite the important contributions of psychology, sub-cultural theory, feminist research, cultural studies, and education to the study of youth, there has not been enough explicit recognition of the constructedness of adolescence; that is, the racialized, gendered and classed assumptions embedded in the modern western narrative of adolescence, and how this narrative has been implicated both directly and indirectly in the production of difference.

Chapter two corrects this oversight, by drawing upon a diverse body of work that offers a more constructivist account of adolescence. Using the work of Cohen, Lesko, Griffin and others, I offer an outline of the changing conceptions of youth in western societies: from feudal times to early capitalism to the development of modern and postmodern discourses of adolescence. One of the significant contributions of this literature is its identification of racist and imperialist discourses at the turn of the century that constructed ideal adolescence as white, western, male, middle class and heterosexual. However, the critical literature on youth is also not able to fully accommodate my research agenda, because its focus on the broader social landscape overlooks the everyday workings of hegemonic discourses of adolescence. As a result, although I continue to rely upon many of the assumptions of the constructivist perspective on youth, I do not completely locate my research agenda in this framework.

Chapter three synthesizes aspects of all the above paradigms in order to construct a framework of analysis that can accommodate my research question. Using post-structuralist concepts of discourse and positioning alongside a narrative conception of selfhood, I mine the literature on minority girls for key moments where subjects negotiate the tensions between dominant conceptions of girlhood (which are raced, classed etc.), and their own projects of selfhood. I also try to identify some of the strategies that girls use to accommodate, resist or deny hegemonic narratives of adolescence. Finally, I point to the past as an important space of re-interpretation and re-making for racialized women.

Chapter four moves my general concern with race, adolescence and girlhood to the more specific focus of the thesis: second generation South Asian girls. In order to situate their experiences, I outline a general history of the South Asian diaspora in

Canada over the last century: the systemic and everyday racism that early pioneers experienced; the struggle for enfranchisement; the movement from Western Canada to Central Canada; the resurgence of anti-South Asian sentiment in the 1970s and 1980s; and the effects of a changing landscape of high tech, globalization and cultural fusion in the 1990s on 'Canadian' discourses of South Asianness.

Chapter five explains the methodology of the thesis. I outline the research design and then go on to discuss my method of analysis, a combination of feminist research methods and narrative methodology. I also discuss some of the dilemmas of doing fieldwork: questions of exploitation of the subject; the epistemological issues surrounding both transcription and analysis; and the problem of authorial control.

Chapter six uses the framework provided in chapter three to analyze the results of my interviews with ten second generation South Asian girls and women. Here I discuss some of my most significant findings on the role of adolescence in the making of difference: subjects' acceptance of dominant discourses of youth, and their attempts to negotiate their distance from these norms; the presence of intra-ethnic tensions that divide subjects along the lines of region, religion and country; the significance of race in terms of girls' friendship negotiations; the policing role of mothers, aunts and older female siblings that suggests strongly the existence of age-related hierarchies among *women* in South Asian families and communities; and the strategies of remembering and forgetting that both the girls and women used to deal with the memories of becoming racialized in adolescence.

Chapter I
Betwixt and Between: Theorizing Adolescence in the Social Sciences

Introduction

This dissertation examines how age as a relation of power intersects with other social relations such as race, gender and class to produce marginalized subjects. Social theory, for the most part, has not been particularly concerned with the role that age plays in the construction of subjectivity. A great deal of lip service is paid to the idea of the self-as-process, without unpacking its developmental implications. Literature that focuses on youth is marginalized within general debates on identity/subjectivity, which is still understood to be an adult concern. As a result, childhood and particularly adolescence have been seriously neglected by general social theory as a potentially important site for the making of particular kinds of subjects.

Part of what is at stake in the neglect of non-adult forms of subjectivity is the construction of the self as a static object. While adulthood is viewed as a relatively stable period, and a destination point for selfhood, adolescence in modern western societies is understood to be a phase in the 'life-cycle' characterized by huge physical, emotional and cognitive changes. The subject, while no longer part of the world of childhood, has not yet developed enough to enter the adult world of civil society and is, therefore, at a 'crossroads' in terms of social and self-identity. This view of adolescence - as a developmentally difficult and confusing period - has informed both popular and academic understandings of youth over the past hundred years. Even work that is specifically on non-adult identity tends to rely on the assumption that youth as a transitional stage of development.

Research on adolescence can be broken down roughly into five major paradigms: developmental psychology, sub-cultural theory, feminist/gender studies, cultural studies and education/pedagogy. Although much of the work on youth does occur in the disciplines of education and psychology, none of these paradigms is tied strictly to disciplinary boundaries. Furthermore, despite important theoretical differences, it is difficult to find research on adolescence that situates itself unambiguously in one or another approach. Most research tends to cut across these paradigms; such being the case, it is difficult to categorize particular theorists without reducing the scope of their work. In addition, while these paradigms are the most widely used, they do not necessarily accommodate all research on adolescence. For instance, popular culture texts that deal with adolescence and youth culture are not typically included in academic research, despite the fact that some of this work offers interesting and important insights.¹

Finally, although there have been significant developments in each of the paradigms, some of the basic premises rely on potentially outmoded notions of adolescence and youth culture. There is, therefore, a need to modernize approaches to a social phenomenon that has changed so radically over a period of time. As Fine and Mechling point out, one of the problems with understanding adolescence is people's tendency towards symbolic demography: responding to ideas and images acquired in a different social, historical context (1993: 120-146). This is, at least to some extent, reflected in academic theories, whose own historical specificities shape and delimit the

¹ See, for example, Mary Pipher. 1994. *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Lives of Adolescent Girls*, New York: Ballantine Books; Sara Shandler. 1999. (Ed.). *Ophelia Speaks: Adolescent Girls Write about Their Search for Self*. New York: Harper Perennial; Mike A. Males. 1999. *Framing Youth: 10 Myths about the Next Generation*, Munroe, Maine: Common Courage Press; Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards. 2000. *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future*. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux.

way in which adolescence has been perceived. For example, research in psychology still tends to rely implicitly on Erikson's life cycle model, which was itself informed by Stanley Hall's conception of youth as a universally experienced biological period characterized by emotional instability, sexual awakening etc. This romanticist notion of the adolescent self is pervasive even in contemporary psychology, which continues to reduce the experiences commonly associated with adolescence to developmental inevitabilities.² Similarly, cultural studies work has addressed some of the major blind spots found in the sub-cultural paradigm by pointing to the major effects of globalization on postmodern youth/popular culture, but recognition of the constructedness of adolescence (as a subject position and set of discourses), has not prevented many theorists in this area from relying on the very same clichéd understandings of youth.

Chapter one provides a fairly detailed outline of each of the above mentioned paradigms, by examining their historical roots and key contributions and by pointing to areas that need further development. My intention is to introduce and to evaluate some of the major theories and concepts relating to the study of adolescence in modern western society, a number of which will be informing the framework of analysis that I will be using in the thesis. A central part of my evaluation will be based on the ability of these paradigms to accommodate the three major concerns of this thesis:

² According to Gergen, our contemporary notions of self represent the triumph of a modernist vision of self over a romantic one: "...Cultural life in the twentieth century has been dominated by two major vocabularies of the self...a *romanticist* view...passion, soul, creativity and moral fiber...but since the rise of the *modernist* worldview...chief characteristics of the self reside, not in the domain of depth, but rather in our ability to reason – in our beliefs, opinions and conscious intentions" (1991: 6). What implications does this have, particularly in light of the gradual replacement (according to Gergen), of both these projects with the self of postmodernity (i.e. non-linear, multiple, surface and momentary)? And since adolescence has been constructed in romanticized terms, does it remain the primary romanticist counterpoint to both the modernist and postmodern versions of selfhood?

1) racialized/ethnicized difference, and its relationship to the period of adolescence 2) my argument that age is not simply a biological marker, but operates as a relation of power in modern western societies and 3) the use of the auto/biographical in order to understand larger social processes.

Developmental Psychology

The study of adolescence in the field of psychology is said to have begun formally in the early 1900s, with Stanley Hall's seminal work (1904), which described it as a period of *Sturm und Drang* (storm and stress).³ After Hall, the study of adolescence was continued by the well-known psychologist Jean Piaget, who focused on three stages of cognitive development: sensory-motor, concrete operations and formal-logical thinking (Danesi, 1994: 8-9); and the equally famous psychologist Erik Erikson, whose work on the phases of the life-cycle posited that human development occurred through temporally structured periods characterized by fixed emotional, biological and cognitive changes.⁴ According to Piaget, the major difference between childhood and adolescence is the shift from a simple perception of reality (*what is*) to the capacity for abstract thought (*what could be*) (Dulitt, 1979: 23). Children's cognitive skills are limited to what they can concretely perceive (things that can be seen, manipulated and clarified), but between the ages of 11 and 15, they go through a period where they begin to think about the range of possibilities available in terms of ideas, words, hypotheses and concepts (Mosher, 1979:

³ Hall's theory of recapitulation argues that human development is a socio-biological evolution, with infancy and adolescence being the animal and savage stages, respectively (Danesi, 1994: 7).

⁴ A developmental stage is defined as a distinct period in the life cycle, characterized by a specific set of behaviors, emotions, motives and abilities that occur concomitantly and form a coherent pattern (Shaffer, 1985: 41).

18). They are then ready to move into adulthood, which Piaget viewed as the achievement of “final equilibrium” in cognitive development (Dulitt, 1979: 21; Shaffer, 1985: 60-66).

Erikson's work, in particular, has come to be associated with the study of adolescence.⁵ According to him, ego development happens over a life span and can be divided into eight distinct stages, each of which is characterized by a set of internal and external conflicts that must be positively resolved if the subject is to develop properly (Travers et al, 1993: 94-104; Mosher, 1979: 134). Furthermore, Erikson argued that although ego identity⁶ is achieved in childhood, at adolescence this identity becomes destabilized and subjects start to suffer from self-doubt or “identity diffusion” (Erikson, 1979: 143-146). Adolescence (defined by Erikson as the period between 12 and 18), represents the most difficult stage of development, because if this doubt is not resolved satisfactorily, then subjects will continue to struggle with identity confusion past adolescence and into adulthood (Travers, 1993: 104). The period of adolescence is thus marked by identity struggles, role confusion, and conflict with family, as the subject - standing at the crossroads between childhood and adulthood - grapples with one overarching question: who am I? (Shaffer, 1985: 53). The key agent of socialization at

⁵ Erikson has been described as a neo-Freudian theorist, since much of his work draws upon Freud's articulation of such concepts as instinct, maturation, and the components of personality (the id, ego, and superego) (Shaffer, 1985: 46-50).

⁶ Erikson defined healthy ego identity as “...the accrued confidence that one's ability to maintain inner sameness and continuity... is matched by the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others. Thus, self-esteem, confirmed at the end of each major crisis, grows to be a conviction that one is learning effective steps towards a tangible future, that one is developing a defined personality within a social reality which one understands” (Erikson, 1979: 143).

this stage moves from the family to the peer group,⁷ whose validation and approval becomes of consuming importance to the subject:

To keep themselves together they temporarily over identify, to the point of apparent complete loss of identity, with the heroes of cliques and crowds. On the other hand, they become remarkably clannish, intolerant and cruel in their exclusion of others who are "different", in skin color or cultural background, in tastes and gifts and often in entirely petty aspects of dress and gesture arbitrarily selected as *the* signs of an in-grouper or out-grouper. It is important to understand...such intolerance as the necessary *defense against a sense of identity diffusion*, which is unavoidable at... [this] time of life" ((Erikson, 1979: 145-146).

Unlike Piaget, who focused on cognition, Erikson was interested in the emotional and the unconscious aspects of development; he saw adolescence as an emotionally fraught period where psychosocial changes intersected with physiological changes to produce the conflict, ambivalence and pain that we often associate with being young (Mosher, 1979: 135). Another important difference between the two was their view on the pre-determined or "natural" aspect of the respective stages. Piaget saw education as playing a central part in the cognitive development of the subject and suggested that this development could not properly occur without certain forms of support and encouragement (Kohlberg and Gilligan, 1979: 73). Erikson, on the other hand, argued that while external factors were important, ego development in its eight stages was pre-determined by inner laws of development that were triggered by age specific biological and mental changes (Mosher, 1979: 135).

Developmental psychology as a discipline has been profoundly shaped by the work of both Piaget and Erikson; in fact, a great deal of contemporary research still follows Erikson's view of adolescence as a period of identity confusion, over-dependence

⁷ A peer group is defined as "two or more persons who are operating at similar levels of behavioral complexity" (Shaffer, 1985: 673).

on peer approval and conflicts with the family. The following is taken from a recent book on the subject:

Adolescence is a...prolonged period, beginning with hormonal changes and ending with the transition to adult social roles, typically work. Adolescence is marked by a series of social transitions, including entry into middle/junior high school and differentiated school tasks, increasing use of peers as a critical reference group for exploration of social roles, exploration of opposite-sex relationships, and changing relations with parents and other adults...adolescence is also a time of pursuit of some universal goals of adolescence: mastery, social identity, and autonomy (Fagan and Wilkinson, 1998: 57).

Starting from the basic assumption that youth is a difficult and ambiguous period of identity-building that sometimes leads subjects into dangerous, unpleasant or painful situations, a great deal of youth research in psychology attempts to quantify and measure such things as self-esteem, potential drug use, risk factors in teen suicide, and so on. However this view narrows the range of adolescent problems and responses to them. Furthermore, such an approach does not explore the complexity of, and contradictions in, subjects' lives. The psychology literature that relies on this understanding of youth tends to fall into the trap of assuming that subjects have no agency and only respond in fairly mechanical ways to projects of socialization (see Bhattacharya, 1998; Chung and Pardeck, 1997; Dubois et al, 1998; Martinez and Dukes, 1997; Phinney et al, 1997). For example, research on ethnicity and healthy self-concept focuses on the effects of peer group pressure, school culture and parental demands without meaningfully exploring the responses made by the subjects in question. It relies heavily on quantitative data that are generated from scaled answers to statements such as the following: "I have as many close friends as I would like to have" (Dubois et al, 1998: 564), or "On the whole I am satisfied with myself" (Martinez and Dukes, 1997: 506). However, such data are useful only insofar as the answers can be coded and grouped to make general statements about

(ethnicized or racialized) identities. In such settings, there is little room to discover the day-to-day strategies subjects use to deal with structural and/or cultural demands on their identities.

In addition, the bulk of work coming out of this strand of psychology constructs youth through a model that highlights risk, violence and danger as central forces in the lives of subjects, whose loss of control is seen to derive primarily from the intense hormonal changes to which their bodies are subjected. Youth is reduced to its biology and pathologized to such an extent that basic questions of structure and agency are left unanswered.⁸ This pathologizing becomes a central concern when one realizes that both mainstream and academic notions of adolescence have been and still are, in large part, derived from psychology, which is seen as an authoritative voice on youth.⁹ If, as Rose points out, the “psy” sciences are heavily involved in the shaping of “selves” in modern society (Rose, 1996: 139), we need to take seriously the potential effects of a fairly dominant perspective in psychology that constructs young people as dangerous to both themselves and larger society.¹⁰

One reason for this view of adolescence as a “problem period” may be rooted in psychology’s overall approach to social issues: unlike other social science disciplines, a great deal of work in psychology still maintains a socio-biological framework, which

⁸ An informal word count of articles in psychology that deal with adolescence turns up a staggering number of social pathologies: teen anorexia, teen drug abuse, teen pregnancy, teen violence, teen smoking, teen depression and suicide. See for example Johnson and Roberts (1999), Bhattacharya (1998), Dryfoos (1998); Elliott et al, (1998).

⁹ A great deal of research on adolescence still comes out of psychology. See for example *The Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *Journal of Social Psychology*, *Adolescence*, *Developmental Psychology*, *Journal of Early Adolescence* and the *Annual Review of Psychology*.

¹⁰ That the discipline has been largely concerned with what Rose calls “the conduct of conduct” (Rose, 1996b: 114-122), and has strong ties to the fields of criminology, psychiatry and mental health, raises disturbing questions about the part that psychology has played in the construction of youth as a signifier for moral breakdown in society.

foregrounds the workings of the individual psyche and emphasizes the importance of physiological factors. In recent times, many social scientists have abandoned this perspective, viewing it as a naturalizing of human behavior that obscures the social context in which behavior occurs. The claims to universality implied in the rigid ascription of certain experiences and behaviors to bodies/subjects at certain developmental moments, has been proven false (see Dulit, 1979; Danesi, 1994). It has become increasingly difficult to argue cogently that the body is somehow immune to external social forces, that all human bodies can be categorized simply through such features as gender, and through developmental groupings such as child, youth, adult and so on. Taking a biologically determinist approach minimizes the importance of systemic issues such as class, race, gender or sexuality in subjects' lives. Often, in discussions of adolescent identity, psychologists who take this position do not directly address these larger concerns, or do so in a euphemistic fashion. By overlooking systemic factors, these psychologists may simply reaffirm a stereotype of youth as unstable, hormonally driven, and irrational, rather than recognizing that much of young people's behavior needs to be situated in the context of structural problems that go beyond the supposed 'tendency' of non-adults to ridicule, exclude or actively persecute those who are perceived as 'different' from their peers.¹¹

Finally, this strand of the "psy" paradigm creates an understanding of subjectivity as a purely individual process, where 'treatment' of one's problems occurs through a willing enrollment in normative discourses of "healthy selfhood" and a reliance on

¹¹ Note that Erikson's discussion of exclusionary teen behavior reduces racial or cultural intolerance among teens to a normal part of adolescent development, rather than recognizing its connections to larger social relations.

professionals who prescribe various forms of treatment such as therapy, medication and counseling, to deal with so-called biological causes of suffering. As Gergen points out, practitioners in the field of mental health tend to generate a “technical vocabulary of deficit” (Gergen, 1991: 14). As people come to see themselves and others through these terms, “...a spiraling cycle of enfeeblement is set into motion” (Gergen, 1991: 15). Rather than addressing structural relations of power and powerlessness, much psychological discourse continues to reduce social problems to individual problems of ‘coping’, and then offers itself as the locus of knowledge in terms of treating these problems.

Nevertheless, despite the above criticisms, work in psychology has made an important contribution to the area of youth studies, in large part, through its influence on other paradigms. For example, educational theory has been strongly influenced by developmental psychology; as well, feminist scholars have used psychology to explore the more individual aspects of adolescent girls’ subjectivities.¹² Most importantly, perhaps, the socio-biological assumptions of some psychological work, as specious as they may be, are a necessary reminder that we not dismiss the importance of the body and its changes during the period known as adolescence. One of the problems with much social theory on selfhood is its neglect of the subject’s embodied status over the period of a life-cycle. The developmental approach to age and adolescence highlights the necessity of recognizing that subjects are not simply “effects of discourse”, but that they exist in the world in bodies that have been constructed in particular ways.

¹² Feminist psychology has done a good job of modifying some of the problems associated with the dominant psychological paradigm of youth. See, for example, Gilligan (1993) on the links between psychology and resistance for girls; Beaumont’s discourse analysis of conversations between teen girls and their mothers (1995), and Ohye et al (1999), for a critique of feminist psychological work on girls that ignores the issue of ‘difference’.

Sub-Cultural Theory

One of the most widely used frameworks for understanding youth identity and behavior has been British sociologists' synthesis of American sociological thought, specifically Merton's theory of ritualism and innovation, theories of deviance and the Chicago school's paradigm of symbolic interactionism (Epstein, 1998: 7-8). American sociologists argued that the labeling of adolescents as deviant was the result of their adoption of certain cultural symbols of style and music, and their oppositional stance towards mainstream society. Members of the Birmingham Centre for Cultural Studies, although equally concerned with the construction of youth as a social problem in post-war British society, found that this paradigm did not fully account for the class-based origins of British youth cultures, nor did it properly address the role of the mass media and changing consumption patterns in society (Epstein, 1998: 7; Clarke et al, 1975: 9-21).¹³ They added a neo-Marxist twist, arguing that although delinquency results from the labeling process, working class youth were much more likely to be labeled as deviant because of their resistance to the hegemonic nature of class society.¹⁴ The intersection of class with age and generation became the focus of British sociological research on youth culture, and this position was rapidly adopted by many non-British sociologists of youth, so much so that contemporary sub-cultural theory takes as a given certain basic premises

¹³ See Clarke et al (1975: 28-33), for a more detailed discussion of American sociological theory on youth in the work of Cohen, Downes, and Cloward and Ohlin, and the limitations of this work in terms of explaining youth sub-cultures.

¹⁴ According to Epstein, "Hegemonic culture is created by those groups which possess the greatest power, weight and influence in a society, and whose powerful social position makes it possible to create a dominant culture" (Epstein, 1998: 9).

as set out by the Birmingham school.¹⁵ As Epstein points out, the Birmingham school had provided the first paradigm which the sociology of youth culture could call its own (Epstein, 1998: 7).

The central argument of the Birmingham theorists is that, in modern societies, the most important cleavage is social class and all cultural configurations will be mediated through class differences. Although dominant and subordinate classes will each have distinct cultures, the former will become the basis for a dominant ideology, while the latter remains an expression and contestation of marginalized status. Within this subordinate culture arise sub-cultures, "...smaller, more localized and differentiated structures, within one or other of the larger cultural networks". Sub-cultures must therefore be analyzed in relation both to their parent culture¹⁶ and to the larger hegemonic class culture. Theorists also argue that sub-cultures must be noticeably different from their parent culture, with a group coalescing around specific activities, values, material goods, territorial spaces and the adoption of certain symbols. Finally, they draw a distinction between sub-cultures that are permanent and regular features of a parent culture (for example, the culture of delinquency for working class boys), and sub-cultures that appear only at specific historical moments (i.e. the Mods, rocker, skinheads etc.) (Clarke et al, 1975: 12-14).

Youth sub-cultural researchers focus on the interaction of three factors - basic historical ideas, values and material expression – in order to understand the relationship

¹⁵ According to Clarke et al (1975: 49), what makes the experiences of youth unique is "...[that] youth encounters the problematic of its class culture in different sets of institutions and experiences from those of its parents...at crucially different points in its biographical career".

¹⁶ The term "parent culture" is confusing because it has nothing to do with youths' relationship to parents. Parent culture simply refers to the larger subordinate culture of which working class youth sub-cultures are a part (see Clarke et al, 1975: 13; Epstein, 1998: 9-10).

between cultural elements in a subculture and the meanings granted to objects and behavior (Epstein, 1998: 11).¹⁷ Scholars in this area explore the cultural significance of the symbols, practices and experiences of particular groups, whose marginalized identities, because of age and socio-economic status, position them in antagonistic relationship to both parent and mainstream cultures. Ultimately, however, it is argued that this antagonism or resistance does not have a major impact on larger societal structures in any long term and meaningful way, and is largely ineffectual:

The apparently oppositional stance of these subcultures... is interpreted and filtered through the dominant, or hegemonic, system of ideology and, as a result, is not a real threat to society, despite the day-to-day manifestations of such opposition, including delinquent or destructive activities... in this manner, resistance of the subculture is reduced to ritual. Rather than affirming the experiences of these young people, resistance itself becomes an end, thus becoming a mechanism in their alienation (Epstein, 1998: 11).

It is not an exaggeration to say that apart from developmental psychology, sub-cultural theory has been one of the most influential paradigms in research on youth and adolescence. And unlike psychology, the central concepts of sub-cultural theory have been social in nature (initially class and age; and in more recent work, gender, age, sexuality etc.). Birmingham theorists adopted a clear mandate to avoid what they saw as a widely held perspective in the media, academic research and elsewhere, which simultaneously pathologized, infantilized and idealized adolescents (Clarke et al, 1975: 9-21), thereby ignoring the structural factors implicated in the creation of youth culture.¹⁸

In addition, Birmingham theorists were concerned with the largely uncritical focus of

¹⁷ This is known as an homology. According to Epstein (1998:12): "...homologies are used to describe the symbolic links between a subculture's values and its lifestyle...[and]... allow the researcher to determine the extent to which particular aspects of a subculture parallel, or reflect, the overarching concerns, styles, and behaviors of the broader social group to which a particular subculture may belong".

¹⁸ According to Clarke et al (1975: 19-22), youths were portrayed in a host of contradictory ways, as "mindless barbarians", "rebel hipsters", "juvenile delinquents" and "the vanguard of social change".

various experts and non-experts on the spectacular elements of youth as illustrations of “a generation enslaved by a commercial machine” (Johnson 1964, cited in Clarke et al, 1975: 19). Instead, sub-cultural theorists viewed the spectacle of youth manifested through music, clothing, language and so on, as a “bricolage”,¹⁹ a borrowing of symbols from both the parent and dominant cultures, which are then transformed into statements of transgression and resistance:

This meant overcoming or negotiating, or even taking over in a positive way many of the negative meanings which, in the dominant cultural code attached to these things...the new meanings emerge because the ‘bits’ which had been borrowed or revived were brought together into a new and distinctive stylistic ensemble; but also because the symbolic objects – dress, appearance, language, ritual occasions, styles of interaction, music – were made to form a *unity* with the group’s relations, situation, experiences: the crystallization in an expressive form, which defined the group’s public identity. The symbolic aspects cannot, then, be separated from the structure, experiences, activities and outlook of the groups as social formations. Sub-cultural style is based on the infra-structure of group relations, activities and contexts (Clarke et al, 1975: 56).

The Birmingham school’s main contribution has been its success in bringing adolescence and youth culture into the social science spotlight. Partly because of psychology’s dominance in the area of youth, and partly because of the general focus on adult civil society, disciplines like sociology have been noticeably unconcerned with issues that fall outside the frame of the rational autonomous (adult) subject of modernity. British sub-cultural theory problematized this focus by demonstrating how youth culture is deeply embedded in the social struggles and inequalities of a modern class society.

Nevertheless, there are still important issues that are not addressed in the sub-cultural framework. For one thing, theorists only focused on particular sub-cultural formations where the spectacle of youthful alienation was fused with a class identity.

¹⁹ Clarke describes *bricolage* as the “re-ordering and recontextualization of objects to communicate fresh meanings” (1975: 177).

They themselves acknowledged that they were not attempting to make a grand historical claim about the position of working class youth as a whole, even within that particular period (Clarke et al, 1975: 16), nor was it their intention to focus on the day-to-day experiences of young people, many of whom did not belong to sub-cultures (1975: 16). But this has left a lot unexplained about the everyday lives of adolescents (Barker, 2000: 318), since the acknowledgement of these limitations did not significantly alter how many theorists subsequently employed the sub-cultural framework. In addition, this model shaped the social and academic understanding of youth in a way not dissimilar to psychology's 'troubled teen' outlook. Work in the sub-cultural field over the last 30 years has itself focused on the spectacular elements of adolescence and, in doing so, has reified a notion of adolescents as oddities whose behavior still stands apart from the larger world of civil society. Researchers offer interesting and insightful analyses of particular youth cultures, but, ultimately, their view of youth cultures reduces adolescence to a period of rebellion, where subjects express their alienated identities through a politics of style; as a result, their resistance is of little substantive importance. This position reflects a larger paradox built into the sub-cultural framework: theorists argue against the objectification of youth culture as a spectacle without meaning or substance; however they themselves only focus on the spectacular as a way to understand youth. As a result they are caught between arguing that the spectacle of youth holds important meanings for the understanding of class relations in society and, at the same time, concluding that this spectacle, because it becomes an end in itself (resistance through dress, music etc.), is little more than ritualistic, and does not ultimately alter the hegemony of the dominant classes.

Furthermore, although the sub-cultural model is still widely used by researchers in the area of youth studies, its basic premises are potentially outmoded, given the rise of a postmodern aesthetic.²⁰ Mainstream culture has become a culture of surfaces, concerned primarily with image, style and the appearance or form of things rather than the substance. According to social theorists such as Giddens (1991), lifestyle choices have become the new political terrain: post-industrial societies are characterized by rampant consumerism, fueled by pervasive media images of the ideal self, the ideal family, the ideal community and the ideal society. In such a context, youth culture's apparent obsession with ritual and style may be no longer distinguishable from either its parent culture or larger class culture. If reducing resistance to ritual is a hallmark of youth, then mainstream western culture seems to have become one all-encompassing youth culture.²¹

A final criticism relates to the narrow focus of the sub-cultural approach: its emphasis on the dual importance of age/generation and class did not allow for the equal importance of other social relations of power, such as race or gender, in determining the identity struggles that create youth sub-cultures.²² This became highly problematic for those researchers who were interested in exploring aspects of youth culture that were not

²⁰ As I will discuss later on in the chapter, the interdisciplinary field of cultural studies (which examines youth and popular culture), grew out of a dissatisfaction on the part of some Birmingham scholars, with some of the main arguments of the sub-cultural model.

²¹ And if adolescents have traditionally used dress, music and language to express their struggles with adult society, then the conflation of youth culture with mainstream culture (in a society desperately trying to avoid aging), is a further alienation of youth from spaces that offered them temporary relief from the constant demands of an adult world (Kierney, 1998; Giroux, 1998; Epstein, 1998).

²² Although many theorists have managed to incorporate these factors, while still using the sub-cultural lens, there is still the basic underlying assumption that class is what primarily structures group and individual behavior.

simply class determined.²³ For example, sub-cultural research was, for a long time, interested only in the culture of white, working class males, and as a result, little was known about how working class girls responded to the difficulties of being young and marginalized in a class society. According to McRobbie and Garber (1975: 209), the absence of girls from the general literature on youth was striking: when they did appear - fleetingly - in accounts, it was through stereotypes that reinforced the images of women in a patriarchal society. McRobbie and Garber's criticism of male researchers such as T.R. Fyvel and Paul Willis stemmed from a concern over why and how girls come to be ignored or dismissed contemptuously by researchers, perhaps mirroring a larger dismissal within the sub-cultures they occupy so peripherally:

...Fyvel's reference, in his study of Teddy Boys, to "dumb, passive teenage girls"...Willis' comment... "...they tended to be scruffier and less attractive than the attached girls"...is this, simply, a typical and dismissive treatment of girls reflecting the natural rapport between a masculine researcher and his male respondents? Or is it that the researcher...finds it difficult not to take the boys' attitudes to and evaluation of the girls seriously, reflect it in his descriptive language and even adopt it as a perspective himself, within the context of the research situation? (McRobbie and Garber, 1975: 209-210).

Feminist researchers in the area of sub-cultural theory have, in the last twenty years, done much to address the absence of gender analysis in studies of youth culture. Researchers such as McRobbie, Sharpe, Currie and others have studied the ways in which girls respond to being young and female in class societies and the sub-cultural spaces they have created, sometimes in response to the peripheral status girls generally occupy in male dominated sub-cultures. For instance, Best's book *Prom Night: Youth, School and Popular Culture* uses a sub-cultural framework, but broadens the scope to examine

²³ See for example, the work of Dick Hebdige (*Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. London and New York: Routledge, 1979), which brought the issue of race into the equation.

the gendered, classed and racialized nature of the American Prom.²⁴ Although Best does interview boys about their understanding of Proms, she is mainly concerned with how girls negotiate the feminized nature of Prom night in its (white, middle class, heterosexual) discourses of romance and beauty. Much of this work, which has gone far towards addressing the narrow class-based nature of the Birmingham's school's early efforts, has been heavily influenced by the development of a third framework for understanding youth, one which focused almost exclusively on gender and the construction of femininity for adolescent girls.

Feminist Theories

Over the last twenty years, theorists such as Carol Gilligan and Lyn Mikel Brown have revolutionized the study of adolescence by drawing attention to a hitherto neglected area of youth culture: the spaces of adolescent girls. By combining a developmental approach with a feminist analysis, researchers argued that adolescence was a highly gendered period of development that negatively affected girls, who ended up crushed beneath the weight of societal expectations. According to this body of research, girls entering adolescence give over their versions of reality to those who have the power to name and/or reconfigure their experiences (Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 95). While adolescent boys learn to occupy spaces that prevent relationships of intimacy with other boys (Way, 1997), girls – positioned within discourses of caring, helpfulness and

²⁴ Best's work is a good example of research that draws upon several of the above identified paradigms. Although she describes her work as influenced by the Birmingham school, she also draws upon education theory and feminist research, as well as the postmodern offspring of the Birmingham school, cultural studies.

selflessness that actively produce and channel their desires in that direction (Henriques, 1984: 223) – become so relationally defined that they are frighteningly dependent on external approval from friends, teachers, family etc. This silencing has profound implications for their sense of self: emotions such as anger become embedded in discourses of disruption and aggressiveness that are not part of ideals of femininity (Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 97). As Rotheram-Borus argues, interviews with girls suggest that losing oneself and one's boundaries in a group identity, and becoming passive, tend to be common features of most girls' identity building process (1996: 50).

Interestingly enough, girls do engage in struggles over power within their social groups but their methods differ quite significantly from those of boys, who confront gender scripts that equate masculinity with competition, aggression, assertiveness etc. One of the major contributions of the feminist literature has been its revelation of the diverse ways in which girls handle forms of gender and age subordination. Barred from expressing anger or competition openly, girls resort to indirect forms to express themselves (Lees, 1993; Gilligan, 1993; Hey, 1997; Brown, 1998; Brown, Way and Duff, 1999), often through what Brown describes as "relational aggression", which she defines as "...the threat of withdrawal of affiliation for the purposes of controlling the behavior of others" (Brown, 1998: 14):

Don Merton, exploring the 'meaning of meanness' among a junior high school clique of popular girls dubbed 'the dirty dozen' by their teachers, described girls' struggles with popularity, friendship and isolation. Meanness, he explained, was an effective strategy for maintaining popularity for these girls in the face of expectations to be super nice. Girls who were not nice to everyone all the time risked losing their popularity by being called stuck-up, but girls who transformed the support and power of their popular position into meanness side-stepped such accusations or feelings of envy. Their reputation for meanness acted

as a deterrent to both competition *and* suggestions that one was stuck-up. Thus, in a social context in which direct expressions of feelings and open competition among girls was unacceptable, meanness became an effective [discourse] (Brown, 1998: 14).

Conflict erupts among girls like lightning – something has happened, someone has stepped over a line. Rejection – the thin, dark line of rejection: not you, we – whoever “we” are – do not want to be with you...what she is trying to understand is the difference between the surface banter of teasing, putting people down that went on among her friends...and being “really mean” or cruel (Gilligan, 1993: 145-148).

Girls do not learn to express anger directly...they punish by calling a girl on the phone to say there’s a party and she’s not invited. They punish by walking up to girls with insults about their clothes or bodies (Pipher, 1994: 68).

This type of ethnographic research has opened youth theorists’ eyes in regard to interactions that were previously considered apolitical: girls’ relationships with parents, teachers, boys and other girls. At the same time, many of the assumptions about the patriarchal silencing of girls have been, over time, challenged by more post-structural researchers such as Hey, Proweller and Gentz, who argue that adolescent girls do not passively accept cultural scripts of femininity or simply abandon their sense of self for others, nor do they always deal with conflict and power struggles through passive-aggressive methods. Rather than an overly deterministic account that constructs girls as permanently barred from reconfiguring the field of power relations (because of the very nature of their status within it), post-structuralist feminists combine developmental insights about the changing bodies and minds of adolescents, with gender analyses that attempt to theorize the creative and emancipatory spaces that girls carve out for themselves and others.

In addition, theorists also contend that while gender and age are fundamentally linked in girls’ struggles with identity formation, other relations of power such as race,

ethnicity and class play a crucial role in their social contexts. Researchers such as Way (1995), Proweller (1998) or Ohye (1999) critique earlier work on girls for what they see as a blind spot also found in sub-cultural work on boys, where the majority of subcultures being studied were white.²⁵ For example, the assumption that girls do not express anger in the same fashion as boys has been challenged by Niobe Way, who suggests that for certain ethno-racial groups (i.e. African-American or Latino), speaking up and being 'strong' is an important part of girls' identities, and one that is encouraged, at least to some extent by family and peers (Way, 1995). 'Not letting people step all over you' becomes a discourse through which these girls distinguish themselves from the dominant, white middle class norm of feminine behavior.²⁶ Another example may be found in Barker's work on racialized girls' interpretations of cultural texts. Barker found that the girls he interviewed had strong opinions about the characterization of ethnicity and race on a popular British soap opera. Rather than passively accepting the images of racialized men and women being offered to them, girls challenged these subject positions and drew upon their own store of experiential and embodied knowledge to try to understand what ideological messages were being given and why. The following is a dialogue on what the girls view as potentially racist modes of representation in British television:

²⁵ A significant difference between sub-cultural work on white boys and feminist work on girls is the issue of class. Unlike the former, which took class to be the primary issue and then studied white working class boys, feminist research on girls looked mainly at white, middle class girls.

²⁶ Way does point out that this confidence does not extend to girls' relationships with boys, where they are much more passive and stereotypically feminine (1995: 121-123).

A. And why did they decide to totally write out Jack her boyfriend, he only comes into it occasionally now

B. I know, it's because he's Asian, if he was black same thing, Asian same thing – they only keep their own thingy people in that

A. Yeah and in *Heartbreak High* right even though they try to show people from many ethnic

B. they put them down all the time

(Barker, 1997: 623).

Barker argues that such conversations are girls' attempts to work through contradictions in mainstream cultural discourses on identity, belonging and race/ethnicity, while at the same time trying to understand their own discursive positioning. As he points out, the girls in his study are engaged in a "reflexive project of the self", where they both *monitor* the circumstances of their lives and *make* them by naming and re-naming their experiences (Barker, 1997: 613).

However, it is important to point out that the post-structuralist emphasis on agency and creative strategies in the lives of girls sometimes tends to run away with itself, leaving the impression that subjects move in and out of hegemonic spaces with such *savoir-faire* that they manage to avoid most of the pain, anguish and alienation that we often associate with being young, female etc. Certainly it is important to move away from assumptions that infantilize or reduce these (and other) subjects to passive receptacles of ideology (Currie, 1997: 456-457), but we should not necessarily conclude that girls' strategies are always constant or even very emancipatory (Gilbert, 1997: 134; Matthews, 1997: 12). As Valverde points out: "...a fallacy often committed by neo-humanist feminists [is]...assuming that the exercise of agency on the part of oppressed groups is always evidence of resistance" (1991: 183). A prime example of this troubling

tendency is Proweller's otherwise fascinating and insightful ethnography of raced adolescent girls at an upper class private school in the United States, and the "borderland" lives that they lead in their struggles to "become somebody" (Proweller, 1998). Part of her discussion revolves around the class-informed, race-informed methods by which different peer groups in school 'other' each other, and the oppositional strategies used by girls to maintain positive identities in the face of these exclusions. However, at times, Proweller seems to celebrate these strategies uncritically; she does not probe further into the meaning of what her students tell her and, as a result, ignores some disturbing undercurrents. Her discussion often centers on the positive and productive "borderwork" in which these girls engage, but one wonders if it is as productive as Proweller makes out, in a context that she herself identifies as being unequal in terms of class and race. As Robinson and Ward point out, girls resist dominant scripts or discourses, but not always in productive ways. According to them, there is an important distinction between "resistance for survival" (short term strategies that include food addictions, school failure, drugs, early pregnancy etc.), and "resistance for liberation", which requires "...the naming and addressing of oppressions in their lives" (1991).

Although Proweller claims that the school she examines is a microcosm of larger society's classism and racism, both race and class are glossed as channels for positive selfhood. She smoothes out the rough edges and contradictions in her students' narratives through her interpretations and we are left with the impression that pain and exclusion are not really factors. In the following example, Proweller is talking with Wanda, an African-American girl whose Native-American friend Lisa has asked her if black people ski.

According to Proweller, Wanda does not view this as hostile or offensive, because she and Lisa are *friends*:

With patience and good humor, Wanda smiled and candidly answered: "Yes Lisa, black people ski in the winter." Had Wanda been asked this question by another peer with whom she was not as close, she might have come back with a more emotionally charged response. Because Wanda and Lisa are part of the same peer group, Lisa's question is seen as well intentioned (Proweller, 122).

This is certainly one reading of the situation, but Proweller is also choosing to ignore two other possibilities: 1) Wanda's construction of the question as good-humored may be an instance of what Matthews (1997) describes as a creative way of coping with racism (i.e. not seeing it as racism) and 2) the fact of being in the same peer group and being friends may actually be masking the presence of racism, as well as intra-group hostilities of the sort described earlier. What if this well-intentioned ignorance uses race to position Lisa discursively as more dominant and Wanda as having less status or value in this group of girls?²⁷ A great deal of suffering can be inflicted through girls' friendships and interactions with one another as they attempt to draw the boundaries of insider and outsider (Hey, 1997, Brown and Gilligan, 1992; Apter and Josselson, 1998). But Proweller uncritically accepts that there is no tension present in this exchange, and this acceptance mimics the white-washing of narratives that occurs at the edge of adolescence, when girls start to idealize and revise their stories so that nothing bad goes on any longer (Hey, 1997: 30; Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 97-98). For instance, in Brown and Gilligan's study, growing hostilities within a peer group/classroom become so threatening at one point that one of the girls deals with the situation by pretending that everyone gets along well, despite the fact that other girls have spoken openly about

²⁷ For a different perspective on the effects of racialization on adolescent girls, see Ward (1990), Brah and Minhas (1985), Twine (1996), Dwyer (1999) and Waters (1996).

exclusion and cruelty. By positioning herself and others through a narrative of unambiguous friendship, this girl seems to be choosing "...not to speak what is quickly becoming for her and her classmates unspeakable" (1992: 98). As Hey points out, it is a mistake to assume that girls' forms of harassment are not equally (if not more) damaging than those they experience through boys' discourses (1997: 64-123). The highly ritualized form of girls' exclusionary practices, which take place through what she describes as "shifting allegiance plots" (1997: 106-17), must be taken quite seriously as negotiations with particular forms of difference that construct who has power and in what contexts (1997: 123).

Despite these criticisms, both structural and post-structural feminist researchers have made a major contribution, by raising awareness of both the specificity of girls' experiences of growing up as well as the importance of the embodied and experiential aspects of youth culture. In doing so, they have addressed an important silence in developmental psychology and sub-cultural theory: the absence of individual narratives. Both these areas concentrate on group behavior: in the case of psychology, the method of data collection prevents a more in-depth study of subjectivities, and for sub-cultural theorists, there is a basic assumption that membership in particular groups is the identity issue that researchers need to explore most thoroughly. Although sub-cultural theory includes the concept of the biographical as one of its key components, Birmingham theorists acknowledge that this aspect is not dealt with properly in their work, in part because they contend that biographies are only meaningful in the context of the structures and cultures through which an individual is shaped and shapes herself (Cricher, 1975: 57). More contemporary sub-cultural research also follows this line of reasoning, and as a

result, there is a noticeable lack of attention to the question of selfhood. Feminist research has contributed this missing piece, while simultaneously creating a space for girls' voices to be heard and acknowledged in the literature on youth.

Cultural Studies

Cultural studies work on youth is a good metaphor for the singular difficulties in trying to map out discrete theoretical positions on adolescence and youth culture. There are obvious overlaps among sub-cultural theory, feminist research and cultural studies research, and those who work in these areas cannot be neatly positioned within any of them. This confusion reflects, to a great extent, the nebulous nature of cultural studies itself within the academy. As Chris Barker points out, because of its consciously trans-disciplinary roots, cultural studies "cannot be said to be anything" (2000: 6). It not only crosses disciplines, it also has no cohesive set of theoretical boundaries, although it is commonly associated with the study of language, representation and subjectivity (Barker, 2000: 5).²⁸

Interestingly enough, cultural studies' roots are in early sub-cultural theory: it grew out of the Birmingham centre, and some of its most identifiable theorists are also closely associated with youth culture work. Such a close association raises the question of why it is necessary to distinguish the cultural studies approach from its predecessor. One answer would be the detailed critiques leveled against sub-cultural theory from the

²⁸ This section is not meant to be a summary of the basic tenets of cultural theory (if there are any), but a discussion of cultural studies work as it applies to youth culture and adolescence. For a detailed examination of cultural studies, please see Chris Barker. *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*. London: Sage Publications (2000).

cultural studies side. Theorists such as Grossberg, Hebdige, Willis and McRobbie (some of whom were actually part of the Birmingham school's groundbreaking work, *Resistance through Ritual*), subsequently argued that sub-cultural theory's focus on class was too narrow, and excluded other important social relations. They also pointed to the limitations of studying youth through its most spectacular elements rather than the routine lives of most young people. Finally they raised the issue of sub-cultures as theoretical inventions on the part of academics who ascribed particular forms of resistance to groups, a number of which did not themselves relate to the ideological battles that they were supposedly waging. This question of what defines sub-cultural resistance was an especially important issue for cultural studies theorists in light of the changing spaces of youth caused by globalization, where transgressive styles, culture and music were no longer confined to small enclaves, but instead dispersed and in constant flux, within transnational spaces of culture and consumption:

Contemporary commentators on the youth scene, particularly those focused on dance culture, now question the usefulness of the concept of subculture. They argue that youth culture is increasingly fragmented and 'incoherent', with the notion of an authentic subculture no longer viable. It is not that distinct cultures of fashion, dance [etc.]...cannot be found...[but]...they are 'inside' not 'outside' of mass-mediated consumer capitalism...this argument does not lead youth into the black hole of insignificance. Rather, the creative usage of commodities to achieve a postmodern 'cut'n'mix' by active, productive consumers represents a set of meaningful activities. Indeed, the production of hybrid youth cultures is an increasingly global phenomenon...whether it can be regarded as 'resistance' is a moot point. It depends on who is said to be resisting what by whom under particular circumstances (Barker, 2000: 348).

One of the most important contributions of cultural studies work on "hybrid youth culture", derives from a sustained post-structuralist focus on language and representation. Constructed through discursive processes, identity (or subjectivity) is understood to be a

fragmented, unstable and ongoing site of contestation, with popular culture being one arena where this contestation takes place (Currie, 1997: 458-459). Rather than dismissing mainstream music, TV, movies etc., as simply part of a larger consumption/disposal process occurring in late capitalist societies, theorists such as Barker argue that these “cultural texts” must be mined for their productive elements and their capacity to produce multiple meanings and subjectivities. Moreover, rather than taking as a given the fixity of certain structures or categories (i.e. class, race, gender, sexuality etc.), and thus their inevitable consequences for marginalized youth, cultural studies theory examines the productive, resistant and creative identity spaces forged by youth as they play with the power they have, both as a disruption and threat, in adult society (Hebdige, 1988, cited in Barker, 2000). According to Hebdige, the politics of youth is a politics of gesture, symbol and metaphor: youth is a cultural construct, informed by discourses of style, image, difference and identity, discourses through which we bring youth into being as a set of subject positions (Hebdige, 1988, cited in Barker, 2000: 321). Youth or adolescence, in its ambiguous and uneasy location between the essentialized concepts of childhood and adulthood (Barker, 2000: 320-321), is constantly destabilizing this binarism, and as a result, is threatening to adult society. This liminality in part explains why youth is endlessly constructed through blatantly contradictory discourses of fun, trouble, innocence, degradation, hope, danger etc. (Barker, 2000: 321).

Nevertheless, three related criticisms can be made about some of the work on youth coming from cultural studies. The first is with regard to the issue of age: there is often a silence on age as a relation of power that intersects with race, ethnicity, class, gender, etc. Even when the discussion is clearly centered on youth culture, adolescence as

a subject position is often not deconstructed, nor is it explored as a contributing aspect of the cultural production under scrutiny. Theorists delve into youthful subjects' engagement with certain cultural forms (i.e. soap operas, diaspora/Asian underground music, rap music, general popular music), but do not directly examine the part that age plays in this interaction (see Barker, 1997; Banerjea, 2000; Negus, 1999; Hutnyk and Sharma, 2000; Frith, 1996). Race, class, gender and ethnicity are examined in detail, but the issue of age is never really unpacked.²⁹ 'Youth' remains a recognizable code for certain practices, representations and experiences, but this code is never explained or problematized. It exists as an imaginary point of reference from which theorists can delve into aspects of popular culture, without addressing the potential significance of the social category of age.

This neglect of age as a relation of power is further illustrated by the absence of a voice of youth in some cultural studies work.³⁰ Theorists look at youth's multiple locations in a capitalist economy, a diasporic hybrid culture and so on, without including the voices of youthful subjects in their discussions. For instance, Negus' article explores the links between capitalism, race and music by scrutinizing the role of both white and African-American teens in the production, merchandising and distribution of rap records

²⁹ Work in cultural studies is not exceptional in this sense. A number of researchers discuss youth culture or adolescent issues, without explicitly theorizing age. For example, O'Donnell and Sharpe in their introduction (*Uncertain Masculinities: Youth, Ethnicity and Class in Contemporary Britain, 2000*), cite race/ethnicity, class, gender and age as key factors, but only the first three are discussed in any detail. Similarly, Frith's article on the relationship between popular music and cultural identity argues that musical styles are linked to a whole set of social relations such as class, ethnicity, race, gender and age (Frith, 1996). But his discussion focuses only on the first four categories. He never explores the connection between age, music and identity in terms of building social and political communities. Like O'Donnell and Sharpe, Frith appears to be assuming uncritically the category of youth.

³⁰ Barker's is the exception, possibly because it is also driven by feminist methodological concerns with voice, representation and the importance of the experiential. Also see Bludgeon's article (1998), on the effects of the *Spice Girls* phenomenon on girls' identities, using qualitative interviews with pre-adolescent and adolescent girls.

within a capitalist economy. He points out that although 75% of rap records are owned by white teens, this percentage does not recognize the circulation of a record through black urban culture (due to lack of disposable income) (1999: 497). But we never hear from either group of teens about these issues: the reasons behind rap music's popularity among white teens or the methods through which black urban youth circulate the records. Similarly, Banerjea (2000) attacks naïve assumptions that the current popularity of British Asian underground music signals the victory of multicultural tolerance over racism. He stresses the importance of recognizing how actual racism plays out in the lives of second generation Asian adolescents. However, he does not actually inform us how it does play out or why this music has no positive effect on their outsider status, nor does he offer us *their* thoughts on these issues. Another example, given that they too do not have even *secondary* data on how youth read the cultural text in question, is Best and Kellner's rather suspect claim that "the popular MTV series *Beavis and Butt-Head*, while 'only' a 'cartoon', provides all-too-real indications of how many contemporary white youth think and feel as they vegetate in front of the television" (1998: 74). Even feminist research sometimes falls into this trap. Angela McRobbie's critical and reflexive discussion of rave culture and changing modes of femininity discusses how girls construct identities without including the voices of actual girls (1993). Similarly, Cynthia Fuchs discussion of the *Spice Girl* phenomenon and its complex and contradictory meanings for girls, while extremely interesting, does not offer any data on how real life girls view these icons and, instead, assumes what subjects are thinking: "In 'Spice World', *girl power* is for real...this miraculous place where girls want to be...delivers exactly what its target viewers, girls aged six to fourteen, would seem to want...the Spice Girls...enthrall the

girls who love and wannabe them...the Spice Girls not as perfect role models but as imperfect approximations of what girls might be conceive of being" (Fuchs, 2002: 343-345).

Consider the uproar that would take place if contemporary Euro-American academics wrote about the history, experiences and cultural symbols of African-Americans or immigrant/minority groups, without including their voices (at least in the form of secondary analyses), or if contemporary male academics positioned themselves as pro-feminist and proceeded to explore 'women's worlds', without evincing the slightest interest in listening to the women living in those worlds. Are we to assume, then, that youth represents one of the rare subject positions where the subject can be spoken *for*, by an authoritative knower who also happens to be on the winning side of a power divide?³¹ Regardless of whether or not one believes that non-adults are actually oppressed or subordinated in a society controlled by adults, they are still subjects who can speak on their own behalf. What are we to take from the fact that in much of this work they do not?

The tendency to speak for youth in some cultural studies work leads directly into another pitfall: without the inclusion of youthful voices, cultural studies work on youth often falls victim to a paternalistic discourse of rationality/maturity that smacks of adult condescension and even contempt. The authorial voice here takes two forms. In the first, a serious tone positions theorists as well-versed in youth culture, cautiously optimistic about youthful agency, but still concerned about youth and their marginalization in adult

³¹ I have intentionally constructed this relationship in conflictual terms. In spite of what may be perceived as an exaggerated view of adult/non-adult power relations, I strongly agree with Giroux's position that there is a "...deep rooted hostility and chilling indifference towards youth [who]...are viewed as a growing threat to the public order" (Giroux, 1998: 26-28; also see Boethius, 1995; Best, 2000). One of the contentions of this thesis is that adult antagonism towards youth is a constitutive element of their subject formation that is too often overlooked, downplayed or dismissed in research on adolescence.

society. One example is Best and Kellner's reading of the MTV satire *Beavis and Butt-head*, and what the show tells us about the state of contemporary working class, white American youth (1998). Although Best and Kellner work hard to demonstrate their sympathy for adolescents and their concern with how shabbily youth are treated in American society, their overall narrative has frightening parallels with the 'psy' model of dangerous youth.³² Furthermore, their analysis of certain 'youth' music is not only dismissive, it is actually inaccurate, again raising the question of what it would mean to study any other group in society and not only exclude its members' voices, but also offer a misinterpretation of its cultural symbols (calling into question the very legitimacy and usefulness of the research):

...The metal culture in which Beavis and Butt-Head immerse themselves should not simply be reviled, but needs to be seen as a way for those caught up in dead-end lives to blot everything out, to escape in a world of pure noise and aggression...heavy metal music is the religion of many white suburban kids, speaking to their anger and despair...as well as working-class kids...its popularity suggests that a large number of kids want to blot out 'reality'...In their utopian fantasy, [Beavis and Butt-head]...will 'roam the earth among all that is cool', living, in other words, in Seattle, immersed in a postmodern culture of sex, money, spectacle, and fun, amusing themselves to death (1998: 92-98).

³² The following is one example of Best and Gellner's somewhat horrifying take on youth, not only because of their use of dehumanizing and Othering imagery, but also because they see themselves as *sympathetic* to youth culture: "...Society as a whole will pay the much higher future costs of dealing with their hopelessness, illnesses, and rage...criminologists are warning of far worse cycles of violence in the coming decades, with 'the coming of the super-predators', in James Alan Fox's phrase. These are teenage boys who 'kill and maim on purpose without any intelligible motive', except for their blind rage...bereft of any respect for life...more and more, the nightly news presents the appalling spectacle of kids killing kids (or adults)...in such a deteriorating social fabric where adolescents will kill each other over a pair of tennis shoes, where the teen population is expected to grow substantially over the next decade, where hundreds of thousands of kids are being pushed into criminality because of poverty and neglect, and where there may be a future 'bloodbath of teenaged violence that will make 1995 look like the good old days'" (1998: 92-93).

With regard to a number of points, the above description is simply wrong: 1) it mistakenly conflates the two musical genres of *heavy metal* and *grunge rock* 2) it makes sweeping (and incorrect) statements about the worth of heavy metal that allude to its lyrical content, which supposedly lacks meaning beyond mindless aggressive sound³³ 3) it assumes heavy metal is a youth oriented genre when in actuality groups like *Iron Maiden*, *Megadeth* and *Metallica* have a fan base that spans several generations and 4) its statement about the *Seattle* sound is completely inaccurate, since grunge rock developed in opposition to the 'Glam-rock' bands of the 1980s which *were* associated with sex, money, fun and spectacle. In fact, the Seattle movement was associated with Generation-X's disillusionment with, and alienation from, mainstream society; it was also a deliberate attempt to reclaim the image of rock as non-glamorous, through old and worn clothes, lyrics that were somewhat political (and at the very least angst-ridden), and an 'edgy' musical sound in contrast to the synthetic sounds of 80s pop culture:³⁴

³³ The following lyrics (from well known heavy metal bands such as Metallica, Megadeth and Testament), demonstrate a stronger social conscience than most 'adult contemporary' music: "Bodies fill the fields I see, hungry heroes end no one to play soldier now...soldier boy...21, only son, but he'll serve us well" (Metallica "Disposable Heroes" from the album *Master of Puppets*, 1986); "People have round shoulders from fairing heavy loads, and the soldiers liberate them, laying mines along their roads...countless corpses piled up along the wailing wall" (Megadeth, "Ashes in your Mouth" from the album *Countdown to Extinction*, 1992); "Fuel the fire for war, it's man against mankind...innocent people suffer the loss" (Testament, "'Low" from the album *Low*, 1994).

³⁴ Pearl Jam and Nirvana are two of the bands most strongly associated with the development of the Seattle sound and their lyrics and music hardly bear out Best and Kellner's image of Seattle bands "amusing themselves to death". A main theme running through Nirvana's lyrics was the alienation that adolescents struggled with in a world that pathologized them (see Nirvana's 1993 album *In Utero*), and Pearl Jam's first big hit "Jeremy" (from the album *Ten*, 1991), was an extremely dark and disturbing song about child abuse.

The 'alternative' rock movement, which has dominated the present decade, has been considered an open rebuttal of the 'selling-out' attitude of the previous decade...a return to the emotionally charged performance, the display of raw power as an assurance of the truthfulness and sincerity of the performer (s). A turn back to the political and/or social conscience so characteristic of the 1960s has been registered, as we can see in the numerous political stances that the group Pearl Jam has taken at the peak of its popularity...the grunge image...a strong statement against the glam aesthetic of eighties heavy metal and the slick elegance of techno-pop (Santiago-Lucerna, 1998: 189-190).³⁵

Santiago-Lucerna's respectful and well informed discussion of 'youth' music throws into sharp relief the narrative tone and content in work like Best and Kellner's, where the underlying message is that youth culture has little merit except as a metaphor for a slowly disintegrating society. In this scenario, youth are silenced as active agents of meaning making and instead serve as phantom reminders of the growing illiteracy, poverty, criminality and sexual, social and cultural decadence overtaking America. This type of approach simply feeds into societal fears about youth, and it disguises the presence of a powerful gaze that names youth as the problem and reduces the complexities of their existence by fetishizing their identities. Youth as a subject position becomes the signifier as well as the cause and effect of social breakdown:

If the function of the subject as fictive origin is to occlude the genealogy by which that subject is formed, the subject is also installed in order to assume the burden of responsibility for the very history that subject dissimulates (Butler, 1995: 204).³⁶

³⁵ Ironically, Santiago-Lucerna's article is in the same collection of essays as Best and Gellner's (see Epstein, 1998).

³⁶ For example, according to Hutnyk and Sharma: "We now know that popular youth culture has an adroitness for feeding upon/obliterating difference" (2000: 59). Such (cannibalistic) imagery places the burden of racial and ethnic homogenization on youth culture, without bothering to mention either the role of adult corporate interests and agents in the production of this culture, or the possible ways in which youth culture has been responsible for *blurring* essentialist notions of the racialized and ethnicized Other.

The exaggerated narrative tone taken by theorists such as Best and Kellner is one style adopted in cultural studies work on youth. By contrast, the second authorial voice strikes a playful postmodern pose that positions the author as hip and cool with her/his finger on the pulse of youth, thus eliminating the need for any 'authentic' voice of youth.³⁷ Cultural studies work often adopts a consciously whimsical style in opposition to formal academic writing, but in the context of research on adolescence this seems to be laced with a certain amount of irony about the pop/youth culture being written about. Furthermore, regardless of whether one chooses to view this as a sincere effort to relate to youth (through its own lingo), or as a more cynical attempt to address the lopsidedness of the account (by mimicking the voice of the Other), when theorists adopt a self-consciously *cool* voice, they sometimes end up mocking the very subject whose concerns they are trying to validate:

...what was cool before is so "five minutes ago" now (Hutnyk and Sharma, 2000: 58-59).

Ice-T is coming to Tampa with his hardcore band, and I'm hyped...I stare at my small collection of baseball caps. Should I wear a hat to the show, or not? If I wear a cap, will I look like a wanna-be, somebody trying too hard to fit in? But I like wearing caps. Does that make me a wanna-be, even if I don't mean to be one? Or may be I am one. But if I wear a cap, and admit that I am a wanna-be, then have I bypassed the whole wanna-be problem by being up-front about it to myself? Ok, no cap (Simpson, 1996: 118).

The Enlightenment's great *Encyclopedia* project, where Diderot and other luminaries systematized the new forms of learning to promulgate reason, has collapsed into Beavis and Butt-Head's *Ensucklopedia*, whose A to Z purview of the postmodern adolescent mind features entries on "Anatomy" (including operations of the butt and nads), "Dudes and Chicks" (with tips on scoring from the unscored)... "Literater" (including analysis of *Moby Dick*, uh, huh huh huh), and "Toilet" (inimitable research into the mechanics and etiquette of the john) (Best and Kellner, 1998: 82).

³⁷ In any case, authenticity is already a delegitimized concept in postmodern thought.

Beneath the humor in each of these quotes one may hear a derisive quality that caricatures youth as shallow, transient, illiterate and irrational. Hutnyk and Sharma mock youth's supposed ethos of 'living in the now', where neither the past nor the future matters. Simpson's comical worries about his appearance remind the reader of that (shallow and self-absorbed) period in the North American life cycle, where subjects' most pressing concerns are not such things as world hunger, but looking 'cool' (and most of all not looking like you are trying to look 'cool').³⁸ Best and Kellner's quote is perhaps the most absurd since, here, they crosscut their normal discursive style in a bizarre manner, as they move from painting the apocalyptic horrors of a youth culture gone mad on rage, poverty and depression to a form of snickering intended (presumably) to be an imitation of Beavis and Butt-Head (and thus white male youth in general). Added to this is their juxtaposing of the contributions of great western philosophers with youth culture's vulgar and disposable forms of expression.

Although the above criticisms cannot be applied to all cultural studies work on youth, some theorists are guilty of buying into (as well as creating) discourses on adolescence that completely ignore what McRobbie has compassionately described as "...the terrible psychological complexities of growing up" (McRobbie, 1993: 406). Instead, they continue to construct youth as responsible for behavior that is more reflective of modern and postmodern culture than anything specifically to do with youth.³⁹ This means that like their predecessors from the Birmingham school, cultural

³⁸ Simpson is not actually even interested in how youth understand or appreciate rap and hip-hop; his discussion revolves around how and why he as a "middle class, suburban white male" finds such a strong connection to this music. This is particularly ironic, given his analysis of rap and hip-hop as genres built around "an aesthetics of appropriation" (Simpson, 1996: 111).

³⁹ Contrary to the images conveyed, self-absorption, superficiality and 'living in the moment' are not the sole property of teenagers. Over eighty years ago, Aldous Huxley's novel *Antic Hay*, satirized the cynical,

studies theorists get caught in the trap of recognizing the constructedness of youth as a set of discourses, while simultaneously drawing upon those very discourses to understand the subject being studied.

Education

It is somewhat ironic (given the role of schooling in the construction, management and surveillance of youth), that of all the approaches previously discussed, the educational paradigm on adolescence remains the hardest to characterize. There are a number of reasons for this elusiveness: First, like its parent discipline (psychology), education is a separate field, comprising a diverse number of sub-fields, subjects and therefore frameworks; and unlike psychology (which uses the pathology model to theorize adolescence), it does not appear to have an overarching perspective on youth. Second, although heavily influenced by developmental psychology (Adelson, 1986; Mosher, 1979; Travers and Elliott, 1993; Hewit and Whittier, 1997), modern education as a discipline has also been the arena for larger societal debates over issues of justice, democracy, civil rights and citizenship and has, therefore, not been able to fence out social concerns and major historical changes.⁴⁰ As a result, education philosophies, at

excessive *adult* society of the post world war one era: "...One can refuse to accept responsibility; a clown cannot be held accountable. And besides, when the future and the past are abolished, when it is only the present instant, whether enchanted or unenchanted, that counts, when there are no causes or motives, no future consequences to be considered, how can there be responsibility, even for those who are not clowns?" (Huxley, 1923: 162).

⁴⁰ Psychology has been criticized by other social sciences for being too focused on the individual, and ignoring the larger picture. Given that psychology research has not needed to be particularly attentive to social changes, this may explain why it continues to study adolescence through somewhat outdated developmental concepts.

times, seem, to be an odd and not always compatible mix of various theoretical and political positions.⁴¹ Finally, education is *directly* linked to the question of youth and its place in modern democratic society, since schools play a pivotal role in the production of certain types of civil subjects, and this direct connection sets it apart from the other paradigms. As a result, both the theory and practice of education must be examined in the broader context of social, political and economic changes happening in industrialized nations. These include the shift from feudal to capitalist economies; changes to child labor laws which left large groups of non-elite children with hours unaccounted for during the day; the development of liberal notions of freedom, autonomy and opportunity underpinning democratic systems; and the shaping of modern nation states and therefore national identities.⁴² All these changes shaped the education systems of western countries, as well as having an impact on the ideological battles taking place at various moments between conservative, liberal/progressive and radical education scholars. While it is true that some of these battles were not specifically about the nature of adolescence, they bear closer examination, since they represent important moments of contestation over the subject position and status of non-adults in society.

Since it is not possible to do justice to the voluminous literature available on the issue of youth and education, this section will offer an overview of some of the major education debates and theories of the last 50 years taking place in the United States. I will then focus specifically on one school of thought: radical education, commonly associated

⁴¹ See, for example, Kohlberg and Mayor's position (which I discuss later on in the section), which marries Piagetian psychology with Rawlsian principles of justice, and then throws in the pragmatics of teaching and learning techniques (1979).

⁴² According to Hewitt and Whittier, from 1870 to 1920, processes of urbanization and immigration in the US required that the large numbers of children who were flocking into schools be inculcated with certain ideals of American national identity (1997: 44-45).

with Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux and other self-described critical pedagogy theorists. My reasons for doing so are as follows: 1) in terms of approaches to youth and schooling, there is, in my view, a discernable linear progression and critical pedagogy represents one of the most valuable contributions to the field 2) the broader subject of this thesis centers around the issue of racialized adolescence and, although general educational debates are also currently informed by concerns over difference, theorists associated with the radical school of thought are directly engaged in the deconstruction and disempowerment of social inequalities caused by race, class, gender and sexuality. I include anti-racist pedagogy in this category, since race is a central concern for many of the theorists who are associated with Giroux.⁴³ For example, Cohen (1993) is concerned with relations of power between students and teachers, getting students to understand how race plays out in their own lives, and encouraging them to develop critical thinking skills (also see Roman and Stanley, 1997). As well, anti-racist scholars describe their work as being situated in a model of critical education and they are focused on similar (if not identical) issues. As Sefa Dei and Calliste (2000: 11) point out, “educational institutions [are]...one of the foremost places for producing societal change and transformation...[but] our schools, colleges and universities continue to be powerful discursive sites through which race knowledge is produced, organized and regulated”.

One major conflict in 20th century education centered on traditional versus modern approaches to schooling. According to Adelson, this conflict developed in a post World War two era of idealism about the role of education in the creation of a strong and

⁴³ See for example, Henry Giroux (Ed). *Between Borders: Pedagogy and the Politics of Cultural Studies*. New York and London: Routledge, 1994. Also see Henry Giroux and Patrick Shannon (Eds.), *Education and Cultural Studies: Towards a Performative Practice*. New York and London: Routledge, 1997).

powerful new America (Adelson, 1996: 3-13). Juxtaposed with this utopic vision were the social realities of the baby boom (whose numbers put schools under a great deal of pressure), a sudden rise in youth “social pathology”, and the growing interventions into education on the part of government, bureaucracy, the courts and ideologues. Adelson contends that schooling was a terrain on which larger political and social battles were played out. Debates over values, morals and the relationship between education and civil society implicitly positioned schools as the primary agent for solving a variety of larger social ills in American society (1996: 4-17).

In this context, the struggle between traditional notions concerning the purpose of education came up against newer views favoring a more progressive philosophy. *Traditionalism*, in Adelson’s view, was based on an ideology of merit, accomplishment, competition and success. It emphasized self-discipline, self-restraint and the postponement of gratification. Finally, it viewed the ideal society as one characterized by stable families and strongly held beliefs in certain moral universals. *Modernism*, on the other hand, devalued the pursuit of success and instead upheld principles of egalitarianism and redistribution. It tolerated or encouraged sensual gratification, valued self-expression over self-restraint, and accepted alternative or ‘deviant’ forms of family. With regard to morals and ethics, it was relativistic.

According to Adelson, the modernist ethos triumphed, ushering in an era characterized by weakened authority on the part of educators, a rise in adolescent crime, violence and other forms of pathology, and what he describes as “...a general decline in

both [the] civility and [educational] competence" of modern youth ((1986: 8-20).⁴⁴ In this era, academic and mainstream understandings of youth fell prey to two overriding ideologies: a psychopathology model of youth as disruptive, hormonally driven and in constant conflict with parents⁴⁵ and a romanticist narrative built on images of youth as passive flower children, social and political visionaries or victims of an adult society's oppression:

The figure of the prophetic victim...becomes the dominant image of the young in the postwar era [but]...in the 1960s we note an important change. The young victim now transcends his victimization; he overcomes his passivity and in doing so achieves strength and heroism...the themes of oppression, prophecy and rebellious heroism become the dominant motifs of collective fantasy, as the metaphor of victimization is politicized, and as other groups – blacks, women, homosexuals, freaks, prisoners, the psychotic – are defined by themselves, or more often through self-appointed spokesmen as victims, visionaries and revolutionary heroes (1986: 138).

Accompanying these turf wars were major theoretical disagreements over the role that educators were supposed to play in the 'development of young minds' and the ways in which non-adults were to be perceived. According to Kohlberg and Mayor (1979), education theorists and practitioners could be distinguished as falling into one of three philosophical positions: *romanticism*, *cultural transmission* and *progressivism*.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ It seems hardly necessary to point out that Adelson's position is itself heavily ideological. Note the following (somewhat amusing) section titles in his (1986) book: *How the schools were ruined; terrorizing the children (with Chester E. Finn Jr.)* and *Letty in Pogrebinland*.

⁴⁵ According to Adelson, the sociological literature on youth focused too much on delinquency, while the psychoanalytic literature constructed adolescence as a period when infantile conflicts between the id, the ego and the superego were revitalized (A recent article by Sayers (2000) tried to resuscitate this tired argument but was fairly unconvincing). Adelson argues that in reality, most research could not find a significant degree of psychopathology in the ordinary adolescent (1986: 123-181). However, this does not quite square with one of his main points, that modernism's effect on education created a climate in which "...we have seen a rise in the number and proportion of antisocial adolescents ...an astonishing increase in *all* indices of social pathology among the young during the past quarter century, in assaults, suicides, homicides, drug use, out-of-wedlock pregnancy" (1986: 20).

⁴⁶ Adelson does outline a romanticist vision of adolescence and the role of education (in somewhat confusing terms), but at various points lumps it together with both modernism and radicalism.

Romanticism encouraged the spiritual, mental and physical development of children, and viewed the school as a context in which to work through issues that could not be dealt with in the family (Kohlberg and Mayer, 1979: 247). It stemmed from the 19th century belief in the existence of an authentic self, with this self being the driving force behind the child. Educators were, therefore, in the delicate position of guiding this developing self without crushing its spirit:

Romantics hold that...the pedagogical environment should be permissive enough to allow the inner "good" (abilities and social virtues) to unfold and the inner "bad" to come under control. Thus teaching the child the ideas and attitudes of others through rote or drill would result in meaningless learning and the suppression of inner spontaneous tendencies of positive value (1979: 247).

According to Romanticist theorists (such as Stanley Hall), after the developing self passes through the period of childhood, it reaches adolescence, a period during which the subject "discovers" itself and its uniqueness in the world (Kohlberg and Gilligan, 1979: 67-68). However, the world is not as important or even as real as the subject's developing perceptions of it. The adolescent self is therefore a Cartesian self, characterized by a kind of solipsism, where the only thing real to the subject is itself (1979: 67-78).⁴⁷ Kohlberg and Gilligan argue that the romanticist view is itself adolescent, because its origins can be traced to the birth of the subjective self at adolescence (Kohlberg and Gilligan, 1979: 78).

In sharp contrast to the romanticist ideal of developing selfhood, *cultural transmission* emphasized the importance of social continuity, through the passing on of traditions, rules, values and culture to the next generation. In this model, society was the

⁴⁷ What distinguishes adolescent egocentrism from that of a child is that the latter is not subjective; s/he focuses on events, not on the subjective experience of those events (Kohlberg and Gilligan, 1979: 67).

main beneficiary of schools' transmission of information and skills. Schooling served a particular function in this system as a purveyor of certain basic skills – i.e. the three Rs – the learning of which was mechanical in nature. Hence, the individual child's freedom of expression, creativity etc. was seen to be of little value to the system (1979: 248-251).

The third philosophy - with which Kohlberg and Mayer align themselves - is that of *progressivism*. Following John Dewey's work on education,⁴⁸ and strongly influenced by ethical liberalism and John Rawls' *Theory of Justice* (1972), this approach attempted to combine the nurturing spirit of romanticism with cultural transmission's pragmatic bent, by arguing that education "...should nourish a child's natural interaction with a developing society or environment" (Kohlberg and Mayer, 1979: 249-266). A child's development occurred through a series of identifiable cognitive, emotional and moral stages, and education's role was to provide the guiding hand until the child reached the highest stages of adulthood:

For progressives, the organizing and developing force in the child's experience is the child's active thinking, and thinking is stimulated by the problematic, by cognitive conflict. Although both the cultural transmission and the progressive views emphasize "knowledge", only the latter sees the acquisition of "knowledge" as *an active change in patterns of thinking* brought about by experiential problem-solving situations. The progressive educator stresses the essential links between cognitive and moral development; he assumes that cognitive development is a necessary though not sufficient condition for moral development... The progressive also points out that moral development arises from social interaction in situations of social conflict. Morality is neither the internalization of established cultural values nor the unfolding of spontaneous impulses and emotions; it is justice, the reciprocity between the individual and others in his social environment (1979: 249-251).

⁴⁸ Dewey believed that the goal of education was the moral and ethical development of a person (Mosher, 1979: 6-7).

Kohlberg himself is well known for his work on moral development and judgment, and the role of education in this process (Peters, 1979: 96).⁴⁹ Influenced by both Kantian ethics and Piaget's epistemological stages (Mosher, 1979: 64), Kohlberg argued that adolescence represented an important stage in the moral development of a subject, because it was the period during which subjects became philosophers. They moved from concrete to abstract thinking (from what is to what could be), and this ability to imagine alternatives was the necessary prerequisite for the shift from conventional to principled moral reasoning (Kohlberg and Gilligan, 1979: 85-86).⁵⁰

Although the above approaches may be taken to represent the major ideological, theoretical and practical differences between traditional versus modern or progressive education, there is one other school of thought that merits discussion: reconstructionism also described as radical or critical pedagogy. According to Hewit and Whittier (1997: 38-43), *Reconstructionism* is built on the belief that schools are the means of changing society, by teaching students to question and challenge social practices in a critical fashion. Strongly activist in its leanings, radical education is grounded in a social justice discourse and commonly associated with the work of activist-scholars such as Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux.⁵¹ It is concerned primarily with two issues: 1) the central role

⁴⁹ He is equally well known for a now famous debate that took place between him and Carol Gilligan, who criticized the sexist bias in Kohlberg's work (see Gilligan, 1977). She argued that far from being morally deficient or underdeveloped, women's understanding of moral judgment involved a concern with responsibility to others and an ethic of care or love as central elements of human morality (Mosher, 1975: 65).

⁵⁰ According to Kohlberg: "The rejection of conventional moral reasoning begins with the perception of relativism, the awareness that any given society's definition of right and wrong, however legitimate, is only one among many, both in fact and theory" (Kohlberg and Gilligan, 1979: 86).

⁵¹ According to Hewit and Whittier's schema, education philosophies can be broken down into the following five categories: 1) *Perennialism* - the purpose of education is to develop intellectual strength and mental discipline. Based on the tradition of Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas. Conservative 2) *Essentialism* - the purpose of education is the transmission of a society's culture, heritage and goals, as well as a balanced

of education in the maintenance of social hierarchies that subordinate large numbers of a population through race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality and other relations of power and 2) the role education *could* play, in the democratizing of nations with glaring social disparities, and the realization of certain ideals of justice, equality and tolerance in so-called western democracies. Scholars in this tradition link the cultural discourses, social practices, and structures of power in society, arguing that while schooling practices help to maintain systemic inequalities, they also have the capacity to effect transformative and emancipatory social changes. However, in order for this change to happen, education as a discipline must problematize practices that work to maintain particular hierarchies both inside and outside the classroom. It must also abandon a “methods” approach to teaching and learning that produces passive, uncritical students (Shor, 1993: 28), in favor of what Freire and Giroux respectively call “problem-posing education” and a “critical pedagogy of representation” (McLaren and Leonard, 1993: 8-11; Giroux, 1995: 48-49). Problem-posing education is when students actively engage in their own learning process, by locating their own histories in larger social, political, and cultural struggles (Aronowitz, 1993: 8-11). Giroux’s pedagogy of representation (which draws heavily on Freire’s work), extends this to include the realm of the popular, and the importance of mainstream cultural representations in the lives of modern youth. He challenges educators and other “cultural workers” to draw students’ attention to the historically specific nature of

knowledge of the larger world. Also conservative 3) *Progressivism* – the purpose of education is to promote the interests of both the individual learner and larger society. The method is child focused, active, creative and strongly emphasizes democratic ideals 4) *Constructivism* – knowledge is not transmitted to students, rather it is constructed by students, based on their own set of experiences. Educators must approach the so-called body of information in an epistemologically skeptical fashion and 5) *Reconstructionism* (Hewit and Whittier, 1997: 38-43). It is not entirely clear to me why the last two are separated, since scholars they identify as *Reconstructionist* (i.e. Giroux and Freire), are also strongly concerned with the constructed nature of discourse, subjectivity, language etc., as well as the creative and diverse ways in which students ‘make’ reality.

particular representations, to remind them continually to ask critical questions (i.e. whose interests are being served in these representations?), and perhaps most importantly, to encourage them to situate their own identities and experiences in the context of larger social and political struggles (Giroux, 1995: 48-51):

Not only do young people need to become critical agents able to recognize, appropriate and transform how dominant power works on and through them, they also need a pedagogy steeped in respectful selfhood, one that does not collapse social into personal problems, systemic oppression into the language of victim blaming. In short, they need a pedagogy that provides the basis for improvisation and responsible resistance (Giroux, 1998: 49).

As the above quote illustrates, a key element of critical pedagogy is its “language of possibility”⁵² which is steeped in modernist ideals of liberation, emancipation, progress and the subject’s ability to act, even within the oppressive structures that have constructed her/him. This language is particularly courageous in an anti-essentialist, anti-foundationalist, deconstructive academic climate that is openly skeptical (with some reason), about the possibility of *knowing* what constitutes justice, truth or progress, let alone harnessing these notions to specific political agendas. Committing to a modernist agenda does not mean that critical pedagogical theorists adopt a Pollyanna-like optimism that belies the epistemological difficulties inherent in such truth claims. Instead, they reflexively locate themselves in a discourse of social justice that recognizes the limited, contextual, historically specific and relative nature of all narratives, while at the same time maintaining a commitment to these ideals. In doing so, they have created a space for those who take seriously the criticisms leveled at the modernist project, but are at the same time concerned with the importance of social justice goals:

⁵² Also described by McLaren and Leonard as a language of hope (1993: 3).

The relationship between history and identity is a complex one and cannot be reduced to unearthing hidden histories that are then mined for positive images. On the contrary, educators need to understand and develop in their pedagogies how identities are produced differently, how they take up the narratives of the past through the stories and experiences of the present. Understood in these terms, a representational pedagogy is not wedded to the process of narrating an authentic history, but to the dynamics of cultural recovery, which involves rewriting the relationship between identity and difference through a retelling of the historical past (Giroux, 1994: 50).

Finally, theorists in this area are perhaps the most conscious of those working in the domain of youth and adolescence, that among the various relations of power (i.e. race, gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality), that define and delimit the social spaces and identities of non-adults, age is one of the most salient. According to Giroux, “any pedagogy about youth must take as one of its central concerns how authority and power are wielded by adults” (Giroux, 1998: 49). The recognition of age as a relation of power is missing from both the psychology and sub-cultural paradigms,⁵³ it is only indirectly part of the feminist critique (which focuses more on the difficulties of being a young *woman* in a gendered society),⁵⁴ and even cultural studies does not allow enough importance to age-related

⁵³ Despite the assertions of the Birmingham school vis á vis the age related specificity of youthful experiences, I have found little evidence in the work that I have read that age is recognized and explored for its constitutive role in the making of subjectivities. See for example Clarke et al (1975), Critcher (1975), Garrison (2000), Sharpe and O'Donnell (2000). Key Exceptions include Best (2000) and Kearney (1998). Interestingly these are also articles with a strong feminist focus.

⁵⁴ Several of the feminist theorists mentioned in this chapter - Currie, Proweller, Barker, and even Gilligan and Brown - do not address age as fully as they should, mainly because their focus is on gender. For instance, Barker cites the conjunction of gender and ethnicity as determining South Asian girls' concerns with getting a “bad reputation” (1997: 619). But age is also an important factor here, since it is teenage girls and young women who worry about being constructed as “sluts” within school and peer contexts, rather than, for example, adult women in their 30s. Another example is Currie's argument that teenage girls interpret what it means to be a woman through magazines that depict patriarchal images of motherhood, marriage etc. However, this does not take into account the potential *empowerment* that girls may be reading off these images of adult women. The issue of girls wanting to become stereotypical women may be more than simply a reinforcing of structure (patriarchal, capitalist or racist). As Best points out, teenage girls are often denied control over their bodies, desires and self-definition and they perceive adult women as having greater control over their own lives (2000: 47). Therefore, I suspect that these girls want to be women in part because womanhood as an adult subject position is still more empowering than their subordinate position as girls.

inequalities. Critical pedagogy, as part of a discipline whose main concern is with non-adult subjects, is therefore the most attentive to the multiple ways in which age in conjunction with other relations of power works to subordinate children and adolescents in adult civil society.

The attention paid to age in critical pedagogy raises the question of why this model has not superseded other paradigms used in youth research. One reason for this relates to the specific aims of education as a discipline. Despite its interdisciplinary nature, critical pedagogy (as the name implies), is still directly related to the theory and practice of teaching and educating. Ultimately, this may be a little too narrow for those outside the education field, who are often concerned with research that is more descriptive, exploratory or abstract. For instance, how would a purely theoretical study of rave culture symbols, cult TV shows, or the growing popularity of rap and hip hop music fit comfortably into the aims of critical pedagogy, which has at its core an agenda directed towards change, rather than simply knowledge production? Similarly, would researchers be able to accommodate the ethnographic detail in work produced by Hey, Proweller and Others, which tells the ordinary stories of ordinary girls' lives as they struggle to make sense of their friendships, family relationships, sexual lives etc.? Although critical pedagogy places a great deal of importance on the links between students' experiences and the larger political picture, much of the work is either a general analysis of these links or, when it involves human subjects, is geared towards a particular *topic* rather than the spaces, silences and narrative shifts in a particular *subject's* story

(see for example Cohen, 1993). While both are necessary, ethnography provides a richness of detail that is not necessarily reproduced in more bounded research projects.⁵⁵

A final criticism relates to the prescriptive nature of critical pedagogy's project. Although its "language of possibility" – what could be and what should be – is vital to social justice concerns, this also offers a more limited view of the possibilities available in what *is*. In other words, how do we flesh out the ways in which subjects actively resist, change or disrupt particular discourses in the context of schooling *now* rather than in the ideal world of tomorrow, where students are nurtured, encouraged to develop critical thinking skills and offered the tools to reshape society? For instance, do students in the passive learning model simply become drones or does their learning occur in places outside the classroom?⁵⁶ Are there no counter-narratives embedded in the racialized, classed, gendered and heterosexist culture of the mainstream? Are subjects who are struggling with multiple forms of disempowerment, without access to critical forms of education, simply incapable of resistance? The implicit assumption in critical pedagogy (that empowerment can occur by teaching the right kinds of knowledge), seems like a thinly disguised version of false consciousness. Rather than asking how subjects deal with the relations of power in their lives for better or worse, it is assumed that young people's methods of coping are mostly for the worse, unless liberated by the progressive agendas of those who have been constructed as "knowers".⁵⁷

⁵⁵ This observation also applies to research in psychology and sub-cultural theory, and cultural studies, which is generally more concerned with the big picture itself, rather than what the biographical or narrative details of a subject's life can tell us about the big picture.

⁵⁶ See for example Niobe Way's article "Can't you see the Courage, the Strength I have?" (1995), on girls' negotiations with friends, boyfriends, family etc., in the context of urban poverty and inner city schooling.

⁵⁷ This is a recurring problem in any form of research that has social justice aims. For instance, Currie identifies similar constructions of expert knowledge in feminist theory and practice: "While feminist

Conclusion

This chapter was an attempt to outline and summarize the major social science paradigms on youth and adolescence. I began by looking at psychology, and the contributions of Hall, Erikson and Piaget, who may be described as the fathers of modern theories of adolescence. I went on to discuss the sub-cultural approach, which focused on the meanings of symbol and ritual among working class youth who were part of sub cultural groups (i.e. skinheads, punks etc.). I then looked at the important insights offered by feminists on how adolescence is experienced by girls in a patriarchal culture. I also discussed cultural theory, a recent offshoot of the sub-cultural paradigm that offers a multidisciplinary approach to youth and popular culture. I concluded with an outline of the education model and its historical ties to adolescence and the construction of certain types of civil subjects.

Although each of the above approaches offers some important insights into adolescence and the importance of age as a relation of power, none of them is adequate in itself as a framework for this thesis, which is interested in exploring the significance of adolescence in the development of racialized subjectivities. My intention is, therefore, to draw upon all of these approaches in my analytic framework. For instance, psychology recognizes the body as an important element of adolescent identity, but its adherence to a fairly rigid set of developmental experiences does not allow for an explanation of how social and historical contexts are constitutive elements of this identity formation. Furthermore, the focus on individual psyches precludes a well-developed understanding of how factors such as race, class, or gender produce a wide range of experiences during

researchers have been accorded the ability to identify (hence reject) the patriarchal subtexts of women's magazines, female readers were never portrayed as similarly capable of subversive reading" (1997: 457).

the period of adolescence. The sub-cultural model stresses the importance of youthful spectacle, but contradictorily argues that this spectacle is only ritualistic in its resistance and cannot be seen as a meaningful force of change in class society. It also does not allow for the exploration of everyday forms of symbolic resistance among adolescents who do not belong to any particular sub-culture. Feminist research on adolescent girls provides very important insights into the relationship between age and other social relations, particularly in terms of its focus on the interplay between the social/cultural and the private or biographical. I will be drawing upon much of this literature throughout the thesis. However, even this model cannot completely accommodate my research agenda because its main concern is with gender, and even work that looks at the question of race does so without explicitly theorizing the link between belonging within peer culture and becoming a racialized subject. Cultural studies work offers a space for exploring the creative elements of youthful resistance in popular culture through music, dress, dance, movies and television, but it is inattentive to the importance of age as a relation of power, and like its predecessor, is often guilty of dismissing youthful resistance as part of a larger capitalist mode of production, consumption and disposal. Finally, although this dissertation is grounded in the aims of the anti-racist critical pedagogy approach, the focus on education is too limiting for a research project that wants to explore subjects' everyday negotiations with difference in the context of family, school, peer culture and larger society.

Chapter one has offered a fairly thorough outline of the major paradigms of adolescence, but one important gap remains: the social, cultural and historical roots of modern adolescence. Although a constructivist account of adolescence could conceivably

be included as another paradigm of youth, I prefer to view it instead as a meta-narrative that informs, challenges and interrogates the major approaches to youth described above. Therefore, chapter two will draw upon a fairly diverse body of work in order to examine critically the concept of adolescence/youth and its location in modern discourses of imperialism, racism, patriarchy and class domination.

Chapter Two
***“The Uncontrollable, the Incongruous and the Ambivalent”:
 Social and Academic Narratives of Adolescence***

Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I attempted to map out the various positions on youth within social science research, in order to demonstrate that despite major contributions to our understanding of this ‘life stage’, most of these frameworks fall short in terms of adequately exploring how adolescence in modern western societies has been narrated as a form of “ambivalent” and “uncontrollable” subjectivity.¹ Chapter two explores this question within the context of certain cultural, economic and social changes occurring over the past two centuries in western societies. I begin by briefly discussing pre-modern understandings of youth and the passage to adulthood in feudal Europe, and the socio-economic contexts shaping certain views of youth. I then outline the emergence of *modern* adolescent selfhood in 19th century western capitalist societies, and examine how this ‘new’ understanding of age-based identity was closely tied to gendered, classed and racialized discourses on desirable and undesirable civil subjects. In the early part of the 20th century, these academic and social narratives were also accompanied by age-specific social practices in the U.S. and Great Britain such as the boy scouts, the YMCA and the creation of age cohort schooling that constructed, regulated and pathologized youthful subjects in a manner analogous to marginalized populations (i.e. women, minorities, homosexuals, mental patients and prisoners). I move on to discuss the rise of the

¹ The title of the chapter is a phrase that Sarup (1996) uses to describe the positions of the stranger or foreigner in a society (one who occupies a space outside the friend/enemy dualism), but it fits nicely as a description of adolescence and youth culture in modern society.

adolescent as a “consuming subject” after World War Two, a phenomenon that was interwoven with a larger societal ethos of ‘fun’, but that was also shadowed by the ongoing threat posed by racial and classed Others. Finally, I examine how contemporary discourses of ‘becoming’ continue to position adolescent selves and bodies through notions of decadence, moral degeneration, violence and madness. Furthermore, this ‘becoming’ is to some extent *lived* as a period of madness or instability because of the subject’s ontologically uncertain status: subjectivity is experienced as a lack or an absence, what Lesko describes as not really existing in the present (Lesko, 2001: 89).

I conclude the chapter by returning to the question of subjectivity and its location in relations of power. Here I use one of the key questions/constructions around youth and identity – the importance of the peer group – to interrogate a larger debate in social theory: the relationship between identity and difference. The peer group has been constructed as the key ‘agent of socialization’ in adolescence and yet this has not been translated into a sustained critical examination of what this type of social power might mean for the formation of difference or Otherness. Similarly, the identity/difference debates continue to discuss how certain groups in western societies are excluded politically, economically, culturally and socially through categories of ‘difference’, without addressing the developmental implications behind how certain subjects come to recognize themselves as Other. For example, if adolescence has been constructed - and therefore, at least to some extent, *lived* - as a stage of ‘becoming’ and also as a period where the peer group is of prime importance, then perhaps we need to reconceptualize the somewhat static identity/difference relationship as a more fluid and incomplete

negotiation between *becoming*² and *belonging*. Rather than simply taking up the identity/difference issue after identity has supposedly been “achieved”, this reformulation allows for a much stronger recognition that, following Davies (1993), subjects are “spoken into difference”³ in childhood and adolescence, through specific discourses and social practices that bear closer examination.

The Journey of the Hero: Pre-Modern Conceptions of Youth

Contrary to popular belief, adolescence in its modern incarnation is neither a universal nor transhistorical phenomenon, and is instead embedded in concrete economic, social and cultural shifts taking place over the last two centuries in western societies. While there are some similarities between feudal and modern notions of youth, there are also some important differences. For instance, according to Griffin, pre-industrial European society had a less clear cut distinction between childhood and other pre-adult stages of development (Griffin, 1993: 12).⁴ Even puberty was not considered as much of a physiological marker, because childhood, youth and adulthood were defined less chronologically, and more in terms of dependence/separation from one's family (1993: 2).⁵ In pre-industrial, pre-capitalist Europe (where the organization of family, community

² This italicizing is meant to distinguish my conceptualizing of the term (as linked specifically to belonging in peer culture), from the standard narratives of ‘becoming’ that are part of both academic and mainstream discourses of adolescence.

³ Davies’ phrase is actually “speaking and being spoken into existence” (1993: 20-21). My re-formulation is meant to suggest that subjects are not simply spoken into existence/being during adolescence, but that this being (or becoming) is actually tied to whether they are able to belong or whether they are constructed as Other.

⁴ Gillis contends that the Latin terms *puer* (child) and *adolescens* were used interchangeably until the eighteenth century (1974: 1).

⁵ According to Gillis, physical and sexual maturity were not considered of great consequence because children were used to assuming adult sex roles earlier, and the onset of puberty was not signified through

and identity was governed by a feudal system), the modern narrative of youth as a universal period of fun, danger, irresponsibility and identity struggles must be read against the existence of rigid hierarchies both within families and between classes. Sons and daughters were subject to paternal authority; in this regard, the *pater familias* was simply an extension of larger social hierarchies embodied in the divine right of kings, *le droit de seigneur*, and the upholding of an impregnable 'caste' system. This is not to say, however, that there was no differentiation between youth and adulthood but, to a large extent, status differences rendered this distinction highly specific to certain classes within the feudal system. For example, western literature is rife with romanticized views of youth and its journey to adulthood - from early Greek plays to Shakespearean literature - but these 'heroes' were always male and generally members of the aristocracy. Youth for artisans, laborers and serfs in feudal society generally meant either a period of apprenticeship, marriage for the economic benefit of families, or simply being old enough to take up the identity/status of one's father within the social hierarchy.⁶

Moreover, even within the aristocracy, the narrative of the tragic or romantic young hero⁷ was governed by economic and social concerns. In these stories, the passage

change in dress, behavior or other manifestations of 'maturity' (1974: 6): "...they were dressed as miniature adults and permitted to use the manners and language of adult society. The future Louis XIII was provided with adult garb as early as his fifth birthday, being told at that time... 'Monsieur, now your bonnet is removed, you are no longer a child; you begin to become a man.'" (David Hunt. *Parents and Children in History: Psychology of Family Life in Early Modern France*. New York: Basics Books, 1970, p.180. Cited in Gillis, 1974: 9).

⁶ According to Gillis, "many a lad followed his father's plow from the age of 7 or 8 without thought to alternatives" (1974: 5).

⁷ For example, a foundational narrative underpinning western culture is Sophocles' play *Oedipus Rex*, a story built around the myth of the hero's journey. Although the events in the story are shaped by an understanding of 'fate', the youthful hero leaves his family (and identity), in an attempt to make a new life for himself, in effect to be named within the social. Another key narrative may be found in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, which takes up the Arthurian legend. Here again we see the story of the boy hero becoming a man through various trials and tribulations, in order to be recognized, that is to find an identity within the

from boyhood to manhood can be only be won through epic encounters with adversity, but this 'quest' plot romanticized the economic and social insolvency of many young men in the aristocracy. According to Cohen (1999: 189), the existence of "wandering knights" in the middle ages can be traced to the problem of younger sons in the aristocracy, whose fathers were either unwilling or unable (because of primogeniture laws), to provide them with adequate patrimony. Even within the aristocracy, the hero's journey as a story of youth struggling to name itself and be named must therefore be understood in the context of material difficulties. As Cohen points out:

...chivalric codes and military adventures had a severely practical function – to master the martial and social arts, and thus enhance their attractiveness as suitors, or to acquire land and other possessions for the same purpose. The institution of knighthood thus did for the lesser nobility what the 'putting out' of young people as apprentices and servants to other households did for artisans and peasants – it postponed marriage, absorbed surplus offspring and generally eased the strains which inheritance systems were undergoing in reproducing these class positions in the later Middle Ages" (1999: 89).

While the aristocracy, at least to some extent, could maintain a view of youth as a period of adventure, romance, and the realization of inherent nobility, the passage to adulthood for the lower classes generally meant taking up pre-ordained positions of social and economic subordination within the feudal order. Surplus children were "put out" as apprentices or servants to other households (Gillis, 1974: 8; Cohen, 1999: 221; Bulcroft et al, 2000: 67-69).⁸ Although youth living away from home had a relative amount of freedom from parental households, usually the 'master' functioned *in loco parentis* vis à

social. However, in keeping with the times, it should be noted that both these narratives are not so much stories of creating or inventing an identity, but the 'discovery' of a 'royal' or aristocratic identity, and in the Arthurian story, this discovery is a reward for his suffering.

⁸ As Gillis points out, children as young as eight years of age were "put out" to other families and households to be trained as domestics or apprentices. This had the additional benefit of freeing families from the economic expense of raising the child (1974: 7).

vis moral direction, control and obligation. Youth culture and peer group relations occurred in the presence of adults and were essentially a means of regulating heterosexual interaction, and even this was of secondary importance to economic considerations. Furthermore, romantic attachments were governed by social class, proximity and above all family and community approbation. Again, the romanticized conceptions of young rebellious love that have informed modern discourses of adolescence (as depicted, for example, in William Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet*), did not generally extend beyond members of the elite. According to Bulcroft, in pre-industrial Europe, people married late or not at all, and romantic attachment and marriage were not considered to be markers of adult status in the same way that they are in contemporary western societies.⁹ Many young people chose to remain permanently single in order to avoid the restrictiveness and responsibility of family life and to care for aging parents and siblings (Bulcroft, 2000: 67-69; Miller, 1998: 12).

It is important to keep in mind that the idea of youth as a struggle over identity and autonomy did not play out in quite the same fashion in pre-industrial Europe, because one's status within the hierarchy was already determined by birth and family occupation. In societies where difference was more clearly and visibly structured, the passage to adulthood was less an open-ended project of 'becoming'; it appears as if one often 'became' one's father or mother in terms of stabled identity. As Moretti points out, in feudal societies, who one was, was largely a matter of birth: individual status and identity

⁹ Miller would disagree with this; according to her, the transition from single status to couple and/or family was actually very important, and marked the possibility of attaining a certain kind of power within the community (1998: 13). However, she would concur with Bulcroft's point that a large portion of young people never married at all, mainly for economic reasons.

derived from the family that one was born into and one's position in that family (Moretti, 1987: 185, cited in Johnson, 1993: 36).

Adolescence and the Rise of Industrial Capitalism

Pre-modern European societies had a more fluid understanding of youth as a period between childhood and adulthood; for instance, the term 'adolescence' did not come into use until the rise of modern capitalism.¹⁰ This suggests that the economic, social and political changes sweeping through Europe were both productive of and produced by changes in the norms governing these 'life stages'.¹¹ What scholars refer to, perhaps erroneously, as the "discovery" of adolescence is directly related to the impact of industrialization on family, community, class relations and emerging ideologies of autonomous selfhood (Griffin, 1993: 12; Neubauer, 1994: 124).

According to Cohen, the systems of apprenticeship and inheritance affecting youth in pre-modern Europe did not disappear with the advent of either industrialization or capitalism, but were instead modified. "Putting out" was replaced by the capitalist "putting out" work to the family, as first cottage industry and later factory work transformed the family into a set of wage laborers. Children now earned wages, could

¹⁰ According to Philippe Ariès (1973), even childhood was not an historical constant in European societies: in the medieval world, children were seen and treated as miniature adults (*Centuries of Childhood*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, cited in Miller, 1998: 130-131).

¹¹ This does not mean that the shift from feudal to industrial notions of youth was either smooth or even linear. Miller describes moments of tension around the place of youth as far back as the 1300s. According to her, during this period the plague struck, wiping out a sizeable portion of the population in Europe and leading to at least temporary social upheaval: "young people confident that they could buy good land with the savings from their wages, deserted family farms to escape the oppressive authority of lords and peasant fathers alike. In the face of unprecedented mobility, the class discipline of the lords crumbled; fathers lost the power to dictate their sons' future course" (1998: 7).

marry sooner and were 'liberated' from the hierarchy of the family (Cohen, 1999: 220; Bulcroft, 2000: 71). Live-in servants and apprentices became too expensive to maintain and masters lost control over the mobile portions of the youthful population (Bulcroft, 2000: 71). Cities expanded because of factory production and mechanization and urban migration led to the breaking up of peasant families, as young people who formerly would have trained as apprentices in traditional crafts began working in the manufacturing sector (Griffin, 1993: 12-13). In addition, colonial projects created a niche for able-bodied young men to 'find their fortunes' in the new world (Gillis, 1974: 20). Finally, the development of moneyed classes alongside a decaying aristocracy created a set of young people whose financial security rested neither on the limited resources of land and title nor on the necessity of indentured labor.

Coloring this new social and economic landscape were changing conceptions of community, nation and individual selfhood. Under the impact of capitalist production relations and the political doctrines of democracy and liberalism, the nature of, and relations among, states, communities, families and individuals were being completely re-defined. For example, according to Miller:

Patriarchal relations *within* most forms of proto-industrial households were rearranged and weakened as well, with regard to both gender and age...in general peasants could marry only after many years of saving were supplemented by land or other wealth passed on to them from the older generation. The children of proto-industrial workers, by contrast, could frequently marry and set up viable households without their parents' help or consent as they reached "adulthood"...parents not only lost much of their leverage with regard to the marriage-making of the younger generation, but the new arrangements also undermined their ability to make binding agreements about subsistence in old age with their children and thus loosened the structural connections between the generations (1998: 70).

The nation-state as the successor to the feudal lord and the church, came increasingly to organize familial relations through marriage and labor laws, individual

rights of property, voting and so on. State policies around family and youth were embedded in both a capitalist ideology of productivity, employment and work (Griffin, 1993: 64-65), and the liberal conception of the autonomous individual. Democratic ideals of justice and equality produced new questions about citizenship and the rights of every man (sic) to such things as liberty, property, and education.

According to Best, the development of the public school system in the 19th century must also be identified as a crucial 'turning point' in the history of adolescence and youth culture, not simply because of the democratizing of education, but because public schools became central in the management and organization of the social body and the maintenance of class inequalities (2000: 5). As Curtis points out, alongside concerns with building social peace and harmony, "educational reformers in the governing classes consistently stressed...the necessity and the beauty of class differences" (1988: 13). Moreover, although working class children were now offered an alternative to early employment (and over time, through child labor laws, legally required to attend school until a certain age), this situation created a youth population that was more economically dependent on the family and state than in previous generations. The partial autonomy that youth experienced in pre-industrial times declined. Public education also created age cohorts: peer groups moved from being part of the social fabric of the feudal community, to a determining feature of both childhood and youth.¹² Youth was poised to become a distinct culture, with its own rituals, institutional life, and biographical experiences.

¹² It should be stated that even in pre-modern times, peer groups were an important part of the social fabric for youth. According to Miller, in the feudal era, same sex peer groups, both informal and formal (i.e. associations), were central parts of young people's lives and these relationships often continued on into adulthood because many young people did not have the resources to marry (1998: 13). Miller also points out that during the industrial stage, the rise of 'brotherhoods' or more formal youth organizations was very much about "policing the morality of its members" (1998: 58); this description is quite similar to what has been observed about modern peer culture.

During this period of tumultuous social change, three discourses in particular played a key role in how youth was beginning to be represented socially: the liberal conception of the autonomous self/individual; the “child-loving” gaze of the Victorian era; and the gendered, racialized and classed nature of evolutionary theories of human development. These three radically different social logics operated sometimes in direct contradiction to one another to produce a set of discourses around youth as a period of pleasure, freedom, danger and responsibility that needed to be closely monitored and regulated by societal groups increasingly occupied with creating certain types of citizenry. Youth, as Lesko points out, became a metaphor for both the potentiality and the danger of the emerging body politic:

In the gender, race and generational upheavals of the turn of the century, the adolescent was newly made as a multilayered object, a “multi-accented”, polysemic being. The adolescent was an object that could be discussed, diagnosed, scientized, differentiated, and familiarized in terms of unsettled race relations, economic prospects, emerging manliness, purity, and future preparedness as citizen and soldier. In these ways, the modern adolescent was always promiscuous, always ready to indicate and exemplify national crises, and a perfect trope for worry, study and action-taking (Lesko, 2001: 47).

The development of a liberal model of selfhood that stressed individual rights, freedoms, and responsibilities was first and foremost a concern with an adult subject who had specific social attributes (i.e. white, male, heterosexual and moneyed). The discursive construction of an autonomous subject within a democratic, capitalist regime also drew upon Cartesian notions of a rational self occupying a body, without that body having any significant impact. Because childhood and adolescence were becoming increasingly defined in chronological rather than social terms, both these periods of selfhood were positioned outside the realm of the rational autonomous self. Although they were relatively unstable and ill-defined categories, the social recognition of their difference

from the period of adulthood meant that, in both mainstream and academic debates around the individual, the child and the adolescent were seen as incomplete subjects, in a state of “perpetual becoming” (Lesko, 2001: 63), the nature of which rendered them outside the boundaries of the rational, autonomous self.

This exclusion was perpetuated by the romanticizing of childhood and youth that occurred amongst the bourgeoisie in the Victorian era (Lesko, 2001: 66-67; Scheie, 2002:124). The eroticizing of childhood innocence (seen for example in the work of Lewis Carroll) was juxtaposed with the awakening sexuality of youth and its potential for tragedy. Novels such as Goethe’s *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, in which a young man scorned in love commits suicide, fostered a notion of youth as a period of emotional, physical and mental instability, and yet strangely also as one of tremendous excitement, adventure and romance. Youth, in a society whose adult population was beginning to be preoccupied with aging, became a metaphor for all that was lost upon entering adulthood; as Lesko points out, it was seen as a “melancholy fix” for a golden time in one’s life that once gone, was gone forever (2001: 66-67).

Alongside the liberal discourse of a rational, autonomous self which excluded youth, and the romanticized view of adolescence common amongst the Victorian bourgeoisie and middle classes, there existed a third narrative, one which links the birth of *modern* adolescence with colonial masculinist projects both at home and abroad. Darwinian evolutionary theories, which were slowly displacing the Judeo-Christian creation myth, were used to justify slavery, women’s legal and social inequality, and the grinding poverty of the under-classes. In the narrative of evolution, certain cultures, populations and groups were in an advanced state of civilization, while others were

barely ahead of animals. Although linked in this “great chain of being” (Lesko, 2001: 50-55; Cohen, 1999: 184; Griffin, 1993: 15-16), blacks and other colonized peoples, women, the working class and non-adults were all at an earlier stage of development, in contrast to white, Euro-American, middle-class men, who represented the apex of civilized society. However, unlike the first three populations, the adolescent (who was normatively constructed as western, white, middle-class and male), was capable of moving towards complete development. The adolescent had the intellect, muscles and genetic backing to ‘become’ the ideal civil subject. Adolescence, in fact, was characterized as a period of “purity and vigor” that represented the Barbarian stage of development, and this ‘savage quality’, although it needed to be civilized, should not be completely lost, otherwise those who held economic, social and political power risked the development of a population of emasculated leaders who were incapable of properly governing.

Stories for Boys: Adolescence in the Early to Mid 20th Century

The discourses produced in the early part of the 20th century on adolescence are a crucial part of the making of modern adolescence as a social fact; moreover, the gendered, raced and classed underpinnings of these narratives *continue* to inform contemporary understandings of youthful subjectivity in ways that youth culture theorists need to examine more closely. With the exception of certain scholars (for example, Lesko, 2001; Griffin, 1993; Cohen, 1999), most youth research seems to be oblivious to the fact that adolescence as a modern project of ‘becoming’ is embedded in a whole set of

exclusionary practices that have defined and that continue to define the boundaries of social and legal citizenship in western society.

To begin with, in the early part of the 20th century, both the United States and Britain were caught up in imperial projects of domination at home and abroad. In the U.S., the abolition of slavery as well as widespread immigration created a diverse population not easily contained by state segregation laws; while in Britain, the growing problem of insurgence in the colonies, as well as the working class at home, created concerns over the empire's ability to protect and maintain its economic, social and political interests. In addition to the concerns of colonial and state administrators over the threat of racial Others, there was a growing tension over the legal, political, and social rights of women in so-called liberal democratic societies. Changes in law over voting, education, ownership of property, and even definitions of personhood were accompanied by material shifts in working and family life.¹³ Both informed by and informing these sweeping changes was the development and consolidation of psychology as an administrative science of identification, surveillance, regulation and treatment aimed at producing 'normal' subjects. During these turbulent times, the development of adolescence as a set of discourses and social practices, not coincidentally, served to reinscribe the natural superiority of privileged white men within particular relations of power. As a "newly defined population" in turn-of-the-century United States (Lesko, 2001: 39), it is not an exaggeration to say that adolescence became a focal point for both the hopes and fears of white, privileged males concerning such things as immigration,

¹³ According to Lesko, in the US, by 1930, women comprised nearly 50% of the workforce, rendering traditional notions of masculinity as synonymous with wage-earning and public autonomy increasingly problematic (2001: 38).

anti-miscegenation, colonial uprisings, women's demands for equal rights and freedoms, homosexuality, and the rise of the labor movement.

As I mentioned in chapter one, the 'invention' of adolescence as a distinct and identifiable period is attributed to the psychologist Stanley Hall and his theory of recapitulation. Hall, commonly known as the "father of adolescence", was a practitioner in the growing field of psychology, which attempted to identify certain populations (such as women, homosexuals, non-whites and the underclass), as morally and developmentally inferior and in need of surveillance and treatment. Hall's recapitulation theory, which was based on an evolutionary schema described by theorists as "the great chain of being", contended that adolescence represented a crucial turning point in the life cycle, where a subject either developed into a mature and superior western self or remained in a childlike and savage state of being. The *sturm und drang* of adolescence, in Hall's view, was a necessary period of psychic conflict where the subject struggled between the primitive state of "the stone age baby" and the enlightenment of modern rational man (Cohen, 199: 184). In this struggle, societal efforts needed to be directed towards nurturing youthful "purity and vigor" (Lesko, 2001: 55), but also towards vigilantly monitoring and eradicating any form of precocity. Subjects must be allowed to be young, vigorous and barbaric (within certain boundaries of civilized conduct), but actively discouraged from engaging in prematurely adult behavior, particularly any form of sexuality.¹⁴ In Hall's view, boys must be allowed to be boys and not encouraged to

¹⁴ One of Hall's main concerns was with the "battle against masturbation" (a waste of masculine energy and a form of degenerate behavior), as well as 'premature' sexual encounters (Lesko, 2001: 57-59). Lesko contends that this focus on controlling sexuality was the centerpiece of evolutionary theory and its traces are still visible in contemporary moral panics over teenage mothers in the US (2001: 144). According to her, teenage sexuality represents a frightening form of precocity to adult society that must be contained by preventing subjects from seeing and discussing themselves as sexual beings.

develop either passion or assertiveness; at the same time, in order to avoid the production of weak, ineffectual men, excessive intellectualism was frowned upon.¹⁵ As Curtis points out: "Given the changed political-economic conditions of the world, it had become 'criminal to acquire knowledge merely for the sake of knowledge'" (1988: 28). The production of ideal 'boyhood' required a delicate balancing act on the part of families, educators, and psychologists to keep, "...an aboriginal boyhood uncorrupted by an emasculating civilizing process" (Lesko, 2001: 71), while at the same time cultivating a subject that would eventually take up the reins of the western masculine civilizing project.¹⁶

The creation, disciplining and regulation of (white, male) youth as a means of racialized and gendered nation-building became a near obsession for psychologists in both the US and Britain. The "boyologists" (Lesko, 2001: 45), took up the complex problem of producing subjects who were simultaneously mature without being manly; barbaric and still civilized; disciplined but with unbroken spirits; and heterosexual without being the least bit interested in sex. To this end, these concerns manifested themselves in an obsession with youthful sexuality, leisure time, school and family life, peer relations and self-development. Boys needed to be kept from the unhealthy feminizing influences of both women and 'primitives'. The creation of such organizations

¹⁵ According to Miller, Jan Cohn's work, *Romance and the Erotics of Property: Mass-Market Fiction for Women* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1988), charts the shift from the masculinity of the British aristocrat to that of the American capitalist in the fiction of the times: "In today's fiction, the hero's work is itself virile: it signifies his male energy and power...in most Victorian fiction, in contrast, the hero...was of an active man of business...he was blond, with perfect features and a languid disposition and his power was that of old money and aristocratic authority over dependents. The modern association of social standing...with the active control of capital...is of recent origin" (1998: 120).

¹⁶ See Curtis (1988: 28) on the creation of 'practical education' in a new world context (i.e. Canada in the 19th century): " 'Men' were to be encouraged to develop the 'habit of self-dependence'... 'men who will take the field and whose souls are fired with a zeal for active duties in the service of the world.'"

as the YMCA and Boy Scouts and the encouragement of athleticism in schools represented an active attempt on the part of state agencies and other reformers to create a form of “muscular Christianity”, that would imbue boys with a strong sense of patriotism, acceptance of a given position in the social order and contempt for the Other (i.e. the underprivileged, racial minorities, women and effeminate men) (Lesko, 2001: 77; Griffin, 1993: 12).¹⁷

The boyologists constructed adolescence as a border zone between adult/child, male/female, sexual/asexual, productive/unproductive and self/other; and according to Lesko, contemporary adolescence continues to be defined by the doubled tensions of this historical legacy (Lesko, 2001: 50):

As adolescence was increasingly defined as a separate identifiable stage, easily and necessarily distinct from adults, the adolescent took up qualities of other Others, that is, of savage races and women...in this simultaneous distancing and desiring...denunciation and affirming...problematizing and idealizing...the discourse of Hall and other boyologists was double-voiced, double-accented, desirous of that which it shunned...adolescence today utilizes similar doubled tensions: the mixing of fear/desire, black/white, savage/civilized, emotional/rational, male/female, and adult/child. In this doubling – scientists and presidents proclaiming that we needed the dark virility *and* the white, Christian purity...adolescence as always “becoming”, as constantly “budding”, evokes physicality and sexual charge. The white, manly purity depended upon the movement through the lower stages: *development* simultaneously recognizes the claims of civilized strength and social order, the need for adolescents to become mature, as it recognizes, with pleasure and danger, the tensions of controlling desire (Lesko, 2001: 68).

¹⁷ It is worth noting that youth falling outside the normative frame of reference (i.e. working class boys, minorities or girls), did not engender much interest from the boyologists. Rather than development, it appears as though containment and policing were the order of the day for these groups. For instance, the birth of the juvenile justice system in the US in 1899 was not only a direct line for state intervention into adolescent lives, it also represented a widespread societal fear of blacks, immigrants, lower classes and female sexuality (Lesko, 2001: 82). In fact, the latter were generally charged with “moral crimes”, according to Lesko; either desiring or acting upon desire could land a girl in court, where she was routinely subjected to a vaginal examination to determine virginity (2001: 82-83).

This voyeuristic administrative gaze, which Lesko describes as unmistakably laced with an erotic charge, narrated adolescence as a panacea to the national dangers posed by raced, gendered and classed Others, but contradictorily also imbued it with the status of Other: an Other potentially in the making. It was precisely this potentiality which rendered even normative adolescence so unstable. The boyologists feared that youth's exposure to difference in a modern, democratic society might undermine the existence of well-entrenched hierarchies of race, gender and class. Neither children nor youth could be relied on to reproduce difference automatically. They needed to be monitored vigilantly by adults, and more importantly, encouraged to monitor each other in the maintenance of status differences. In this regard, the concept of 'play', an ostensibly innocuous pastime for children and youth, was directly implicated in projects of control: playground reformers in the US identified certain forms of play as "central to creating young men who had disciplined spirit and would obey superiors. Play came to be revered for making children and adolescents moral and strong via direct and efficient processes, unlike the passive, unfocused and feminized school curriculum" (Lesko, 2001: 75). Furthermore, playground reformers worked to make the peer group an extension of the adult gaze, where boys would police other boys when adults were absent (Lesko, 2001: 75-77). The peer group became constructed as the eye of the social, but its success in creating and maintaining status difference was constantly mediated by the growing autonomy of a youth culture that was showing incipient signs of cultural hybridity, reckless regard for the hidebound traditions of earlier generations and a penchant for creating its own forms of social hierarchy and status that were tied, but not reducible to, larger social categories of gender, race and class.

The Consuming Desires of Post 1950s Youth

Although the notion of youth as a distinct population became firmly entrenched in the first half of the 20th century, its potential as a consumer market only gathered momentum after World War II. Prior to this, the existence of a commercial youth culture between 1900 and 1930 in the US was limited to members of the elite; however, even privileged youth who were part of the “jazz age” of dance halls, cinemas and fraternities were hard hit in during the 1930s depression (Osgerby, 2002: 17).¹⁸ It was during the 1940s that the first signs of youth-focused commercialism began to take hold: the term “teenager” came into existence and magazines such as *Seventeen* were launched in the recognition that teenage consumption was an idea whose time had come (Osgerby, 2002: 18).

The post war renewal of the American economy, which went hand in hand with a huge demographic shift characterized as the “baby boom”, created an era of prosperity, where (white middle class) adolescence came to be seen as a signifier for the new politics of leisure pervading American culture.¹⁹ The middle class had money to spare and youth

¹⁸ One conceptual problem I find in a great deal of the literature is an unwillingness to specify the subject under study. For example, Osgerby's point about the Jazz Age uses the term ‘youth’ vaguely, and allows for a reading of youth as either ‘teenagers’ or young ‘college’ people in their twenties. This confusion runs across the youth literature, which at times defines modern adolescence in varying chronological sets (i.e. 13-19, 11-19, 13-21 etc.), and at other times, through social markers (high school, college, financial dependence, marital status etc.). This convenient vagueness is a good illustration of what Lesko describes in Foucauldian terms as “panoptical time”, where adolescence represents a temporal narrative that can be displayed, manipulated (and I would add changed) in various contexts (2001: 107), according to society's changing discourses around youth.

¹⁹ From here onwards, I will be focusing on American cultural narratives around adolescence, since the section on sub-cultural theory in chapter one was devoted to discussing British youth culture. It is, however, important to point out, after World War II, that American and British discourses on youth begin to diverge, due in part to the post war geopolitical shifts (i.e. Britain's status as a failed imperial power versus the new superpower identity of the US). In Britain, postwar concerns over youth were formulated heavily in terms of class: the middle class teenage consumer in Britain was assumed to be a dupe being lured away from traditional British values by American mass culture (Griffin, 1997: 11), while working class youth culture became the focus of increasing anxiety about delinquency, class warfare and moral decay (Hall and Jefferson, 1975: 9; Johnson, 1993: 38-39).

was the most obvious signpost of this prosperity. As Osgerby points out, “the 1950s...[saw] youth emerge as both a potent economic force and a compelling cultural influence...a generational cohort of unprecedented numbers, with unique levels of disposable income and an apparent thirst for the exciting opportunities opened up by post-war affluence...” (2002: 5).

Accompanying these social changes were subtle shifts in the narratives around youth and adolescence. Again, Lesko’s point about the doubled tensions of youth’s history resonates strongly, when we examine the blatant contradictions in post-war societal understandings/inventions of adolescence. One dominant narrative was that childhood and youth were periods of “fun” and “structured irresponsibility.” In sharp contrast to the first half of the century, where youth was explicitly constructed as bearing the weight of protecting and perpetuating a certain national imaginary, societal ‘experts’ (this time in the form of behavioral psychologists), encouraged a new “morality of fun”, where children and adolescents could be brought into the social order “painlessly”, in a manner akin to what Fine and Mechling describe as, “taking one’s polio vaccine on a sugar cube” (1993: 124). In this new “fun morality”, children and youth were supposed to be kept apart from the more utilitarian aspects of society: their labor wasn’t needed and even schooling must be made enjoyable (Fine and Mechling, 1993: 124). This reemergence of a romanticized conception of youthful “frivolity” as normal and innocent (Gillis, 1974: 141), tied remarkably well into the consuming patterns of young people, who were free to spend money on all the latest music, clothing etc., as an indication of the carefree social and economic status that they held, particularly in contrast to the financial responsibilities of their parents (Osgerby, 2002: 16).

However, undercutting this ethics of fun was a counter-discourse of equal significance, informed by both academic and popular concerns with “the malignant cultural fallout of the consumer boom” (Osgerby, 2002: 19). Politicians, academics, writers and media warned of the dangers of a rising “mass culture” of conformity, rampant consumerism, narcissism and impoverished cultural values (Osgerby, 2002: 19-20; Fine and Mechling, 1993: 125-126; Best, 2000: 7; Johnson, 1993: 38). In this scenario, youth was simultaneously victim and purveyor of crass commercialism and mindless conformity; young people were dictating the styles, music and trends of the day, and their tastes were clearly execrable.²⁰ Youth, because of its inability to distinguish between ‘real’ culture and ‘junk’ culture, and because of its desire to ‘fit in’ with peer groups, needed to be monitored closely and aided in its precarious identity formation by the family, school, state and psychologists (Johnson, 1993: 44; Fine and Mechling, 1993: 125). As Johnson points out, adolescents’ preoccupation with disposable forms of culture, coupled with their apparently limitless consuming desires, were constructed, once again, as a gauge for where modern American society as a whole was headed:

...This identification of youth as both symbol and victim of modernity is a phenomenon not only of this period, but is characteristic of the way in which particular anxieties about modernity as a set of social conditions have typically been expressed since the eighteenth century...the more... unstable and precarious...the social order or the social norms...the stronger is the image of youth and its use to register these anxieties (1993: 35-36).

Alongside the celebration of youth as a period of ‘fun’ and irresponsibility, and the condemnation of youth as the symbol of a lamentable obsession with consumerism,

²⁰ Osgerby cites various examples of this underlying hostility towards a youth aesthetic: “The high school set makes its own decisions about what to buy and where to buy it, often dragging their parents along in their wake” (Eugene Gilbert, in *Harper’s Magazine*, November 1959, cited in Osgerby, 2002: 15), and “Are Teenagers taking over?...a vast, determined band of blue-jeaned storm troopers forcing us to do what they dictate (Richard Geham, in *Cosmopolitan*, 1957, cited in Osgerby, 2002: 19).

existed a third narrative: the worry over youthful criminality (Fine and Mechling, 1993: 125; Osgerby, 2002: 22; Gillis, 1974: 201). The prosperity of the post war era was shadowed by worries over growing crime (which was blamed on minorities and lower classes). In this social context, the 'juvenile delinquent' became a key emblem not only of (racialized, classed) difference, but of the dangerous influences of this difference on normative youth (i.e. white, middle class). A major parental worry was that through peer interaction, popular culture (i.e. rock music), and the growth of a commercial youth market, lower class (and other) values and behavior were "infecting" good, middle class adolescents (Osgerby, 2002: 23; Fine and Mechling, 1993: 126):

By distinguishing between "good" and "bad" adolescents and by blaming the mass media (comic books, films, television, and rock and roll music), parents and some experts worked at creating an image of a normal teenager to match the image of the normal middle-class child...part of the process of the professional middle class's defining itself in the 1950s was connecting juvenile delinquency with the lower classes. The "discovery" of poverty in the 1960s helped solidify the professional middle class's identity by clarifying what it *was not* – namely poor, black, or brown, and uneducated (Fine and Mechling, 1993: 126).

Austin and Willard point out that these concerns revolved around whether, "the insidious mixing of races and social classes in the public schools and in popular culture [was] producing a generation of gang members, murderers, sluts, layabouts and delinquents" (1998: 2). Here again we can see that the concern over youths' susceptibility to the corrosive influences of the Other mirrored the boyologists' early fears around adolescence: an unstable period of identity formation with the potential for undermining or even erasing socially constructed differences of race or class that were responsible for maintaining certain groups' privileges in society. Griffin argues that transition and threat as dominant narratives of youth are infused with concerns that subjects are not

accommodating to adult forms of authority (1993: 68); however, this is not simply in terms of hedonistic lifestyles or declining forms of democracy and civility. The instability of modern adolescence, relative to its feudal counterpart, stems from the more open-ended possibilities of whom subjects might become and, as a consequence, the new social and institutional forms that they may produce. In feudal times, hierarchies were more stable as one often 'became' one's father, in the sense of inheriting his role, social position, work identity or estate. The modern experience of 'becoming' for youth involves more complex choices in terms of lifestyle, sexuality, work/ profession, and the myriad ways in which difference and Otherness can be constructed and lived.

Postmodern, Postcolonial, Postfeminist – or just Postal? The Lunatic Subjectivities of Contemporary Adolescence

Contemporary narratives of adolescence are rooted in the complex and contradictory constructions of youth that have pervaded modern western societies. At different times, youth has been constructed as rebellious, innocent, libidinous, dangerous and, above all, unstable, because it is caught in the borderlands between childhood and adulthood. The "undecidability"²¹ of adolescence is a powerful rhetorical device that allows both experts and non-experts to fashion, willy-nilly, a discourse around youth that continues to be filled with contradiction. As Griffin points out, the category 'youth' as both the strange and familiar continues to be an ideological focus for adult fear, longing, pity and contempt (1993: 23): Adolescence as a set of discourses and subject positions is constructed and regulated by an adult gaze, which is simultaneously desiring and

²¹ Again, I am drawing upon Sarup's term "undecidables": those subjects who are outside the parameters of civil society (1996: 9). Also, Macleod's use of Derrida's concept of the "undecidable", which she appropriates to describe the discourse of adolescent subjectivity (2003: 421).

disdainful; adolescent bodies are colonized through specific social practices and young people are subjected to adult forms of authority and control, while they contend with the often rigid social hierarchies of peer culture. Finally, they are imprisoned in an ontological no-man's-land, in what Brannen et al (2002: 517) describe as an "extended present" or what I would argue is a suspended mode of subjectivity: adolescents cannot lay claim to any form of 'stable' identity as it has been defined in modern western societies. Although childhood is a period of selfhood that is also characterized by forms of powerlessness, at the very least, it occupies the counterpoint position to adulthood, within the narrative of development. The relatively recent identification of adolescence as a particular biological, emotional and social 'stage' associated with certain experiences unsettles the child/adult binary but does not meaningfully undermine it. According to Macleod:

The adolescent is defined by what she lacks – she no longer possesses the characteristics ascribed to children (presumably innocence, naturalness, etc.), but she also has not reached the ultimate state of adulthood...adolescence is 'decided', to a certain degree, by portraying it as a normal stage of transition between childhood and adulthood. A discourse of 'transition' makes undecidability acceptable (2003: 426).

This transitional or suspended mode of being means that adolescents exist in the borderlands of subjectivity. They are caught in a prolonged moment of 'endless becoming', and although the dynamism of the latter term seems to belie the static quality of suspension, at closer glance, there is no real contradiction. To be neither one thing nor another, but instead positioned in-between is to be simultaneously suspended between two modes of 'stable' selfhood, while constantly in motion. As Lesko puts it, this leads to the conflicted experiences of becoming, but not being (2001: 89; 123-129).

Furthermore, according to Lesko, the drama of adolescence is played out to an adult audience through a variety of intersecting and opposing storylines. In one version, the audience views, with affectionate amusement, the ostensibly trivial concerns of youth, through a “panoptical gaze” that turns youth into a cartoon-like spectacle. Youth itself is supposed to take every moment seriously and ‘live in the now’, but the audience has prescient knowledge of the meaningless and ultimately temporary nature of adolescent ‘angst’ (2001: 132). However, this amused contempt is curiously layered by both nostalgia and resentment: adolescence is at one and the same time perceived to be a period of conflict and confusion, self-absorption and hedonism, freedom and irresponsibility. The gaze operates here as director, actor and audience: in true postmodern form, adults want both to watch and comment on the performance of adolescence from a safe distance, have stylistic control over it, as well as participate in it.²²

Adolescence in mainstream media is also narrated through a discourse of degeneration symbolized by rising crime rates in American society, rising violence in American schools, rampant consumerism, and the erosion of high culture by teen-fueled

²² An excellent example of this ‘view from everywhere’ is the Hollywood movie *American Beauty* that represents both the adult gaze and its interlocutor (interestingly, the film’s title refers to a type of rose - used throughout the movie as a prop - where the flower can only bloom by killing the buds on its stem). The film is narrated by an aging, middle class suburbanite who longs to recapture the innocence and irresponsibility of his youth. Youth is represented variously by his teenage daughter who is ‘typically’ miserable, self-hating and full of attitude (adolescence as painful and conflict driven); his daughter’s beautiful friend who is vain, mean-spirited and apparently sexually precocious (adolescence as hedonistic and self absorbed); and his daughter’s boyfriend, a drug dealer who films random events (i.e. paper bags tossing in the wind), because he sees so much beauty in the world that he can hardly stand it (adolescence as innocent and idealistic). The narrator attempts to retrieve his youth by trading in his nice car for a typical teen ‘hot rod’, quitting his corporate job to work at a fast food drive-through, smoking up with the dealer boyfriend and trying to sleep with his daughter’s friend. In the end he is killed by the boyfriend’s homophobic military father, but the narrator’s voiceover reminds us that every moment of life should be appreciated and although ‘we’ don’t understand him right now, someday we will. Presumably the ‘we’ represents the adolescent audience (once again infantilized), which is told to love life, even as the movie (which has been about how horrible and soul destroying adulthood is) ends with the character’s death.

popular culture. In this storyline, young people are both the perpetrators and victims of social chaos, and they must be stopped *and* saved. Youthful energy is wasted on disposable culture, an obsession with sex, and useless or violent leisure pursuits. According to Austin and Willard, newspapers depict young people as animalistic and alien beings; as they point out, youth in mainstream media occupies a bifurcated social identity, “as a vicious threatening sign of social decay and ‘our best hope for the future’” (Austin and Willard, 1998: 2; also see Giroux, 1998: 25; and Epstein, 1998: 4). Much of the academic literature follows a similar same path by constructing young people as apathetic, apolitical hedonists who’d rather ‘have a good time’ than display any form of social consciousness.

In terms of the public sphere, youth ‘issues’ (often defined quite narrowly through concerns with violence, drugs, suicide etc.), shape policy and public discourse (Fine and Mechling, 1993; McLaughlin and Heath, 1993), but even when young people’s voices are included, they speak from a position outside the political machine (Giroux, 1998: 24). As Jones and Wallace suggest, the status of adolescents as civil subjects, with rights and responsibilities is, in actuality, a form of “citizenship by proxy” (1992:151-154), given their social, economic and cultural dependence on family, school and state. However, despite the fact that young people are actively excluded from the political arena – being in a waiting room of sorts vis à vis citizenship rights – their lack of interest is perceived as apathetic and irresponsible, rather than a fairly normal response to powerlessness. They are again stereotyped as “ignorant, apathetic and cynical”, and often identified as a key reason for declining democratic values, civility and political participation (Buckingham, 1999: 123-124).

Constructed as objects of ambivalence - caught between discourses of childhood freedom and adult responsibility – young people are under constant surveillance by a voyeuristic adult gaze that watches their processes of *becoming* with fear, speculation, resentment and desire. This gaze renders them simultaneously invisible within the adult landscape of political and social power, and frighteningly caricatured as objects of adult fascination, desire and control (Epstein, 1998: 4; Giroux, 1998: 25). Youthful bodies, energy and sexuality are not only ideals for an aging population, they are a continuing source of envy and erotic desire. According to Giroux, although adolescents have traditionally displayed subversive identities through the body, "...through oppositional sub-cultural styles, transgressive sexuality and disruptive desires" (Giroux, 1998: 28-29), the new representational politics of youth commodify and control youthful bodies, thus erasing their presence as subjects and reinserting them as objects within adult oriented spaces (Giroux, 1998: 32). The spectacle of youthful alienation from adult society has become a marketable product in diverse forms (music, film, fashion) (Epstein, 1998: 17). A hip, cool MTV culture caters to an adult (male) viewer, and is peopled with adolescent girls and boys who strut their stuff to an objectifying adult gaze that refuses to acknowledge their presence as subjects, at the same time as it fetishizes youthful bodies, images and discourses:

A recent, highly publicized example of this is the controversial 1995 Calvin Klein jeans advertising campaign...in these advertisements, coquettish girls flash their breasts and white panties, and lounging boys display black nail polish, tattoos, and bulging briefs...a low gravelly, off-camera voice prods the kids with questions such as "Do you like to take direction?" and "Ya think you can rip that shirt off ya? That's a nice body. You work out?"..., evoking the dialogue of a low-budget porn flick ((Giroux, 1998: 35).

Coming full circle from the boyologists' desiring gaze, which sought to deny and erase the disturbing reality of adolescent sexuality, even as it watched in guilty fascination, the adult gaze in postmodernity now openly eroticizes its object: teenage sexuality, style and embodiment are not only titillating, they are constructed as ideals. Yet, even as this gaze devours the culture of youth, it dismisses it as meaningless.²³

Furthermore, as scholars such as Giroux, Lesko, Griffin and Cohen point out, the eroticized spectacle of adolescence as it is constructed by an adult gaze represents a colonizing of the Other's body in disturbingly similar fashion to other Others. In fact there are strong parallels to be made between adolescents and certain groups (i.e. women, minorities, the poor, prisoners and the mentally ill), that have been economically, politically, socially and culturally marginalized in society. For one thing, adolescent bodies are spatially regulated in ways similar to marginalized subjects: like women historically relegated to the private sphere, minorities and poor people tucked away in ghettos and slums, prisoners in prisons and patients in mental hospitals, adolescents are "sequestered" for a large percentage of their time in an institutional setting where they are under constant surveillance (i.e. they required to go to class, risk detention if they are tardy, have specific time allotted to lunch, and often must ask permission even to use the washroom). Again in a fashion similar to women, minorities, prisoners and mental

²³ Both mainstream and academic narratives of youth focus on the spectacle of youth through symbols such as dance, music, dress, ritual and even food (witness the ongoing concern with adolescent eating disorders and nutrition). Postcolonial, feminist and class based theories have explored the exoticizing of the Other through such feminized, racialized practices as dress, ritual, food etc. These differences offer up the possibility of what Bauman describes as the identity of the tourist, to members of the respective dominant group (men, whites, the middle class or adults), without having either to negotiate the lived realities of the particular world, or recognize the Other's humanity: "The tourists want to immerse themselves in a strange and bizarre element...on condition, though, that it will not stick to the skin and thus can be shaken off whenever they wish...in the tourist's world, the strange is tame, domesticated, and no longer frightens; shocks come in a package deal with safety" (Bauman, 1996: 29-30). It should be pointed out that Bauman himself does not appear concerned with the exploitative nature of this identity, and discusses it only in the context of new postmodern forms of identity available to subjects.

patients who were historically denied access to certain spatial freedoms and behaviors, adolescents are subject to specific prohibitions (for example, before a certain age they cannot buy alcohol or cigarettes; they are also not allowed to be in certain areas, like bars and strip clubs). Their bodies are seen as uncontrollable and dangerous; moreover, since they cannot seemingly exercise self-control (being victims of hormones and physical development), they must be institutionally controlled and contained. Further, adolescents are reduced to their biology: their development is naturalized in spite of the fact that these biological and universal changes are embedded in changing social contexts.²⁴

Finally, the sequestering of adolescents has created age cohorts and peer cultures that have their own problematic and painful hierarchies. For reasons such as the educational system, the desire for power and status on the part of subjects who are relatively powerless, and the imitation of larger societal norms and structures, North American high schools are a breeding ground for all manner of exclusionary practices, some of which can be directly tied to larger relations of power (i.e. race, gender, class and sexuality), but some of which have their own internal logics (see, for example, Adler and Adler, 2002; Griffiths, 1995; Bettie, 2000).²⁵ Youth research has documented the ways in

²⁴ According to Gillis, physical growth occurred later and more gradually in pre-industrial populations (6). For example, in Norway in 1850, menarche occurred at an average age of 17 years, as compared to 13 ½ (1974: 7), some 100 years later (Lesko contends that there has been a drop every decade in the time of menarche (2001: 63)). And boys, who in 1900, achieved full physical growth only by the age of 23, were by the 1970s, fully developed at 17 (2001: 188). Of course, much of this is attributed to improvements in nutrition and health, but it still indicates the social and cultural specificity of so-called 'natural' and biological events such as puberty.

²⁵ It is vitally important to recognize that these practices are not some direct reproduction of class, race or gender hierarchies in adult society, as many youth researchers would have us believe. Bettie's article offers a good illustration of the ways in which high school cliques disrupt or complicate macro relations of power. Bettie describes the problem of middle-class *Latinas*, who performed a working-class identity in order to 'belong', in their particular clique at school (these girls were known as and called themselves *las chicas*). These middle class subjects worked hard to avoid being perceived as trying to be white, but because of their whitened class status, found it difficult at times. In the words of one girl: "The Mexican Mexicans, they aren't worried about whether they're Mexican or not" (Bettie, 2000: 21). Similarly, in Griffiths' study

which adolescent subjects construct and live difference and otherness in an environment where surviving high school seems to be a dominating theme. As Lesko points out, a school's politics become a teenager's everyday psychology and this becomes intensely problematic in light of the fact that both non-adults and adults seem to accept as a given that high school is a hostile place for most students (2001: 173). For instance, many mainstream teen TV shows and movies are centered on the issue of belonging in this hostile environment. One example is the popular television show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, a supernatural comedy/drama taking place in an American high school 'built on the Hellmouth' (a mystical hot-spot for vampires, demons and witches). Many of the show's supernatural themes were thinly veiled metaphors for the painful experiences of high school; according to the show's creator, Joss Whedon, "Sunnydale High is based on every high school in America because so many kids feel like their school is built on a Hellmouth".²⁶ A recent spate of articles on the problem of bullying in mainstream magazines and newspapers suggests that this may not be far from the truth. According to *People* magazine, "The U.S. Department of Education reports that 77% of middle and high school students in small Midwestern towns have been bullied...160,000 children skip school each day because of intimidation by their peers".²⁷ While it is important, when reading these reports, to keep in mind the problematic media construction of youth,

of girls' friendships in British schools, she found that although girls' physical closeness did draw accusations of lesbianism (mirroring larger societal fears around homosexuality), there was actually an organized system of same-sex 'crushing': if a younger girl had a 'crush' on an older girl, she must write to the older girl and ask her permission to have her as the object of a crush. If this was given, the younger girl was allowed to display her crush publicly, by running errands, walking with and sometimes even holding hands with the object of her affection (Griffiths, 1995: 58-60).

²⁶ (Interview with Joss Whedon, in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, season one, DVD)

²⁷ *People* magazine, June 4, 2001, "Disarming the rage", pp.56-61.

there is no gainsaying events such as Columbine, which occurred, at least ostensibly, because the killers were actively persecuted by peers:

...Klebold and Harris...were called fags, made fun of, and humiliated for being emotional and lacking self-control...school controls the majority of a teenager's life and most of that is outside personal choice and control. If one is openly hounded and disrespected during those unending hours spent in school, it is easy to imagine the situation as intolerable" (Lesko, 2001: 185).

When an adult gaze reduces what amounts to physical, psychological and emotional torture to "bullying", it discursively constructs non-adult problems as less meaningful, when in actuality the differences between symbolic or physical oppression in both contexts are not always very clear. Moreover, constructing these experiences as 'bullying' (read as 'kids will be kids'), rather than addressing the real issues behind the struggles for power that occur 'on the playground', allows an adult audience to draw upon a favorite narrative of modern adolescence: the grisly horror movie of North American youth gone mad.

The underlying message in both the historical and current discourses around adolescence is that it is a period of ambivalence and ambiguity that can produce madness. From the suicide of a young man in love in Goethe's *Sorrows of Young Werther*, to the mental breakdown and suicide of Sylvia Plath's heroine in *The Bell Jar*, to contemporary representations of youthful insanity,²⁸ the liminality of adolescence means that it is constructed (and thus potentially lived by subjects) as a period of madness. Again, because it destabilizes the long-standing dualism of child/adult, adolescence must be read

²⁸ See, for example, Hollywood movies such as *Mad Love* (the story of a teenage girl with manic-depression), *Girl Interrupted* (the story of a girl who is institutionalized against her will) or *Disturbing Behavior* (which actually does a nice job of critiquing the adult gaze: in the story kids are being turned into straight A, non-sexual jock/cheerleader robots by a psychologist who has the full support of all the parents, and the so-called 'deadbeat' dysfunctional teens are the only ones left who are able to think for themselves).

as the space in-between, in effect, as a form of negative or suspended subjectivity: the subject does not really exist in the present, only in its memory of a past self (childhood) and its orientation to a future self (adulthood).

The importance of recognizing adolescence as an extended present - where subjects are defined by what they are not anymore (children) and what they have yet to become (adults) - cannot be overstated. Narratives of adolescence present each moment of the present as both highly consequential (Lesko, 2001: 107), and paradoxically, as transitory. Within this narrative, the experience of adolescence is ultimately rendered meaningless with the 'achievement' of adult subjectivity. Located in a developmentally informed narrative of 'becoming' rather than 'being', adolescents are forced to exist in the spaces between identity; in effect they are constructed as subjects without subjectivity. Again, following Lesko, the dominant concepts of development and socialization which confine youth in an expectant mode of selfhood make it impossible for young people to secure a socially recognized identity:

Adults are people who *are*, adolescents *will be* in the future...teenagers cannot go backward to childhood nor forward to adulthood "before their time" without incurring derogatory labels, for example, "immature", "loose", or "precocious"...in these ways, adolescents, like the natives portrayed in ethnographic accounts, are imprisoned in their age as absence and suspended outside historical time (Lesko, 2001: 123-129).

Postcolonial theorists have talked about the fragmentation and psychic difficulties of living in-between cultures, races, nations and generations. Macleod describes adolescence in similar terms, as an "undecidable" space that exists between the categories of childhood and adulthood: "adolescent acts as a category of exclusion of both childhood and adulthood. The adolescent is neither child nor adult, but is, simultaneously, both. She or he contains and excludes the binary opposition" (2003:

425). Reading adolescence through this notion of the in-between, and thus conceiving of it as a borderland of selfhood engenders two key questions: 1) what are the specific processes of becoming during this period and 2) who and what exactly are subjects becoming, in terms of being named within the social?

Conclusion: Becoming What? Inserting Adolescence into the Identity/Difference Debates

Chapter one of this thesis outlined both the contributions and limitations of the major youth paradigms in social science research. Although a great deal of this work will be informing the larger discussion around gendered, racialized girls, one key problematic was the lack of attention paid to the historical specificity of western adolescence. Most of the major frameworks implicitly construct youth through what Griffin (1993: 2) describes as a strange combination of biological determinism, social constructionism and structuralist theory; even some of the poststructuralist work on youth tends to reify certain commonly held perceptions about adolescence. With this in mind, chapter two attempted to address some of these criticisms, by examining literature that uses a constructivist approach to theorize the various ways in which modern western adolescence has been 'invented' in both mainstream and academic narratives. While this literature cannot formally be described as a framework, given the very different theoretical approaches taken by the authors, it provides a meta-narrative to accompany the vast body of research on youth and adolescence coming out of the social sciences. Further, by explicitly recognizing that age is, "a fundamental *organizing principle* of social and historical relations" (Austin and Willard, 1998: 5), it allows us to ask certain

key questions about processes that on the surface would seem to have no connection at all to the formation of adolescence,

One of the key contributions made by scholars who take a more constructivist approach to youth is the recognition that modern adolescence is a culturally and historically specific phenomenon that has its roots in a range of political, economic and social changes. Reading adolescence through the rise of industrial capitalism or the racialized and gendered processes of nation building in the west offers a powerful counterpoint to paradigms that continue to naturalize adolescence through a developmental framework. The work of scholars such as Nancy Lesko, Christine Griffin, and Philip Cohen provides us with an understanding of adolescent subject formation as a complex process of differentiation through categories of gender, race, ethnicity, class and sexuality. This in turn makes it possible to “study up” (i.e. examine the experiences of youth who occupy privileged positions within any or some of the above social categories), while recognizing what Lesko (2001: 78) describes as the “haunting shadow presence” of the Other. At the same time, researchers interested in “studying down” are not confined by the racialized, gendered or classed assumptions built into the development/socialization discourses around youth and, instead, can explore the ways in which marginalized subjects “do” adolescence in a variety of creative and subversive ways.²⁹

It is, therefore, somewhat curious that the bulk of youth research on questions of race and ethnicity has not taken up the concerns of what I will call ‘the critical

²⁹ Feminist research on girls has been particularly successful at this, although its focus on gender tends to overshadow the importance of age as a relation of power. Similarly, the focus on class issues in sub-cultural theory and popular culture in cultural studies, has not allowed enough room for the importance of recognizing theorists’ own complicity in “the construction and reproduction of academic ‘common sense’ about young people” (Griffin, 1993: 2).

perspective' on youth. Although a great deal of this literature does draw upon the strengths of the youth models discussed in chapter one, a noticeable silence in this literature is the above recognition that western adolescence is already embedded in certain historical practices of racialized exclusion. Instead, work on minority youth generally tends to follow one or more of the dominant paradigms on youth, and can be divided into the following branches: 1) work that uses the psych/developmental model 2) feminist research on minority girls that examines the intersection of gender and race/ethnicity 3) cultural studies work that examines the cultural productions of marginalized youth and 4) research that studies the effects of normative education and schooling for minority youth. While these various strands of research have made important contributions to our understanding of how minority youth cope with difference, an important piece of the puzzle is still missing. Understanding how subjects negotiate difference is not the same as understanding how subjects become different in the first place. Adolescence - constructed and lived as a crucial period of identity formation - is a life stage where social hierarchy and status in peer culture become of paramount importance. With certain key exceptions, most of the research on minority youth is still implicitly informed by the larger debates over minority identity that continue to examine race and culture issues through the identity/difference dualism.

There is neither time nor space to launch into a lengthy explanation of the social science debates over identity/difference in such areas as identity politics, legal and social citizenship, state policies of multiculturalism etc. As such I will rely on the description given by Craig Calhoun in his book *Critical Social Theory*: the contemporary interest in identity is universal and ubiquitous; furthermore, the preoccupation with selfhood and

identity is a specifically modern concern arising out of certain philosophical and political developments (i.e. Descartes' *Cogito*, the development of modern nationhood, the erosion of small kinship communities etc.); and most importantly, identity is always about the defining of oneself by identifying what one is not; that is, there is no sense of self without an awareness of other (Calhoun, 1995: 193-204; also see Connolly, 1991: 39-44). Particularly in multicultural societies, the proliferation of gendered, sexual, racial and ethnic differences has given rise to endless debates over the rights of minorities versus the rights of dominant groups; the importance of universal standards versus the recognition of the local and particular; and the tolerance of difference versus the reconstruction of national identity to include these differences. Underpinning these debates is the recognition that identity is always constructed, recognized and negotiated through the awareness of an unlimited set of differences that become identified in specific cultural and historical contexts:

It is now generally recognized that considerations of identity necessarily entail considerations of difference, since knowing who one is requires recognition of who one is not. Difference and identity are, thus, inextricably linked (Phoenix, 1998: 859).

Although it may well be the most useful way of understanding the relationship between self and other, my concern is that the inextricability of identity and difference poses a problem for research on subjects like children or adolescents who have neither fixed identities nor fixed notions of difference. The dualism takes for granted that both identity and difference exist in somewhat static terms: it implies both a clear understanding of, as well as a fixed relationship between, the two concepts. But adolescence does not fit comfortably into this dualism because it is constructed and lived as a period of struggle over both the making of identity and the identifying of difference.

Adolescence is all about the making of selves and Others, in large part, through peer culture. The peer group as the gaze of the social is the vehicle through which subjects become named, that is “spoken into existence” as Othered selves. But even the social hierarchies of adolescent peer culture do not directly or unproblematically reflect the race, gender, class dynamics that structure larger society. Rather, in various ways, these social relations inform the manner in which subjects come to recognize themselves and others. However, the negotiations around sameness and difference that are embedded in adolescent politics and social hierarchies are often somewhat inexplicable from an adult perspective and cannot be seen simply as some juvenile form of interaction. Instead these negotiations must be understood as methods by which young people are beginning to conceptualize notions of status, hierarchy, sameness and difference. As they ‘become somebody’, they also construct notions around who ‘belongs’ and who doesn’t for reasons that reflect both large scale processes of exclusion and everyday interactions. For example, while minority subjects within certain specific social contexts are constructed as different, others are not; not only does most of the literature on minority youth not offer a convincing explanation for why difference is produced in one set of circumstances and not another, it does not even seem to be overly cognizant of this issue.

Therefore it is my contention that the identity/difference dualism does not work well as a mode of understanding adolescent subject formation.³⁰ The assumption of identity means a foreclosure on understanding the process of identity formation, while the assumption of difference implies *a priori* a set of experiences and discourses into which the subject is inserted. Instead, following Knowles (1999), it is important to ask why and

³⁰ I will continue to use these concepts throughout the dissertation, but will no longer use them together; that is, in this particular relationship to each other (i.e. identity/difference)

how lives “acquire” difference, through social practices, spatial arrangements etc. Therefore, my central aim in this dissertation is to re-conceptualize adolescent negotiations with identity and difference as negotiations with the process of *becoming* someone, in the context of struggles around *belonging* somewhere.

Chapter three is a starting point for the above agenda as it begins to explore the possible ways in which subjects get “spoken into difference” in adolescence. In this chapter, I outline my framework of analysis, which uses the idea of discourse and narrative in conjunction with certain concepts drawn from the literature on youth (i.e. boundary events, strategies of resistance, denial and accommodation, meta-narratives of Otherness etc.), to interrogate the experiences of racialized, minority girls as they have been presented in social science research. Chapter three represents a bridge between the first half of the thesis (chapters one and two), which offers a general discussion of adolescence and its relationship to relations of power such as gender, race and class, and the second half of the thesis (chapters four, five and six), which moves from the general discussion of adolescence and difference to the discussion of racialized subject formation among a particular group of subjects: second generation South Asian Canadian girls.

Chapter Three

Unsafe Passages: Becoming a Minority Girl in Adolescence

Introduction

This dissertation is concerned with exploring the production of racialized difference or Otherness in developmentally defined periods such as childhood or adolescence. My contention is that these identity 'stages' are crucial to the production of difference in subjects (and this extends beyond race to gender, class etc.), and that age must be viewed as a relation of power that intersects with other social relations to produce certain forms of subjectivity. Furthermore, I argue that adolescence in particular is a critical period for the construction, identification and negotiation of difference, because it is when subjects are engaged simultaneously in struggles of *becoming* someone and *belonging* somewhere. This particular intersection is specific to modern adolescence as it has been constructed in western societies and bears much closer examination than it has been given in theories of adolescence and youth.

Chapter one identified both the contributions and limitations of the major paradigms on adolescence in order to demonstrate that, taken by themselves, they do not provide an adequate framework for my thesis question, which revolves around the issue of whether adolescence is a culturally, socially and historically specific mode of subjectivity through which subjects come to recognize themselves and others through notions of difference. Chapter two addressed this gap by examining a fairly disparate body of work on youth whose commonality lies in the importance that several scholars place on theorizing adolescence/youth as a set of discourses and social practices that are directly implicated in the creation and maintenance of marginalized subjects in western

societies. Nevertheless, even this 'framework', to the extent that it does not incorporate a micro-level analysis, is not able to account fully for the disruptions and contradictions in structures, practices and discourses on youth and age. Its structuralist overtones close down the possibility of agency on the part of subjects implicated in projects of becoming gendered, racialized and classed. The inability to balance a larger historical perspective with what Cohen himself describes as a micro-level examination of the lived experiences of adolescence is a serious limitation of this body of work (see for example Lesko, 2001; Griffin, 1997; Cohen, 1999; and Osgerby, 2002). Although some of these theorists do attempt to insert 'data' or experiential information into their research, they do not explore, in enough detail, how ordinary people negotiate their lives.

In chapter three I incorporate various aspects of the previously discussed paradigms into the framework of analysis that I will be using in the thesis. From psychology, I take the importance of recognizing psychic processes in the construction of identities and subjectivities; as Hall, Brah and others point out, it is worth investigating how memory, the unconscious or repressed, the fantasmatic and other processes outside the realm of the rational, leave their mark on subjects' lives within the social (Brah, 1999: 8; Hall, 1996: 4). From sub-cultural and cultural theory, I include the importance of youth culture symbols and the ways in which young people, barred from active participation in the public sphere, express political, cultural and social voice creatively and often subversively through music, dance, dress and other rituals of resistance. I also draw heavily on feminist research, which does an excellent job of embedding its theory in the experiential or the biographical; this focus on the personal allows us to better understand

what Hey describes as the relationship between private forms of subjectivity and the making of public forms of cultural hegemony (1997: 131).

Furthermore, my thesis is both a feminist and anti-racist research project, and thus is entrenched firmly in the social justice concerns of critical pedagogy, specifically its recognition of the emancipatory potential of youths' engagement with their own lives as lived within larger relations of power. As Giroux argues, "Pedagogically and politically, young people need to be given the opportunity to narrate themselves, to speak from the actual places where their experiences are shaped and mediated" (1998: 48). I agree strongly with Giroux's point about the importance of creating spaces for the silenced to be heard. Accordingly, I try, whenever possible, to supplement the theoretical discussion of adolescence and race with the voices of actual subjects drawn from secondary fieldwork sources. Finally, I rely on the constructivist approach to youth taken by Lesko, Cohen, Griffin and others, to make a forceful claim for the relationship between modern discourses of adolescence in western societies and the manner in which subjects come to be recognized and recognize themselves through gender, race, class, age and other forms of hierarchical difference.

My own reading of the relationship between adolescence and difference begins from the assumption that macro-level relations of power such as race must be further explored through their effects on the everyday lives of people. As Knowles points out, "The use of biography in social analysis is gaining ground in many areas of sociology, but *not* race or ethnicity...while the literature on racialized and ethnicized identities is legion...it is not clear *how* race operates as a part of lived individual/social identities" (Knowles, 1999: 111). To this end, I use chapter three to construct a framework of

analysis that allows me to explore the relationship between identity/selfhood, adolescence and racialized forms of difference. The chapter begins with a discussion of subjectivity as a way to understand larger social processes, using poststructuralist concepts of discourse, positioning and narrative. I go on to explore the literature on minority girls in order to identify some of the ways in which subjects are constructed as Other in adolescence through dominant and marginal discourses. I then theorize how this process of Othering is experienced biographically or narratively by subjects, and their often creative responses to this 'acquiring of race' in adolescence. Finally, I explore the potential impact of becoming racialized in adolescence on adult subjectivity; that is, the retrospective understanding of how one's life "acquires" difference.

Selfhood: A Framework

As part of a larger trend towards studying the everyday, theories of selfhood reveal the often hidden connection between ordinary lives and macro structures of society (Bruner, 1990; Giddens, 1992; Proweller, 1998). No matter how local the contexts of action, or how personally individuals are affected, they are still affected, albeit in a variety of ways, by social influences that are global in nature (Simonds, 1996; Gergen, 1996; Bauman, 1996). In this scenario, trends in personal identities, crises or relationships are not simply depoliticized individualizing projects, but can actually tell us important things about the landscape of late modernity (Giddens, 1991: 2-21). Selves, according to Bruner, never escape being expressions of larger social and historical forces (1990: 136-137); thus, the study of particular subjectivities offers us more than limited parochial knowledge or voyeuristic glances into people's personal lives. Furthermore, if

macro processes have local everyday effects on lives and identities, it is also the case that these local expressions of power often have an impact on larger structures, as evidenced by the rise of various social movements coalescing around 'identity' issues.

I should state at the outset that I will be using the concepts *selfhood*, *subjectivity* and *identity* interchangeably, since I view the conceptual distinctions between them as somewhat artificial. Structuralists theorize *selfhood* as stable, authentic and over determined by societal norms. Post-structuralists view the *subject* as a product of language (or discourse); the self here is fragmented, unstable and, because of its multiplicity, cannot make claims to authenticity, at least not in the way that authenticity has been understood by structuralists. The third term, *identity* (which also comes out of a romanticist tradition that posits an authentic self), is used commonly as a shorthand for communicating the social roles that people occupy (for example, the label of visible minority with which subjects become identified that, in turn, shapes their social interactions). However, all three concepts are addressing the subject's response to her social environment and are therefore cognizant of the highly social nature of selfhood. Structuralists do not take into account the fluid nature of selfhood, nor do they address the issue of agency. Their main argument about the over-determined social nature of the self also stands in contradiction to their notion of an authentic self. Post-structuralist claims about fragmentation do not clearly explain how it is that subjects maintain a somewhat stable sense of identity over a period of time. And the idea of identity as a social label that can be separated from people's own sense of themselves is not, to my mind, a particularly useful distinction, since subjectivity is always constituted within social relations, and although subjects react in ways that are determined by individual

experiences and biographies, there is no hidden or true self that remains untouched by the social identities that people occupy. There are simply identities or subject positions within the self that hold more or less importance for the subject (for example, being racialized may be an important part of a subject's identity, while her identity as a bank teller may be far less significant and far more changeable).

The framework of analysis I will be using in this thesis draws upon two distinct but related notions of self: the self as a product of discursive practices and positioning, and the self as a narrative or autobiographical project. According to post-structuralists, language plays a major role in the construction of subjectivity, because it is through language that we learn to think about who we are and what shapes us (Harré, 1998: 23-25). It is through language that we become embedded in social relations: cultures create shared meanings which become private through what poststructuralists call processes of subjectification (Bruner, 1990; Davies, 1993). Subjectification, according to Davies, involves a tension between becoming a "speaking agentic subject and the co-requisite for this, being subjected to the meanings inherent in the discourses through which one becomes a subject" (1993: 22). Discourse - a key concept in post-structural thought - refers to the use of language and language-like symbols, that occurs at what Davies and Harré describe as "the disciplinary, the political, the cultural and the small group level" (Davies and Harré, 1990: 45). Discourses can and do compete with one another to offer contradictory or incompatible versions of reality (1990: 45), and their ability to shape people's everyday realities should not be underestimated. As Hall points out, selves/identities are produced and represented within discourses that are tied into and inform specific historical and institutional contexts (1996: 4).

However, the constitutive force of discourse does not imply that the subject has no agency or ability to resist or respond. As Harré points out, a particular strength of the post-structuralist paradigm is the recognition of both the structuring power of discursive practices and the capacity for subjects to “exercise choice in relation to those practices”. Discursive practices are the ways in which people are “positioned” within specific discourses, and how they in turn actively respond to, reproduce and produce social realities. “Positioning” or “subject position” must be seen as replacements for the structuralist notion of role which invokes a static, formalized and ritualistic sense of identity. Instead, positioning offers a more fluid and multiple notion of selfhood, where subjects can and do respond to socially ascribed roles and identities, but at the same time bring to bear on them their own experiences, histories and understanding of social life (1998: 43-46):

Consider the ‘role’ of mother. Everyone ‘knows’ what that is, and anyone finding themselves in that role or in relation to someone in that role, knows the multiple expectations and obligations of care for children that are entailed. There may be variations on the theme, such as ‘Jewish mother’, but these are simply mothers who take up their role within a further set of constraints embedded in ‘Jewish culture’. But everyone does not know each of our personal understandings and sets of emotions connected to our idea of mother, developed out of experience of our own mothers in the first instance...the way we have been positioned and have positioned ourselves in relation to ‘mother’, the narratives that we have lived out in relation to particular mothers may mean that we bring to each new encounter with someone positioned as mother a subjective history with its attendant emotions and beliefs *as well as* a knowledge of social structures (including roles) with their attendant, rights, obligations and expectations (Davies and Harré, 1990: 52).

As mentioned by Harré, the concept of narrative is an important analytical device used by many post-structuralists in discussions around subjectivity (see for example Davies and Harré, 1990; Hall, 1996; Brah, 1999; Hey, 1997). If discourse refers to the use of language and symbols to produce meanings, narrative is the structure through which these meanings are conveyed subjectively: the stories through which we make

sense of our own and others' lives are located within several different discourses (Davies and Harré, 1990: 46). Human life, according to Widdershoven, is actually organized in a narrative manner (1994: 103). Story-making and story-telling are fundamental parts of most, if not all, cultures because human beings make sense of experience through stories rather than the organization of empirical facts (McAdams, 1993: 49-51). Myths, fables, fiction and even historical documents are narratively organized: random events are ordered in a particular pattern or 'plot' to highlight the importance of certain events, people, places etc. As individuals, we understand our experiences through the available narrative resources offered to us within our cultures, communities and families; these resources are described variously as "a catalog of images", "dominant cultural devices" or "conceptual repertoires" (McAdams, 1993; Steedman, 1995; Davies and Harré, 1990). These 'stories' provide commonalities of experience as well as placing certain constraints on us. According to Giddens, this means that we cannot simply construct narratives of self that have no relationship to our larger social, cultural and historical contexts: "The individual's biography, if she is to maintain regular interaction with others in the day-to-day world cannot be wholly fictive. It must continually integrate events which occur in the external world and sort them into the ongoing story about the self" (1991: 55). However, there still remains a strong creative element to both personal narratives of self and the larger cultural narratives that we draw upon, and it is this element that makes narrative a very useful way to frame subjectivity. As Hall points out:

...identities are constructed within, not outside discourse...they arise from the narrativization of the self, but the necessarily fictional nature of this process in no way undermines its discursive, material or political effectivity, even if...the 'suturing into the story' through which identities arise is, partly in the imaginary...and therefore always partly constructed in fantasy, or at least within a fantasmatic field (Hall, 1996: 1-4).

According to Giddens, a self is not just a collection of traits or even simply a material continuity across time and space, as it is a narrative or auto/biographical project, lived reflexively by the subject (1991: 5). The subject, out of a vast number of experiences, renders certain ones more or less meaningful and uses them to fashion a coherent understanding of her place in the world (Bruner, 1993; Steedman, 1995; Giddens, 1991). As Barker points out, the narrative self is an interweaving of different stories that is not unlike a soap opera (1997: 627). If structures, social practices and discourses shape and constrain the subject's ability to make certain choices and to be certain things, one form of resistance or agency lies in her self-narration of the experiences, memories or emotions that have shaped and/or constrained her life.

However, despite the creative and reflexive nature of self within the narrative perspective, it is important to recognize that the stories into which individual lives/identities are "sutured" are still produced by, and sustain, certain relations of power that operate in a given historical context. Although counter and/or marginalized narratives exist, they are in constant tension with the dominant or hegemonic narratives of a culture, society or nation. The latter stories (which are gendered, raced, classed etc.), construct ideals that are not attainable for certain subjects; according to Steedman, those subjects who live on the borderlands, for whom the dominant cultural devices do not work (1995). The discrepancy between these stories, images or devices and the realities of everyday existence produce a particular form of reflexivity, where the subject recognizes her exclusion from these narratives while at the same time trying to accommodate them, as illustrated in Steedman's moving account of her sense of alienation from middle class narratives around the ideal family:

I read the collection *Fathers: Reflections by Daughters...* or Ann Oakley's *Taking it Like a Woman* and feel the familiar sense of exclusion from these autobiographies of middle class little-girlhood and womanhood, envy of those who belong, who can, like Ann Oakley, use the outlines of conventional romantic fiction to tell a life story...there exists a poverty and marginality of experience to which they have no access, structures of feeling that they have not lived within...and would not want to live within: for these are the structures of deprivation (Steedman, 1995: 17).

Steedman raises a key question in terms of understanding racialized adolescents' experiences of youth, given the prevalence of white images in western societies. Western adolescence has been narrated in ways that both implicitly and explicitly exclude subjects who fall outside the idealized norm of white, western, middle class and heterosexual. Furthermore, the discourses on youth are as hegemonic as the ones on class that Steedman is describing. At the same time, the dominance of the developmental model in western societies as a way to construct, understand and experience the passage of time means that minority subjects cannot escape from this master narrative. However, they can find ways of accommodating, resisting or challenging the exclusionary nature of this narrative, in order to avoid the fragmentation and sometimes complete erasure of themselves.

To summarize, understanding the formation of racialized narratives of selfhood in adolescence involves keeping in mind the following 4 aspects: 1) the subject is constituted through racialized discourses that are themselves the products of certain structural and institutional realities that determine people's access to resources, their civil and political rights, and their identities 2) the self is actively and reflexively constructed and lived by the subject, through her interpretations of both the events occurring around her (for example, as potentially racialized or not), and the actions she takes in response to these

events¹ 3) this project of selfhood is a creative work of imagination where the subject draws upon both dominant and counter/marginalized narratives of difference (through cultural resources such as books, film, music, fashion etc.) to construct a story about her life (Steedman, 1995; Sarbin, 1997; Zuss, 1997; Stanley, 1993) and 4) racialized subjectivity, like other forms of selfhood, is an ongoing process filled with contradiction but there is still an underlying coherence or biographical structure to it (Westwood, 1994; Knowles, 1999). In spite of the fragmentation of identity that some argue is a constitutive part of modern life, self-formation is not reduced to an endless series of present moments beyond which the subject does not exist. The anti-essentialist critique leaves no room for a version of subjectivity where fragmentation can and must, necessarily, co-exist with a continuity of self across space and time (Giddens, 1991: 53). As Erickson points out, there needs to be a recognition that the self can and does take itself as a perspective from which to act, in a concrete and biographical way (Erickson, 1995: 132).

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that although the study of selfhood or subjectivity is obviously problematic in contexts where populations are being denied basic human rights, power is not always wielded coercively (Hey, 1997: 28), and strategies of silencing are sometimes quite subtle and diffuse. The study of selfhood is thus extremely relevant if we give any credence to the notion of “epistemic violence” (Gilbert, 1997: 86), where individuals and groups are battered by symbolic forces that render them less able or willing to resist material injustices (see, for example, Bhabha’s

¹ As McAdams describes it, “your accounts of key events reflect autobiographical decisions you have made. Rather than relate your story as a secretary objectively reports the minutes of a meeting, you have subjectively chosen to highlight specific events in your life as high points, low points, turning points...” (McAdams, 1993: 259).

work on the disciplinary gaze of the colonizer in Gilbert, 1997: 114-151). Relations of power produce, and are produced by, discourses that exclude, denigrate and distort the selves of particular agents, and this has an important impact on both individual and group experiences. To be deprived of control over your own naming or to struggle to name yourself in opposition to a dominant discourse that positions you as an Other (Puar, 1995; Handa, 1990), is a form of oppression that cannot be glossed over as immaterial. Symbolic struggles over naming, silencing, surveillance and control may be more indirect than economic and political disempowerment, but they are no less effective in maintaining systemic inequalities (Giddens, 1991: 14-15). However, they may be more susceptible to contradiction, change or disruption, and it is for this reason identity remains an important area of study: by exploring the effects of power on people's identities we can also uncover the diverse and creative ways in which people resist, challenge and sometimes change social relations in their everyday lives.

Language, Subjectivity and Difference: The Discursive Positioning of Minority Girls

In order to identify some of the key discourses through which minority girls are positioned as Other, it is necessary to return to the relationship between *becoming* and *belonging*, which represents the critical intersection of age with other social relations such as race, gender and class. As I discussed in chapter two, in western societies such as Britain, the U.S. and Canada, modern adolescence has been constructed and lived as an intense period, where the subject is almost obsessively preoccupied with her ambiguous identity (not child, not adult, but somewhere in-between), and her status within the peer

group (friendship, popularity, social exclusion or stigma). Literature on minority youth (and girls in particular), analyzes subjects' struggles with race or ethnicity without theorizing how the tension between *becoming* and *belonging* shapes those struggles. The following section examines how minority girls are caught up in this dialectic through two interweaving sets of discourses: 1) dominant discourses of *becoming/belonging* that offer up idealized versions of adolescence and girlhood (as white, middle class, and heterosexual) and 2) marginalized or shadow discourses of *becoming/belonging* that include racialized, ethnicized constructions of both dangerous and desirable Others, as well as notions of girlhood emanating from community and family relations.

Dominant representations of boyhood in western societies have valorized a form of "muscular Christianity" where, in high school, boys with athletic abilities occupy a high status in contrast to "milksops and sissies" (Lesko, 2001: 60-61; also see Griffin, 1993: 12; and Eckert, 1989: 3). However (at least until very recently), girls were encouraged to pursue more passive endeavors (i.e. cheerleading, focus on personal style and beauty), to be considered socially desirable (Gilbert and Taylor, 1991: 13). The "ideal" or "perfect" girl is narrated as smart, but not too smart (Shary, 2002: 236), popular with her peers, fashionable and most importantly, aesthetically desirable within a male gaze (Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 204; Gilbert and Taylor, 1991: 13). Media representations of adolescence perpetuate this discourse of femininity, through advertisements, novels, magazines, music videos etc. (Gilbert and Taylor, 1991: 14) For instance, in recent movies such as *Clueless*, *She's All That* and *Never Been Kissed*, the jockeying for social position between girls concerns desirability, and is therefore indirectly decided by boys, as they single out "Prom Queens", from what Shary describes

as “nerdly girls” (2002: 235-250). According to Gilbert and Taylor, the overall message in such cultural texts is that beauty, style and passive sexuality confer power within the hierarchy of high school peer culture (1991: 14):²

The system through which popularity gains currency is bound to normative constructions of masculinity and femininity; typically the most popular girls are also viewed as the most feminine girls and social power is concentrated in the hands of boys...in contrast to that of boys...girls' popularity is based principally on standards of attractiveness. It is men's assessment of women's attractiveness that chiefly determines women's location within this status system (Gilbert and Taylor, 1991: 72).

Although girls from dominant racial backgrounds clearly have to struggle with potential exclusion from what Hey (1997: 116) calls the “being attractive enough” discourse,³ minority girls have the much harder problem of a deeply rooted societal aesthetic that constructs whiteness as a baseline for being part of the beauty pageant (Lim, 1993; Okano, 1993; Twine, 1996; Matthews, 1997). Within dominant cultural narratives of ideal femininity, racialized women occupy either the counter-point (that is which is ugly or undesirable), or the eroticized subject position of the desired Other. The former position takes on a variety of ethnically/racially specific forms:⁴ girls are told in

² As Eckert suggests, style and fashion are also symbols of socio-economic status, and since girls are much more deeply entrenched in the symbolic economy of style, fashion is a method through which one can either gain, lose or fake status (1989: 61-62). Within cultural representations, the ideal girl subject position is not just racialized white, it is also middle and/or upper middle class.

³ According to Hey (1997: 116), girls derive a form of pleasurable self-esteem in being positioned as desirable; also see Best: “For girls not seen as popular, having membership in the popular group translates into a series of resources – resources, many grudgingly reported, they were without” (2000: 71).

⁴ For example, scholars such as Brah or Bannerji describe one stereotype of South Asian women as “dirty, ugly and smelly” (Bannerji, 1993: 147; Brah cited in Puar, 1995: 35); Khan, Dwyer and Ahmad variously describe stereotypes of Arab and Muslim women as “the shrouded terrorists” (Khan, 1998: 567), “the embodiment of a repressive and fundamentalist religion (Dwyer, 1999: 7), and “helplessly subjugated ...burdened by their veils, backward and passive” (Ahmad, 1998: 75); black feminists such as Pat Hill Collins have examined the de-sexualizing of African-American women through stereotypes of Aunt Jemima/the Mammy, the castrating matriarch and the young, single welfare mother (Collins 1990, cited in Macionis and Benokraitis, 2001: 231-238).

both subtle and overt ways that because they are not white, they will never be considered beautiful, which is a key position of power for girls within the hierarchy of adolescent high school culture:

...I always wished for blonde hair or even brown hair, because I was the only person in my class with such a jet black color. It singled me out and I hated it. Magazines, television, and movies never ceased to aggravate that feeling either. The images always asserted that to be beautiful, one had to look like the models and actresses who appeared in the media – and they certainly were not Asian. I could never think of myself as beautiful (Wong, 1993: 93).

I set about saving my allowance towards operations on this flat-chested, slant-eyed person that I had to step out of. I made a brief attempt with bleach, secretly applied to my skin in hopes of that whiter than white look. Following the example of the blonde girl in summer camp, I tried peroxide only to end up with a carrot orange patch, ridiculously visible against my own color (Okano, 1993: 80).

While some minority girls struggle against their exclusion from the racialized discourse of desire, others find ways in, through what Lim describes as exploiting their sexuality and exoticism in a white patriarchal world (Lim, 1993: 583). Part of colonial history has also been about the Colonizer's eroticizing of the colonized;⁵ as Lesko points out, when the look makes a person Other, there is always desire in that look (2001: 66-67).⁶ Minority girls trying to locate themselves in the "attractive enough" discourse sometimes use their racialized and/or ethnicized status as a point of entry. According to Puar, they play with Otherness or occupy eroticized representations in order to be part of

⁵ Again, this takes on specific discursive forms within a racialized male gaze: for example, Muslim women have been constructed as veiled, mysterious and provocative, black women as sexually aggressive and almost animalistic, and South Asian women as sensuous, seductive or licentious. These different forms of sexualized Otherness are based largely on the different histories of colonization. For instance, according to Chow "The legacy of the Chinese prostitute and the slave girl from the late nineteenth century still lingers. American involvement in Asian wars continues to perpetuate the image of Asian women as cheap whores and exotic sexpots" (Chow, 1987: 289).

⁶ Here she is paraphrasing Franz Fanon.

the racialized economy of desire (Puar, 1995). But this strategy, while it offers a certain seductive promise of belonging, is still a far cry from being the ideal girl and therefore belonging in some penultimate way:

Are we accepted only when we display our girly smile – the stereotypical submissive smile of the exotic, oriental woman traditionally so enchanting and pleasing to westerners?...the Vietnamese girl's key to acceptance – her smile...in an Australia that has learned to be tolerant and enjoy 'cultural diversity' (Ang, 1996: 48).

...intuitively, that one resource I had to overcome the war-distorted limitations of my race would be my femininity...the boys in the band loved having us out there...in our...short skirts. Their dads, mostly navy men, loved it too...I was too young...to understand how an Oriental female can fascinate Caucasian men" (Lim, 1993: 582).

The image of the exotic is a shadow discourse that only serves to reinforce the dominance of ideal (white, privileged) femininity. Because the latter has also been constructed in opposition to any form of aggressive or even active sexuality, racialized subjects who become objects of white masculine desire often end up within the identity spaces of the "bad girl", "slut" or "slag", a standard discourse of dangerous female adolescence that is informed by racialized and classed notions of belonging (Lees, 1993, 75-80; Gilbert and Taylor, 1991: 16, 23; Bettie, 2000: 17).⁷ According to Chow, the societal stereotypes that depict ethnic women as exotic and sexually permissive are a way of reinforcing the different status they occupy in relation to white women and white men (Chow 1987: 289). For instance, in Bettie's study, working-class Mexican girls'

⁷ As Lesko argues, the narrative of blossoming girlhood is shadowed by larger societal fears about how to control female sexuality, particularly in young women (Lesko, 2001: 8-9). The onset of puberty positions girls as physically weaker than boys; it also imprisons them in an inexorable move towards womanhood and therefore sexuality. Issues of shame, desire and fear move to the forefront of girls' lives as they become vulnerable to social pressures that construct their sexuality as dangerous to the maintenance of purity both within and outside the family. As girls' bodies develop a sexualized identity, there are no discourses that offer them a way to express their desires except through male discourses of sexual danger and social stigma through promiscuity (Tolman, 1994). This demands that girls police their bodies rather than enjoying them (1994).

performances of femininity were structured by larger class and race discourses that code women who wear heavy makeup and tight clothes as cheap and oversexed, in contrast to middle class, white respectable femininity (2000: 17).⁸ In such scenarios, occupying the subject position of a desirable Other offers a limited and precarious kind of belonging within a racialized economy of desire.

The contradictions inherent in being positioned either outside or within a discourse of white masculine desire also complicate intra-gender relationships at a time when friendship and peer interaction are possibly the most important influences on subjects' projects of becoming someone. Although the discourses of desire through which adolescent girls become sexualized are located both in larger social relations, as well as in hegemonic forms of 'becoming' masculine that adolescent boys are learning to negotiate, the strongest agents of dissemination remain girls themselves. According to Hey, because popularity is a position of power within the heterosexual economy in adolescence, girls become "unavoidably complicit" with hegemonic gender narratives (Hey, 1997; 129). They police other girls and construct differences within their peer and friendship circles, through narratives of Otherness that draw upon relations of race, ethnicity, class etc.:

Do not girls engage in forms of social harassment almost as damaging...at times even more damaging than those they experience through the discourses of boys, young men and older males? Aren't aspects of girls' culture rife with excesses of difference as power?...many of the most marginalized girls...positioned 'other' girls as 'marginal'... (Hey, 1997: 123-127).

⁸ Also see Tolman, who suggests that for African-American girls, negotiations with a sexual identity are complicated by a dominant cultural discourse that constructs black women as both asexual and hypersexual, and almost animal-like in their sexuality (1994).

Like Emma, this girl I know – that girl's been beat up so many times over things she's never done, y'know, like, she's been accused by some girls of going with one of the boys they fancy, when he's nothing to do with them. It's up to her, isn't it, and it's up to him, it's his preference. And they'll all jump on her when she's on her own, and there's about six of them...maybe because she's pretty, that's why it could be, people just get jealous and that...accused her of being a slag when she's not (Lees, 1997: 43).

These two accounts diverge quite widely in describing girls' reasons for exclusion or harassment. Sometimes exclusion happens because certain girls are positioned as "nerdly" or not attractive enough. At other times, as Lees notes, girls are harassed because they are too attractive and occupy a position of status vis à vis boys. But these accounts do not mention complications of race/ethnicity in the struggles for power between girls. Lees herself points out that not enough work has been done on the intra-gender relationships of minority girls: their peer relations and friendships with other racialized girls and with girls from the dominant racial group (Lees, 1993: 86). Even researchers such as Proweller or Twine, although they point to some interesting negotiations with power within peer culture, do not tell us much about how racial/ethnic differences work both with and against hierarchies within female friendship and peer relations. For instance, Twine's interviewees discuss how their white female friends positioned them as Other simply by cordoning off white boys as potential dating partners, and drawing their attention to racialized boys: "Practically all of my [adoptive European-American] sister's friends and all of my friends were trying to get me and this black man set up. They were pushing for us to go out together so it was like automatically assumed that because we were both black that we should [date]...why was it that I could only date a black man?" (Twine, 1996: 216) Despite the racialized assumptions of Whitney's peers and friends, Twine does not elaborate on the implications of this in terms of the culture of

female friendship and peer interactions. If, as Proweller suggests, girls from the dominant group attempt to patrol “the borders of whiteness as a protective hedge around race privilege” (1998: 126), by positioning minority girls in various contradictory discourses of Otherness, it is worth exploring how this positioning is also informed by concerns around status and belonging within a racialized economy of desire.

An added difficulty for some racialized subjects is the element of ethnicity. As I mentioned earlier in the chapter, for subjects who are both racialized and ethnicized (that is, they come from immigrant communities), the discourses around childhood and particularly adolescence in their communities often do not mesh with mainstream western narratives. Dating, drinking, partying, sexual exploration etc., are not part of the conventional understandings of youth in many immigrant cultures and this discrepancy adds to subjects’ difficulties with belonging. Feminist theorists of race have argued that females in many cultures have been constructed historically as bearers of the national identity. This is particularly the case for displaced communities living in the shadow of a hegemonic national identity that differs significantly from their own. In such contexts, difference is articulated through gendered practices that inscribe women as the signifiers of race and nation: as highlighted in the previous discussion, women become highly visible in dominant discourses of Otherness, sometimes as a threatening reminder of the potential growth of an ethnic community; sometimes as the already corrupted Other whose sexual promiscuity sets them apart from women of the dominant race; and sometimes as the oppressed, helpless victims of brutal ethnic patriarchy, longing to be rescued by a White knight (Barker, 1997: 618; Ahmad, 1998: 76; Aujla, 2000: 42).

Although there has been a great deal of discussion around ethnic women as Mothers of the nation, girls are a particularly interesting group to examine because of their subordinate position within the family in terms of *both* parents (Khanum, 1995; Lim, 1993; Qureshi, 1992). Raced, ethnicized girls are generally expected by their fathers and mothers to adhere to cultural norms that arise out of gendered hierarchies within the family and community. For instance, in Khan's research on Canadian Muslim women, she interviews one woman (Karima), a 44 year old immigrant from Iran. Although Karima talks openly about gender issues (she is often the victim of her husband's verbal abuse), there is a noticeable shift in her narrative voice when she talks about her daughters. In this moment, she is no longer a victim of Canadian racism or ethnic patriarchy, she is the gatekeeper (and enforcer), of what it means to be a Muslim woman. The role of the ethnic father as villain has been talked about in a great deal of the literature on youth, but we do not generally pay attention to the fact that adult women in the community and family are just as vigilant about controlling their daughters:

They don't know what is good for them...I want my daughters to be the girlish type. When they are living under my roof, I want them to cover themselves...no boyfriends, no sex before marriage...the elder brother he is twenty-three; he is more strict than even the father. He comes home and tells the fourteen year old that he does not like "the false nails you have on"...later she tells me "what does he want from me; he has a girlfriend himself" and I say "men have needs, the girls have to get married. They can't go around like a man"...they get upset but I don't listen to them...they are kids (Khan, 1998: 478-479).

I wasn't allowed to go because it was for a week and they didn't want to send me...the reason was it was going to be mixed, you know boys and girls so I wasn't allowed to go. But apart from that she [my mother] lets me go on day trips...as long as I'm just there for a day and I'll be straight home kind of thing (Hennink, 1999: 874).

It is worth noting that many of the above norms are not essentially different from dominant codes of femininity, since they revolve around dress, comportment and sexual behavior. Although dating and sexuality are normalized for “white” girls, they are still restricted through discourses of girlhood that contrast the positive effects of passive and controlled sexuality for girls with the dangers of assault, pregnancy, disease and social stigma for girls who attempt to be sexual subjects rather than objects (Tolman, 1994; Lees, 1993; Pipher, 1994). But ethnicized girls encounter the same societal messages and these are further reinforced by family and community restraints on their sexuality (i.e. often they are not allowed to date or have friendships with members of the opposite sex). Their behavior is tied directly to the honor, status and solidarity of their families and communities within diaspora contexts, where what is defined as tradition (sometimes no longer followed in the original culture) is rigidly enforced through a process that postcolonial theorists describe as inventing or museumizing (Das Gupta, 1997: 580). ‘Ethnic’ culture, constructed in contexts of national non-belonging, has a profound effect on the lives that girls lead as *daughters* of the nation.

If femininity is racialized and ethnicized, then minority girls who are already positioned outside ‘normal’ girlhood, are often obliged to adhere to standards of behavior that interfere with their attempts to ‘be like everyone else’. This in turn, reinforces dominant stereotypes about their cultural strangeness. Race, ethnicity (and often religion) construct them as different, and a large part of their identity formation revolves around negotiating this sense of difference. As adolescents, they are subject to the peer gaze and its intense concerns around belonging; at the same time because of their racial status, minority girls’ belonging is fragile at the best of times, since they are positioned as Other

in larger discourses around race and nation. As girls struggle with the demands to be 'good daughters' and role models in their ethnic communities, they still have to deal with trying to 'fit in' and 'be cool' in an adolescent context where to be different is to be already positioned in uneasy relation to the discourses around belonging:

It's been difficult because people who aren't of color...don't understand the duality of my life. They don't understand why I have to lie to my parents about where I'm going...sometimes I'd cry myself to sleep at night because my dad and I...or my boyfriend and I wouldn't see eye to eye, because my boyfriend wouldn't understand the pressures that I go through as a Korean daughter. Lately it's been alleviated a little bit because there have been more artistic works coming out that express this duality and frustration...but growing up, my God, I can remember days...when the frustration was just so much that I didn't want to go home...when school was done, I'd hang out...by myself, not socializing with anybody. It can be really detrimental because you don't feel you belong anywhere⁹.

Turning Points or Boundary Events in the Narration of Raced Girlhood

Larger cultural discourses construct minority girls as either outside the bounds of ideal girlhood, or as the "haunting shadow presence" of difference that allows shape and form to racialized and classed narratives of female adolescence. In addition, girls often have to negotiate community and family norms that are in stark contrast to these dominant narratives of girlhood, rendering them even further from becoming 'like everyone else'. As girls struggle to shape selves that belong somewhere, they are spoken into existence through these discourses of difference. Their own understanding of, and negotiation with, this discursive positioning may be found in the manner in which they narrate their lives and identities. As Davies points out, we not only read and write stories, we live them. Who we understand ourselves to be at any given moment is structured by

⁹ Respondent N, in my MA thesis: *Identity and Politics: Second Generation Ethnic Women in Canada* (1996: 153).

both the available storylines that allow us to make sense of our place in the world, and also on the legitimacy given to those storylines by those who surround us (1993: 41). Girls tell stories about who they are - to themselves, their friends, and often researchers – and their stories can be found in the growing body of qualitative research on minority subjects. However, because most of this research does not utilize a narrative framework, one really interesting question has not, at least explicitly, been asked: are there specific events, actions and moments where this ‘speaking into difference’ occurs and a subject’s “ontological security”¹⁰ is irrevocably compromised; where her narration of *becoming* can no longer escape from the ‘central storyline’ of *belonging*?

To begin answering this question we must return to the importance of narrative in terms of the ordering, sequencing and interpreting of events in both social and personal histories. Theorists such as Ricoeur, Todorov and Franzosi contend that one of the central devices in narrative is the dialectic between *succession* (linear progression of events) and *transformation* (reversals, changes and actions/events that fundamentally alter a narrative situation) (Franzosi, 1998: 521).¹¹ Further to this is the distinction between *satellite* and *kernel* events, where the former represent actions/events that merely fill in or flesh out the narrative, and the latter are events/actions that disrupt or alter the storyline (1998: 521-522). Adolescence had been narrated as a quintessential period of turning points (Bruner, 1993: 40; McAdams, 1993: 84); according to Lesko, Best, Griffin and others, the discourses around modern western adolescence employ certain stock phrases that cast

¹⁰ According to Giddens, a subject whose sense of self is fractured or disabled cannot sustain a continuous narrative (1991, 53).

¹¹ Ricoeur formulates this as chronological and non-chronological events that make up a narrative (1991: 106).

adolescence as the definitive period of dramatic changes in the body, the self and the subject's relationship to others: adolescence as a rite of passage (Dryfoos, 1998), a set of turning points,¹² a crossroads (Adler and Adler, 2002: 657), and a period of transition (Brannen and Nilsen, 2002: 531; Hubler, 2002: 171). As a result of these hegemonic narratives of 'becoming', adolescence is also lived by subjects as a stage of identity crisis in the story of the self. Both adults and adolescents experience selfhood through the narrative of youth as an emotional rollercoaster, filled with discovery, heartbreak, psychological low points and life changing decisions:

Even if a terrible time is had, the prom is still supposed to be remembered. While this framing is resolutely patterned by an adult ideology, reflecting how kids define and remember their own proms and remember themselves as adolescents, kids also used this discourse to make sense of the prom... "In my school...the prom was considered to be the event of the year...I felt that if I didn't attend my prom, that I one way or another would regret it in the future"... "The entire night seemed to breeze by...I knew in my heart that although it was gone, the memories of my friends, my boyfriends, and fellow classmates would stay with me forever" (Best, 2000: 27).

If we understand mainstream adolescence through Franzosi's model, certain events (prom, convocation, first dates, first encounters with sex, drugs, alcohol etc.), represent key moments in both cultural and personal narratives of selfhood. But we know very little about key moments of transition in the story of racialized selfhood. However, it is interesting to note that the concept of *Kernels* (or 'turning points'), dovetails nicely with what Twine, in her research on mixed-raced adolescent girls, describes as "boundary events", where a rupture occurs between the subject's prior unracialized identity in childhood, and her subsequent realization that she is different from those around her:

¹² "Turning points" was the name given to the 1986 American task force report on adolescence that, interestingly, had as one of its members, then governor of Arkansas Bill Clinton (Lesko, 2001: 91).

The childhood experiences of my participants revealed that becoming culturally white required growing up immersed in a racially exclusive, academic and social community and not being singled out as racially or culturally distinct by white peers. ... disjunctions between these women's experiences as racially neutral and counter identifications by peers as non-whites begins around puberty. Several women described their first becoming conscious of the limits that their physical appearance (brown skin, curly hair and other biological markers of African ancestry) placed upon their ability to experience the world as racially neutral)... "Growing older and being in a community that was predominantly white and not having the same interactions with white boys that my friends were having...not being ostracized [by peers] because I was [socially] accepted to a large extent. But in terms of [dating] relationships with [white boys]...I wasn't accepted as having those intimate relationships with [white] boys that my [female] friends were having at those ages (Twine, 1996: 211-217)".

According to Twine, puberty is an important period in terms of subjects' entrance into a heterosexual economy of desire. She identifies dating as a boundary event, because formal dating rituals begin in junior high and high school, and the public selection of an individual as a dating partner is a way to express allegiance to a particular social group and affirm membership within a particular network of social relations. But her use of the term "boundary event" is an interesting twist on the standard adolescent storyline of first date/first love/first sexual encounter: as I discussed in the previous section, racialized subjects may be precluded from participating in this storyline, either because of cultural prohibitions, or because they are constructed as being outside the economy of desire. Twine's field research indicates that many of her subjects first became conscious of their racial difference, because they were constructed as ineligible dating partners for white boys, while others managed to maintain a relatively unraced identity simply by being 'chosen' to occupy the feminine subject position within the white middle class heterosexual storyline of romance. As Twine puts it, "During puberty, dating becomes an arena where the boundaries of whiteness are drawn from the exclusion of individuals of known African descent from the pool of dating partners. A woman must be desired and

publicly recognized as a legitimate romantic partner of a white male in order to maintain a white cultural identity" (1996: 216-217).

Twine's research is specific to a particular group of girls, and she does not identify any other boundary events that disrupt girls' projects of selfhood. However, I strongly suspect that if we examine research on minority girls with this particular concern in mind, we may find several experiences that qualify as turning points or 'boundary events' in adolescent subjects' narratives of *becoming/belonging*. For example, Handa's autobiographical short story describes, quite movingly, moments in her adolescence where she was spoken into existence as an Other, through overt acts of racism (i.e. name-calling) as well as more subtle incidents (e.g. the mispronunciation of her name by teachers or other students) (1990). Similarly, Proweller's subjects describe conversations with friends or peers, where they are asked questions about their ethnic or racial backgrounds that derive from discourses of Otherness. In these moments, the subject is singled out as the bearer of her culture/race and a repository for all that has gone before her; she is also made aware of how different she is from her peers:

Because the girls were interviewed at different ages and at different stages of maturation and self-awareness, their comments offer an interesting array of perspectives regarding specific incidents in which white students, letting their guard drop, allowed their true feelings to show. In these moments of insensitivity, black students learned who their friends really were and whom they could trust...some incidents were merely annoying, such as when white students would ask questions about how black women groom their hair...other stories describing comments heard from white students speaking about race from outdated and stereotypic notions of black behavior reflected a much deeper level of un-enlightenment (Ward, 1988: 224-225).

Like Lisa, she doesn't know anything. She asks me like...she doesn't think there are people in Africa with clothes and regular stuff. She thought it was like antelopes running around and zebras...like if we are having a discussion, maybe Shelby or somebody will say – well, so what is it like being black and stuff?...one time it bothered me because everybody was just talking, and as soon as someone turned around and

said [to me] – what is it like for you...I can see Mr. Fischer looking at me and then all of a sudden, he will say – well, Tess, what do you think? (Proweller, 1998: 121)

Other potential boundary events might include systemic acts of discrimination or exclusion: for instance, one of Matthews' Australian interviewees describes how she auditioned for a local theatre production of *South Pacific*, and she was told that "it was my face that wasn't matching. I mean I was only auditioning for a small part...they wanted someone who was dark-skinned and I saw all these other little blonde girls and they got into it and I couldn't. They reckoned they were more darker than what I am..." (Matthews, 1997: 11). The subject is clearly aware of the irony of not qualifying for a part that calls for a dark skinned person. In this moment, she sees how a white-skinned, blonde girl would be considered 'darker' and therefore more suitable for an Asian role than an actual 'dark-skinned' Asian, a phenomenon that mirrors the race performances of early American cinema where, rather than using actual black actors, movies had white actors in 'black-face'. In such scenarios, the racialized subject is completely erased: even in a performance of Otherness, her dark skin is still too dark for her to carve out a space of token belonging.

The major ontological issue around experiences that might qualify as boundary or *kernel* events goes further than simply mapping the ways in which "lives acquire race" in adolescence. Theories of selfhood as diverse as those of Goffman, Davies and Giddens maintain that the fragility of the self is bound up in questions of legitimacy and the "capacity to keep a particular narrative going" (Giddens, 1991: 55). According to Goffman, in his work on stigmatized identities, subjects who attempt to "pass", risk constant "exposure" in their performance of belonging, and even when they do "pass",

feel shame, ambivalence and guilt about colluding with 'normals'.¹³ Giddens, although he does not discuss adolescence at all, contends that subjects require a relatively secure, stable environment in which to develop a coherent and continuous narrative of self. Experiences of shame and humiliation, if they are rendered significant, often lead to a fragility of self. According to him, "shame bears directly on self-identity, because it is essentially anxiety about the adequacy of the narrative by means of which the individual sustains a coherent biography...shame depends on feelings of personal insufficiency...[and] should be understood in relation to the integrity of the self" (1991: 65). In a similar vein, Davies describes how being simultaneously the same and different is difficult to hold in balance, and the pressure for sameness can be traumatic if the subject "loses control of the flow of action":¹⁴

Jennifer is *afraid* of what the boys might say *because she will believe them*. This is necessarily so since they will speak her into existence through the same discourses through which she speaks herself into existence. She has no other discourse with which to resist their speaking. Her central strategy is to avoid the storyline in which she can be positioned as marginal to the group...this is her major defense against the awfulness of being alone, of being not like her friends, not liked, of vulnerability in the face of words spoken about her. The self is revealed here, not as an object or thing, but as an interactive, discursive *process*, fragile, capable of great pleasure in oneness with the group, in being competent within its terms, but always vulnerable to the discourses through which it is spoken and speaks itself into existence (1993: 21).

¹³ Interestingly enough, Goffman suggests that public school is a main site of learning that one is stigmatized, and he describes both dating and employment as "moments of truth" for the subject, if she has not already figured out she is different (1963: 38). He also argues that adolescence is a key period of ambivalence when stigmatized subjects try hard to identify with 'normals', and that biographically this stage may be seen as a turning point or period of crisis in the development of stigmatized identity (1963: 40).

¹⁴ It is important to note that both Giddens and Davies are talking specifically about childhood, not adolescent, negotiations of self; furthermore, Davies is not directly referring to sameness and difference in terms of race, but simply in terms of playground dynamics of exclusion and inclusion.

If adolescence has been constructed and, therefore, is partially experienced by subjects as a *lack* of fixed identity, essentially a suspension of being, how ontologically significant are experiences of shame, humiliation or “unbelonging”¹⁵ during this period? Furthermore, if adolescence is also about the production of various forms of Otherness or difference, can we identify key moments when girls are “spoken into difference” - that is, (mis)named within the social as racialized subjects? If indeed there are such moments, they need to be identified and explored in much greater detail than has hitherto been the case in research on race and adolescence. Doing so will give researchers a much clearer idea of how subjects recognize and negotiate the tensions between *becoming* Other and *belonging* to both peer and larger culture, and what effects these tensions might have on their narratives of selfhood.

Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that the boundary events that shape people’s narratives of selfhood do not simply ‘happen’ to subjects in some passive way. As I pointed out in the first section of the chapter, discursive practices do position subjects, who then respond, resist and sometimes transform the identities that they occupy. Discourses and narratives of racialization have potent symbolic effects on identities that should not be underestimated, but examining those effects should occur in tandem with exploring how subjects “do” race in ways that allow them to sustain whatever forms of subjectivity they end up occupying.

¹⁵ Kausalya Bannerji uses this term in her poem, “The Personal is Political” (1990).

Living Inside the Gaze: Enemy I's/Eyes, Voiceovers and Forms of Strategic Otherness

As mentioned in section one, one of the underlying assumptions of a discursive/narrative approach is that subjects are not simply "effects" of discourse; that is, they are not, in Althusserian terms, "interpellated" into being by state, structure or ideology through a process of misrecognition (or false consciousness). Instead, they respond in various ways to becoming racialized, gendered, classed etc. This is not to say that all forms of agency/action on the part of subjects can be interpreted as signs of resistance or emancipation (Valverde, 1991: 183). For example, some scholars suggest that African-American girls often have higher levels of self-esteem than their white counterparts because they have consciously disclaimed the hegemonic ideology of success in dominant white, masculinist American culture. However, their very refusal to play "whitegame"¹⁶ means that on top of being victims of structural racism, they are opting out of 'the system' through behavior that guarantees their remaining socially, culturally, politically and economically impoverished within that system.¹⁷ Nevertheless, while such forms of resistance cannot be characterized as emancipatory from a humanist standpoint, they still need to be identified and understood within a particular socio-historical context.

As I mentioned in chapter one, Robinson and Ward distinguish between two types of strategies that minority girls used to resist the discourses or dominant scripts in their

¹⁶ This expression was used by one of the women I interviewed in my MA thesis (1996: 153). When asked to talk about some of the fragmentation issues potentially experienced by minority women, her response was the following: "It used to be difficult to reconcile all those identities. If I'm talking to certain people and then certain others. This is a white man's world and you got to play *whitegame* until you make the rules, and that's when you can be black and be the way you are really. Sometimes it's hard to play by those rules and try and belong."

¹⁷ According to Ward, for some black students, doing well in school is seen as 'selling out' or becoming white. Doing academically well is equated with 'acting white' and they choose not to participate in this (1990: 215).

lives: 1) *resistance for survival* – short term strategies of coping that include food addictions, school failure, drugs, early pregnancy etc. and 2) *resistance for liberation*, which requires the “naming and addressing of oppressions in their lives” (Robinson and Ward, 1991). Although I find this distinction useful to build on, it does not address certain strategies - i.e. performing otherness, ‘passing’, horizontal violence etc. - nor does it point to the causes of subjects’ own reasons for engaging in seemingly self-abusive behavior. A broader and less deterministic categorizing may be more useful in discovering how and why girls ‘cope’ in a manner that often seems inexplicable from an adult standpoint. Accordingly, I reformulate *resistance for survival* as strategies of accommodation and denial, and *resistance for liberation* as strategies of critical or negotiated resistance. In addition, I want to emphasize that girls generally draw upon a variety of contradictory strategies in their struggles with belonging. Following Drake, it is important to understand the tensions between agency and victimization that underpin girls’ and women’s attempts to resist hegemonic demands on their identities (2002: 190). People’s stories are rarely coherent ideologically, and these narrative disruptions are both points of entry into “the unspeakable stories of subjectivity” and their cause.

1. Strategies of Accommodation

If we examine the field research on minority girls, we can begin to identify some of the strategies of accommodation that subjects use to negotiate their racialized status. By accommodation, I mean to suggest that rather than actively or openly resisting dominant discourses or social practices that exclude, denigrate or distort their sense of self, girls sometimes negotiate the problem of belonging along the continuum of either strategically occupying the position of Other or, following Davies, avoiding the 'storyline' where they might be positioned as Other. For example, Fordham's research on a group of African-American girls in white schools documents how girls use 'racelessness' as a way to belong and build a positive sense of self (see Fordham 1988), a phenomenon which mirrors Goffman's description of "passing".¹⁸ Similarly, Puar (1995), Waters (1996) and Proweller (1998) describe forms of strategic whiteness, which are described as "wanting to be white" or "acting white". These descriptions are used by minority subjects who are actively resisting, as well as members of the dominant group who are - to paraphrase Proweller - "race patrolling". That 'wannabes' are looked down on by other minority subjects, especially those who claim a strong racial or ethnic identity is not surprising, but what is interesting is how these subjects sometimes get constructed by adolescents from the dominant racial group, who simultaneously view this form of mimesis contemptuously, and yet stigmatize subjects for being too concerned with ethnicity or race:

¹⁸ Again, Bettie's research (2000) is particularly interesting because she describes two forms of passing among girls: working class girls passing as middle class in order to belong to the clique and middle class Latina girls 'passing' as working class "chicas" in order to avoid being seen as wannabe whites.

Gayle: they are like acting white. They are like whiter than I am... like well, Lucy...were you here for the morning announcements? Well she made an announcement...she's like, I'm flustered. It's just like who would use that word? I don't even think that a WASPY grandmother would use it. Do you know what I mean? It's just so weird...

Victoria: uch, it annoys me because they shouldn't, they don't have to talk like that [use of black lingo]. They know how to talk normal. Like Lucy, who is this intellectual Person, will use Black English (Proweller, 1998: 126).

In addition to confusing messages about what kind of belonging they should be trying to carve out, and what kind they should not even attempt (because of the risk of being labeled a Wannabe), Goffman suggests that stigmatized subjects are forced to tolerate all manner of personal and sometimes offensive questions by 'normals', and must do so with good grace, otherwise they are further stigmatized as 'touchy' or 'paranoid' (1963: 16-19). Again, the experiences of Proweller's subjects confirm this, as girls describe 'making allowances' by constructing these questions as friendly or, at worst, ignorant, rather than hostile and embedded in a larger discourse of racial exclusion: "Wanda gets mad, but I just figure, it's like Lisa, where she lives at, like Mandy and them... before they came to Best Academy they had seen like two or three black people...maybe...their parents didn't know about it. It's not really their fault. But now they are trying to learn and it's better" (Proweller, 1998: 121). We may view this, following Matthews, as choosing not to name something as racism, because doing so renders you even more powerless. According to Matthews: "Understanding a situation as racist or sexist does not necessarily...give you the opportunity to exercise agency...the refusal to evoke discourses of racism or sexism can be seen to involve the tactical maximization of limited opportunities and thereby to relocate the site of negotiation to other grounds (1997: 13).

Strategically occupying the space of Otherness may be another form of accommodation that girls practice in their negotiations with belonging. Puar describes (adult women's) performances of strategic Otherness as "bargaining with racism" (1995: 27); similarly, for girls, this may mean playing with representations of difference by occupying exoticized (and sometimes eroticized) constructions of the racialized female Other in order to secure some form of belonging or status. For example, in Manji's story about the shame she felt about being Indian, she describes occasional moments of pride, such as when her immigrant mother appeared at school functions in dazzling *saris*, or made delicious Indian food (Manji, 1993). The positive responses of those around her who belonged to the dominant group allowed her to feel momentarily good about being different. In such moments, difference is made palatable for the dominant group's consumption and minority subjects are allowed a space of temporary belonging, not in spite of their difference but, ironically, *because* of it:

[despite]...the very real pitfalls of *Masala-it is* via racist ideologies of exoticism... [it] can be a forum within which desire is used to protect subjects through shifts of meaning in the context of objectified constructions...[because of] white investment in and desire to be the exotic South Asian other...the stereotype of the dirty, ugly South Asian woman thus becomes exoticized through middle-class consumption. Thus *Masala-it is* can act as a strategic way to minimize the daily impact of racism, through refuting the ugly South Asian woman stereotype and subverting, for example, "politically correct" interest in "exotic" or "ethnic" clothing (Puar, 1995: 35-37).

Although Puar is also concerned with the dangers of viewing oneself through dominant representations, she stresses that 'playing with difference' should not be summarily dismissed as a negative strategy. For instance, Matthews' subjects, who get into a fight with a group of non-Asian girls and boys over territory within the school are not punished or blamed. According to Matthews, this is because "the girls benefited from

the teacher's belief that 'Asian' girls were unlikely to respond with violence or initiate trouble" (1997: 8-9). Similarly, the girls in Brah and Minhas' study used strategies such as wearing jewelry (against school policy), and getting away with it because they claimed it was part of their religion and culture (Brah and Minhas, 1985: 24).

'Joining in' in masculine and/or white cultural spaces is another form of accommodation that girls sometimes practice when they choose to ignore attempts to exclude them through verbal abuse or subtle signs of exclusion. Matthews characterizes joining in as "insecure" and "dangerous" because it "risks hostile responses" (1997: 11-12). Unlike Jennifer (One of Davies' subjects, discussed on p. 129), who avoids the possibility of being teased by the boys and therefore positioned outside the group, some of Matthews' subjects consider it worth the risk to be included, even temporarily (which raises the question of why even a temporary form of belonging is preferable to these subjects' sense of self, over an acceptance of exclusion). Risky or not, racialized subjects often use joining-in as a way to consolidate some sense of phantom belonging, as the following accounts illustrate:

When the all-white gang examined the treats with scrunched-up noses, then spat out what they had just bitten into, my heart sank... "My mum has got to be the yuckiest cook in the world"... "she probably put curry in these!" someone screamed above our laughter. That's right, **our** laughter. Mine included...it was easier to let my friends oppress me (Manji, 1993: 193-194).

The above description evokes a sense of helplessness on the part of a subject trying to negotiate belonging. By joining-in, she risks being party to acts of racialized exclusion towards family/ community or other racialized subjects within peer culture. In fact, although joining-in is an attempt to accommodate difference and work around it, it

can often lead to the same erasure of self that occurs when subjects engage in strategies of denial.

2. *Strategies of Denial*

Unlike strategies of accommodation that, at least to some extent, seem to represent pragmatic choices on the part of girls trying to maintain a sense of self within peer culture, strategies of denial appear to be part of a larger cycle of epistemic violence, where subjects struggle with an erasure of self: the peer culture and larger societal discourses that speak them into difference often end up speaking them out of existence as subjects who are capable of resisting hegemonic narratives of belonging. In Meadian terms, if the self is made up of a dialogue between the *Me* (representing the larger community) and the *I* (the subject's own memory and historical continuity), then that *I* is no longer present except as a flicker; it has been taken over almost completely by the dominant gaze of the social:

Released from Manzanar, the young girl still carries the trauma of racial hurt with her. She has internalized the internment into "true shame", "some submerged belief that this treatment is deserved". From this shame of ethnic identity comes the related impulses – "the urge to disappear and the desperate desire to be acceptable," to assimilate, which is another form of death of ethnicity. Her "birth" as an American ... [she becomes]...the lead majorette in the Girl Scouts" (Lim, 1990: 582).

Lim's analysis deals with a fictional account of racial erasure (Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James Houston's 1974 novel *Farewell to Manzanar*); furthermore, it focuses on the aftermath of the Japanese internment, a traumatic event in the cultural history of Japanese-Americans. But strategies of denial are not only the result of profound traumas experienced by the subject herself, they can also result from the

traumatic history of one's ethno-racial community. For example, one of Way's interviewees - an African-American girl - when asked about racism, claims never to have experienced it, but her narrative of race indicates that she is aware of the racialized nature of American society and also of the ways in which blacks have been treated and constructed. However, what becomes apparent is that despite this awareness, she is still looking to rationalize racism:

I'm like real cool with everybody. I see a lot of people, I don't blame them, okay? Like if you're on the train or something and a whole lot of black kids get on - not to be harsh on black people or whatever, but if they get on the train then other people would get frightened. I would get frightened too. If you see a whole bunch of black boys get on the bus or on the train, you would get frightened (1998: 210).

In Gayle's narrative, the white response to black people makes sense and she includes herself in the former category by saying that she would feel the same in that situation. She is not able to talk about racism outside the dominant discourse of blaming; she is not even able to see the contradictions between recognizing racism as a systemic form of discrimination and justifying the dominant group's nameless fears regarding Others. As she attempts to 'understand' why members of the dominant racial group feel so threatened, she implicitly constructs 'white people' as being justified in their fears.¹⁹ As another example of seeing with the eyes of the dominant social gaze, Roman and Stanley describe the use of various discourses around race in a group of Canadian students, one of these discourses being the "backlash" discourse' (i.e. whites are

¹⁹ See also Lim's discussion of this in the context of race novels such as *Nisei Daughter* and *Obasan*, where the young, second-generation Japanese woman finds ways of rationalizing white racism: "When she is rejected by a sorority because of her Japanese origin, she excuses their actions: 'It took moral honesty to have come in the spirit which they did'...the narrator's ability to rationalize white Americans' overt acts of discrimination...demonstrates the utter defeat of the Japanese self, a defeat in which anger is repressed and submission to and guilty acceptance of the racial Other's point of view are total" (Lim, 1990: 299).

discriminated against because of affirmative action). Although this storyline is initially brought up by a white boy, it is striking that one of the non-white students (a Filipina immigrant girl), takes up this narrative. According to her, it is not only white people who are racist, but Blacks and Chinese who beat up white people (Roman and Stanley, 1997: 218). Like Gayle, Ne Ne sees with the eyes of the hegemonic gaze, relativizing white racism by re-telling it through an 'everybody is racist, so let's not point fingers' storyline.

Another strategy involves a subject's recognition of racism, while simultaneously drawing upon a discourse of individual achievement that actively undermines the notion of systemic discrimination. Way describes this as a striking contradiction between identifying a community, while at the same time distancing yourself from it:

I'm proud to be black...I'm aware of racist acts and racist things that are happening in the world. But I use that as no excuse, you know. I feel as though I can succeed...that's no excuse being black. In fact, I think being black is good. I'm proud to be black but you also gotta face reality and what's going on, you know. Black people are not really getting anywhere in life. But I know I will (1998: 214).

In Eva's story, her assertion that she is proud to be black appears mainly to be a defense against being labeled as a 'wannabe', since the overall sentiments being expressed are not about racial pride at all. Despite her disclaimer about the reality of racism, the rest of her story is embedded in a racialized American Dream narrative: blacks use race/racism as an excuse not to succeed, they do not face reality and accept the world the way it is, and as a result are not 'getting anywhere'. These are all subtle iterations of a dominant discourse that constructs the economic and social disintegration/failure of African Americans as self-induced.

Strategies of denial offer subjects the opportunity to be part of dominant narratives of race, nation and belonging. They can *belong* by *becoming* agents of the social gaze and potentially occupying the storyline of 'we hate them, but not you, because you're different.' Like the 'horizontal violence' displayed by girls towards other girls in terms of gender policing, minority girls sometimes choose to align themselves actively with members of the dominant group, in order to feel a sense of security around their own belonging:

As a Canadian, I felt a little more accepted. But being Chinese or part of a minority culture always becomes an issue at some point. "Don't worry", they say. "You're different." "We don't mean you!" I feel a meek sense of victory as if I've won a hard-fought battle. Yet I also feel angry, resentful and hurt. I AM one of THEM that you speak of" (Woo, 1993: 92).

Did you feel kind of embarrassed if you were seen talking to another Indian at school? Actually, yeah, 'cause I didn't want people to think he's my only friend. You know what I mean, 'cause he's brown he's my only friend. Or because she's brown she's my only friend, and because we're brown we should stick together. I didn't want that impression to come...I didn't allow myself to become good friends with that [South Asian] person (Handa, 2003: 42).

When analyzing such narratives, one key question I want to ask is: how does the internalizing of a racist gaze intersect with the ambiguous status of adolescence? How do subjects who are already in a suspended mode of selfhood create and sustain a stable sense of self-esteem with regard to their ethnicized and/or racialized status? And given the primacy of the peer gaze in the positioning of who belongs, how do minority subjects avoid "being spoken into difference", even when they align themselves with the dominant group? For instance, how does the subject in Handa's interview negotiate her identity as brown-skinned, when she herself does not want to be seen with people who have brown skin?

If shame, embarrassment and humiliation affect the subject's ability to function properly in the world, and she operates in what Portis describes as a state of 'ego chill' (1985), it would be worthwhile to examine how this plays out at the narrative level, to discover what stories subjects end up telling themselves about their lives as racialized Others. As Knowles points out, narratives of selfhood still have to negotiate narratives told by others (1998: 50), and there are often significant consequences to racism in terms of people's health, body, dignity and self-integrity (64). Some of the more autobiographically flavored accounts of race and identity suggest that even for subjects who have not experienced overt discrimination (i.e. verbal harassment, physical attacks, systemic exclusion), the "interiority" of their lives has been profoundly shaped by the experience of difference (Knowles, 1999: 124).

3. Strategies of Critical Resistance

Unlike strategies of accommodation and denial, strategies of critical or negotiated resistance are conscious transgressions of the discourses that position subjects. Although influenced by Robinson and Ward's definition of resistance for liberation, my own take on these strategies is that the naming of oppressions in a subject's life does not follow some linear trajectory (i.e. recognition of the problem leads to changing it), but more what I will describe methodologically as a process of 'voicing-over' dominant narratives of race, gender class etc. 'Voice-overs' are present in a narrative when a subject speaks openly about race and racism; they are also present when subjects question and challenge dominant narratives of racialized belonging. The act of 'voicing-over' does not necessarily entail some kind of obvious 'liberation' from the gaze of dominant culture.

Subjects struggle with this gaze and their narratives are not consistent. As a result, they may 'voice-over' certain discourses of racialization, and accommodate others, without recognizing the contradictions.

Although cultural discourses of difference are not erased (certainly not at the macro-level anyway), 'voice-overs' allow subjects the space to interrogate and re-vision belonging, in a number of ways that range from choices that are clearly 'liberatory' (i.e. reading radical literature, joining activist groups or listening to political music), to choices that are less obvious and sometimes even appear to be self-defeating (purely symbolic displays of resistance, drug or alcohol abuse, dropping out of school etc.). Although from a humanist standpoint the latter decisions are deeply problematic (and in some ways more so than using denial or accommodation), these choices must still be recognized as modes of resistance that are informed by subjects' awareness of, and anger towards, existing power relations.

One type of 'voiceover' used by minority girls is the disowning of whiteness and hegemonic notions of belonging, in favor of strong ethnic or racial identities. In Khan's research, one of her subjects chose to identify very strongly as a Muslim in high school, despite daily harassment from peers and even institutional intolerance for her difference (1998: 488). Similarly, some of the girls interviewed by Way, Proweller, Puar and others re-narrated their difference as a source of power. Sometimes, this involved recognizing racism and their own positioning as racialized and yet re-claiming this as a good thing:

Lucy: As a person...I think the biggest thing that describes me, at least from society and comes from like me, is that I'm a black person. I'm everything, in every connotation, every true connotation that comes from a black person...I have...a very different outlook on life than most people my age, meaning most Caucasian people my age. I believe that anything in life that I get I struggle for because no matter what anyone says, there's still a lot of prejudice in the world – against women and

against minorities [How would you like to be seen by the students in school?] Casey: I would like to be seen as African-American, who I am. It...bothers me when people want to use, being we should all, we should all forget about color and not see people as for this and that, as an excuse to put down racial movement. I don't like that because there is such a lack of history in this country (Proweller, 1998: 114).

I'd say I'm Ismaili Muslim. I wouldn't be ashamed to say it, like a lot of people think I'm Spanish, Portuguese or something. They look at me and don't know what I am. But I tell them, I go "Yeah, I'm Ismaili Muslim" and they ask me where I'm from [and] I say East Africa. Like I'm not ashamed to say it, like not at all... I wouldn't say Canada. Even though I'm born here, I'd say East Africa 'cause that's like where we're from (Handa, 2003: 134).

Another strategy is to understand the racialized nature of school and other spaces, and not transgress those boundaries. Although this sounds much like a strategy of accommodation, it is important to view it as the pragmatic recognition of race as a factor and an unwillingness to engage on hostile ground:

We were fighting...*did you shout?* yes I did. I wouldn't care. If they swear I swear back.. *which group was it?* Year 8 boys, yes, and some girls...because they were very naughty they got no respect... *so you decided to stay away from them?* Yes...and sometimes like we say, 'oh, don't care about them, just sit here and let them stare' (Matthews, 1997: 8).

Now if we were to go to a bar, we wouldn't go to a white bar 'cause we wouldn't get noticed. See the problem is no matter what, we are brown, okay. We do not fit in with white people. I don't think I find myself comfortable in a bar, like a white bar, instead of a brown dance. I mean what's the point in going to a club where...you feel like an outsider, when you can go to a place where you walk in a people will say hi to you when you say hi to them...(Handa, 2003: 137).

Girls sometimes engage in a derision of the dominant culture's symbols as a way of expressing resistance. According to one subject in Puar's study, "All the qualities I've got in me, all the things my mother and father brought me up with, when you see white people you think, oh my God, now I know why they taught me the way they did" (Puar,

1995: 45). In Bettie's study, the working class *Chicas* used certain symbols (such as heavy make-up, tattoos, drugs, piercings etc.), to mark their difference from the middle class, white "prep" girls that they despised (2000: 14). *Las Chicas*, recognizing their exclusion from race and class privilege, found ways of diminishing this privilege by re-naming it in various negative ways (for example, white girls' friendships were "phony and insincere" and always in the interest of social ambition) (2000: 18). Similarly, girls in Proweller's study mocked white girls' attempts to dress, sound and act 'black', seeing this as an reverse 'wannabe-ism' that not only made these girls ridiculous, but was recognized by racialized girls as a form of cultural appropriation:

Like Gayle and Amanda...they drive me nuts because they sit there and just try to act so down, just try to be so down as in being hip to black culture...I mean this is going to sound really awful, but it's like if you get a bunch of black people together and have a bunch of white kids try to act like that, it's like a joke. I mean, nine times out of ten, you'll see the black people going – look at them, look at that. It will become the hot topic, and that will be the new discussion, you know. It almost becomes like a joke (Proweller, 1998: 125).

At times, girls' 'voice-overs' of peer and dominant culture are openly hostile.

Notice the use of slang and profanity in the following accounts:

Ke angrily derides the racialized exclusivity of the blonde-is-beautiful media message that she perceives to be the source of her exclusion. The absence of 'Asian' cover-girls, film stars, and models expels her from the dream-making femininity... "You know, I reckon that the modeling industry and all that, they would never let...I don't see any Asians on catalogues... [just] *little Aussie pom-pom shit* [my emphasis]. They reckon blonde and beautiful, I mean not look at someone's face and that... (Matthews, 1997: 11).

B: I think they [Australian soap-opera shown in Britain] put Asians down so much

A: yeah

B: it's not like that

C: they also put Blacks down as well

B: I know they do, they only keep the Australian *thingy people* [my emphasis] high (Barker, 1997: 623).

Again, although there are 'political' differences among these various strategies of resistance, they are all examples of a subject's willingness to recognize a problematic relationship to belonging, and an attempt to tell a different story about race, one that will allow her to create and maintain a sense of self that escapes the narrative of despised Otherness. Naming racism, re-claiming difference as a positive, or reconstructing hegemonic narratives in negative terms are all 'voiceovers' that, at least temporarily, interrupt the tightly knit relationship between *becoming* and *belonging*.

Meta-Narratives of Otherness: Reflexivity in the Presentation of Self

One commonality running through strategies of accommodation, denial and resistance is a subject's reflexivity in the narration of selfhood. Even when girls deny experiencing racism or find ways to justify the dominant discourses around race, they are aware on some level of this denial, through what Barker refers to as a reflexive monitoring of action and meaning (1997: 613). Scholars such as Gubrium and Holstein, Stanley, Franzosi, Steedman and others see this reflexivity as a fundamental part of all storytelling because of the necessarily fictitious nature of narrative. When subjects tell stories about their lives to themselves and others, they necessarily 'lie' because of memory, the unconscious and the subject's own choices about what is or is not pertinent to the story.²⁰ They choose to tell certain stories and within those stories, they foreground certain experiences or feelings. But the subject/storyteller is to some extent

²⁰ Although the issue of truth or objectivity will be more thoroughly discussed in chapter five, for the moment I will align myself with Barker's position that narrative as a theory and method is not useful if we are looking for some "objective or totalizing account" of young people's lives. Rather, its worth lies in enabling us to understand the pragmatic consequences of discourse on subjects and their negotiations with this.

aware that she is making certain decisions about the hows and whys of a particular narrative. In this way, according to Gubrium and Holstein, the subject is both the author of her narrative and its editor (1998: 17).

Although reflexivity is generally part of subjective accounts of experience, minority girls may actually experience a hyper-reflexivity in their narration of selfhood, because they are constantly negotiating the tension between the ideal subject position (i.e. racialized white), and their own ambiguity in relation to that position. As I discussed earlier, a marginalized subject is generally aware of the discrepancy between the dominant stories of a culture and her own experiences. Subjects whose lives are “lived out on the borderlands” are regularly reminded that they do not belong, in large part because their ‘stories’ do not mesh with the dominant narratives of race, class etc. through which belonging is organized:

Personal interpretations of past time – the stories people tell themselves in order to explain how they got to the place they currently inhabit – are often in deep and ambiguous conflict with the official interpretative devices of a culture...the story, my mother’s story, a hundred thousand others – cannot be absorbed into the central one: it is both its disruption and its essential counterpart (Steedman, 1995: 10-20).

Steedman’s point is illustrated quite poignantly in diasporic narratives of displacement, as well as racialized accounts of such events as the Japanese internment in the U.S. and Canada during World War Two. For example, in novels such as Joy Kogawa’s *Obasan*, a major part of the story revolves around the inability to *speak* about one’s experiences of race or racism because of dominant white society’s unwillingness to *hear* . Lim describes silence as a powerful thematic that runs through minority literature ((Lim, 1990: 302); furthermore, this forced silence also represents the tension between

minority subjects' attempts to forget their experiences of non-belonging, and their simultaneous inability to forget, because they are constantly reminded of this difference:

This culture makes me ashamed of mine. I am ashamed of my brown skin, of being from India. I walk through the Hallway in school...people walk by me, crowding the corridors. I am one of them. I dress like them. I talk like them. I even swear to be tough like them... "Paki", someone screams. It echoes through me and rebounds off lockers from side to side. For me, the scene has stopped, I no longer hear the voices. I move through white people, only following motions. I feel as if someone has blown my cover. All eyes are on me now. The intruder has been identified (Handa, 1990: 41).

According to Giddens, subjects who are engulfed by anxiety often seek to blend into their environment in order to avoid being the targets of "the dangers which haunt them". However, because this creates mistrust in one's own self-integrity, the subject is always subjecting her behavior and thoughts to constant scrutiny (1991: 54). In a similar vein, Goffman has suggested that stigmatized subjects have a more active biography than 'normals', who experience long stretches of time ("dead periods"), where events take place that are "memorable to no one" (1963: 62-74). One reason for this may be found in Knowles' argument that race is the most salient of identities for those to whom race categories are regularly applied in acts of public recognition (1999: 122).²¹ Although Goffman argues that everyone has hidden stigmas, in his framework race falls into the category of an embodied stigma, one which is almost impossible to hide. This suggests that even when they are reluctant to do so, minority girls regularly have to integrate race

²¹ Also see Erkut et al: "Race and ethnicity generally are salient for adolescents of color, particularly in their identity formation, in ways that they are not salient for white adolescents" (1996: 56).

or difference into their narration of selfhood,²² producing what Ang (1996) refers to as “paranoid subject positions”:

I’m constantly thinking about what people will think of me, they must think that I’m really typical...even when I haven’t got a scarf on my head but I’m like in Asian clothes I’m so *paranoid*. Oh people must think typical...you know that I’m from the dark ages and that...I know it sounds bad but that’s how I feel (Dwyer, 1999: 12).

When you’re on the trains, and like white people start holding their pocketbooks because they think you’re going to rob them or walking down the street, they’ll cross the street and stuff like that (Waters, 1996: 76).

Both these girls, despite their different ethnic and racial backgrounds, experience a similar sense of being under constant surveillance by a dominant racial gaze. Their narratives indicate that they are always attuned to what Whites might be thinking of them at any given time. Sameera, the first speaker, is also aware of another gaze, a reproachful one that implicitly judges her for being ashamed in the first place. Her narrative shows that she is doubly ashamed of herself, not only because she is constructed as an Other (already a status to be ashamed of), but also because she shouldn’t and yet does, *want* to belong to the racialized society that has spoken her into difference (the shame of the ‘wannabe’). In Sameera’s story, the self reflecting on itself finds little to feel proud of; it is all too aware of other people’s racialized judgments of it, and it not only colludes with these judgments, but despises itself for doing so.

Furthermore, there is an underlying instability to racialized subjectivity that may require more constant monitoring of the self by the self, because the criteria through

²² An exception might be times that they are with family, community or other minority friends, where difference is either temporarily suspended or acknowledged and played with humorously (for example, authors such as Puar (1995) and Handa (2003) describe insider moments where they mimic accents and draw upon the very stereotypes used by dominant members to assert their shared identity as outsiders).

which a subject gets spoken into difference are not uniform, predictable or even very constant. The subject, while perceiving her experiences through an interpretive framework of racial difference, may also suffer from self-doubt about the validity of her perceptions. With the exception of overt racism, how does one determine what contexts are/are not colored by racial undertones? Such judgments are particularly important in situations where even to voice that possibility is to be called paranoid. Again, as Matthews points out, the refusal to name something as discriminatory is often a pragmatic choice on the part of the subject (1997: 13). To embed one's narrative of self in a story of difference is not only to risk being called a troublemaker or someone who is paranoid (and this labeling is itself a form of epistemic violence), it also requires acknowledging that one's project of belonging is always being compromised by one's own identity as a racialized Other.

If adolescence is indeed about the making of various forms of difference, minority girls are well aware that race or ethnicity may potentially hinder their ability to occupy a legitimate social position. Girls, struggling with the social hierarchies of adolescence are also witness to (and sometimes participants in) the Othering of other girls (and boys), sometimes because of race, sometimes for arbitrary reasons that have nothing to do with race. For example, Neeti, who Gilligan describes as a "Perfect Girl", is South Asian. Her racialized status is never discussed (which is perhaps more a statement about the bias in white feminist research on girls), but we get strong hints that belonging is the number one priority in her life, and she has successfully achieved it, in part, through her exclusion of other girls. However, what remains shadowed in Gilligan's account is whether or not

Neeti's racial status is at all implicated in her active, even obsessive, concerns around belonging:

While Neeti struggles to be "still there", to stay visible as her self and have friends who are "really friends", she also knows the power of being chosen and she wants to be popular...playing the popular, perfect game, Neeti risks not knowing what is an act and what is really her: "I watch people...I watch over and over again...if you want to have friends and you are going to plunge into things, you can do it all wrong and never have a chance at having them as friends...if you take things gradually ...look out and see how they act, and see...whether I can fit in"... "One friend I have and she is supposedly my best friend, you know, and I don't talk to her, because like everybody hates her in class"... (Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 195-201).

Neeti's narrative is a testament to the power of the popularity discourse in adolescence. Her attempts to fit in seem to be mainly through a form of mimesis: by carefully studying the social dynamics, she has gained the ability to be a more perfect copy than the original. Neeti herself never mentions race (making it conceivable that her strategy of mimesis has allowed her to remain unracialized), but her struggle to belong at the cost of herself may be more than just the effects of the patriarchal order on girls. Neeti is an expert at monitoring herself and others; she knows how to 'play the popular perfect game', but questions remain: is this game simply about friendship and peer culture? Gendered identities? Is it about race? It is worth recalling Goffman's point that stigmatized subjects, even those who are successfully passing, are constantly on display: they are aware of an audience's gaze at all times, and are obsessively concerned with 'slipping up' in their performance of normal selfhood.

Looking Back in Anger: Memory, Selfhood and the Haunting of Adolescence

One of the underlying assumptions of narrative or biography is the importance of retrospection, commonly understood to be the analysis of past events or experiences. If life is lived in the moment, then it is remembered, understood and re-examined as part of the immediate or distant past. As Sarup points out, the past does not exist in some tangible way: we interpret past events and in the process create histories (1996: 46). It is through the making and telling of these histories/narratives that we produce the self (46). Memories provide us with the material for telling stories about our lives: who we were, who we are and who we may become, and the relationship between these different selves. In part this is because of the dialogical relationship among the past, present and future: our present is a dialogue between what we were a moment ago and what we will be a moment from now. Following Ricoeur, we understand our sense of selves temporally or *within-timeness*; that is, what philosophers have referred to as *Dasein*, a being in time (Ricoeur, 1991: 102).

Exploring the processes through which girls become racialized requires a more conscious examination of the role of time and memory in the shaping of subjectivities. Research on minority girls recognizes the role of memory only indirectly, in that both girls (and women being interviewed about their girlhood), talk about their experiences of *becoming* and *belonging* retrospectively. But there is little analysis of the possible significance of memory in terms of subjects' negotiations with, and creative responses to, experiences of being Othered. However, according to theorists such as Steedman, hooks and Stanley, memory - while problematic from the standpoint of truth claims - allows subjects to reclaim a sense of agency in terms of events, experiences or emotions over

which, at the time, they may have had little or no control. Although, as Ricoeur points out, life should also be viewed as an incipient story filled with potentialities and possibilities (1991: 114), we do not narrate experiences that we have not yet had. To narrate one's life even to oneself is to do so from a vantage point of omniscience; that is, already knowing what has happened. The act of re-telling is therefore an act of re-visioning, of reconstructing one's self in relation to the world. For example, in *The Radical Soldier's Tale*, Steedman explores how a British working class soldier used his personal diary or memoir as a place of resistance to hegemonic notions of class, nation and masculinity; his memoirs were a private forum for questioning the contradictions inherent in his experiences of the multiple and contradictory discourses of imperialism, and class inequality:

I've always known, then, that the soldier's story is about what they can make us do. About what they can do to us...it has to do with powerlessness, the situations that the powerless get into, those places where people can do things to you, and with you... [but]...to be resentful and angry in small and uninscribed ways is one form of resistance...it means only that you don't give in, that you stay alive and resentful, until the end (Steedman, 1988: 2, 7).

According to Steedman, memory is a powerful tool for resistance because it involves a movement between the past that had its own meaning at the time of the event or experience and a "recasting" of this meaning because of subsequent experiences (Steedman 1988, 151). We see this movement a great deal in adolescent girls' narratives: even when they are talking about experiences that have just happened, their stories reflect both their feelings at that time of the experience as well as their subsequent reflections about the experience. According to Hey, "retells", which are a predominant part of girls' narratives of friendship, are not simply told for the purpose of offering information

(1997: 109). The revisiting of past events, especially painful or troublesome ones, allows subjects the chance to create new meanings, as well as to confirm old certainties. From a psychoanalytic perspective, it offers the psyche a way of resolving certain tensions. Sometimes this happens through re-interpretation, where the subject looks back and understands things differently, sometimes through the imaginative or fantasmatic, where the subject imagines a different scenario from the one that occurred. Sometimes it is simply through new knowledge, which allows the subject to understand what was not clear at the time:

The daughter's new knowledge of her mother's death enables her to imagine her mother's final sufferings and in imagination empowers her to possess her mother once again: "Young Mother at Nagasaki, am I not also there?"...The adult Naomi, acknowledging the damage done by the mother's silence, describes the child/Naomi as suffering "a double wound. The child is forever unable to speak. The child forever fears to tell." But as an adult, empowered with knowledge long kept secret from her... the narrator/Naomi is able to know...in rescuing/writing her maternal and racial past, the narrator/protagonist has rescued/written herself" (Lim, 1990: 306-307).

There is something called rebirthing. A healing process that takes sometimes months, years. Traveling back through memories both fragile and firm, scattered and segmented; and those that are cohesive, unforgettable and imprinted within us, upon us..."my name is Amita Handa, not Anita or Amoeba or Amityville Horror. And it's pronounced like Ami-th-a, even though I always introduce myself to the outside world as Amida or Amita." As I said this the class became silent. I then stood up and left the room...these were the small triumphs I was dreaming about in my grade ten science class. I wish now, years later, I had made this a reality (Handa, 1990: 40).

Re-telling also allows subjects to maintain a sense of self-continuity, while simultaneously recognizing the different selves that they have been over a long period of time. When a subject talks about some experience in her past, she is speaking in several different narrative voices: among others, the person that she is presently, the person that she was when the event took place and the editor of both these voices. As Cohen points

out, the relationship among these voices – between the speaking subject telling the story and the spoken subject whose story is being told - illustrates the presence of several unspoken subjects at work in a narrative (1999: 221-222). Moreover, it is interesting to note that both the subject and listener generally recognize these different voices because of their narrative organization: the voices operate through an assumed temporal separation (i.e. this is how I felt then and this is how I feel now). In this way, the continuity of both the self-as-lived and the self-as-narrated is maintained through the organization of these memories into a more or less coherent and linear story that has a beginning, middle and end.

The memories we have, although personal, also draw upon dominant cultural understandings of selfhood, and developmental categories are a key organizing motif in western cultural narratives. Discourses of childhood innocence, adolescent instability and adult freedom/responsibility inform our way of experiencing life (Brannen and Nilsen, 2002: 522). Adolescents draw upon these dominant views of development to talk either about their adult futures or their own nostalgia for the lost innocence of childhood. For example, in Way's research on adolescent boys' friendships, she found that subjects talked a lot about how they *no longer* had friends whom they really trusted and to whom they opened up. In boys' narratives, the insincerity of these teenage friendships was juxtaposed with an idealization of childhood or junior high friendships (according to these boys, *when they were younger*, they had those kinds of trusting friendships) (Way, 1997: 716-718).

For adults, both childhood and adolescent memories are rich resources upon which subjects draw as a way of establishing themselves "within time". Best argues that

adult memories of adolescence rather than the experiences of contemporary adolescents define how adolescence is portrayed in mainstream culture (2000: 25). According to her, because events such as Proms are filtered through the collective memories of American adults, youths' lives are shaped and determined by adult agendas, ideologies and idealized versions of adolescence, regardless of whether these representations have the same resonance for youth themselves:

Proms tend to be events that adults remember, which may help to explain why the themes of adolescent disappointments, fragility and embarrassment are recurring themes...Proms, then, are a part of how adults remember and rewrite their pasts (even for those who didn't go to their proms). Adults get to define their current self in relation to their past self; who adults were then shapes who they are now (2000: 25).

For racialized adults, childhood and adolescent memories are often the reference points for their experiences of cultural alienation, yet this is not an area that researchers have explicitly theorized. Although race research often examines the role of memory in racialized subjectivities, there is no explicit recognition of the importance of developmental markers in people's stories. Even research that is specifically on race and youth (see for example, Ward, 1988; Min and Kim, 2000; Aujla, 2000; Das Gupta, 1997) does not unpack the retrospective undertone of subjects' accounts. This is despite the obvious indications that racialized subjectivity is formed through a dialectic between the past and present, through past experiences of racism and the memory of these experiences that adult subjects carry with them. Adult subjects often narrate their pasts through a filter of difference, looking back on events in their childhood and/or adolescence that marked them as being outside the parameters of national belonging. Following Steedman, they experience and then remember their pasts through the disjuncture between the dominant cultural devices that construct development through a narrow set of experiences

(childhood innocence and adolescent fun, rebellion and awakening), and marginalized subjects' own experiences of these developmental "turning points", in particular, their own complex and sometimes failed negotiations with belonging:

The kids would wait for me and my brother and sister after school to beat us up...my father used to come to pick us up from school because we'd be scared to go home alone. It got so bad that we did not want to go to school (Das Gupta 1997: 578).

I still remember clearly that September morning when I first spoke to you. We were on the playground swings..."where are you from?" you had asked me innocently..."you look different than us." I wonder if you remember that conversation today. I recall it because that is when I was first truly aware that I "looked different from my schoolmates". It was a distinction clearly affirmed by a cruel children's rhyme that started "Chinese, Japanese, dirty knees...I don't think the children meant it viciously, but the feelings of powerlessness return too strongly when I think of living in a society which can produce such a rhyme...in my apartment building...three months ago, I got on the elevator with an elderly lady. I made a comment about how nice it was to have a sunny day...She patted my hand. "Yes dear, in this country we do have many different kinds of weather. You'll like it very much". Little did she know that I've been experiencing our weather for twenty-two years. [In]...situations like these...It is like I am transported back to the seven year old on the playground (Wong, 1993: 94).

High school is such a time when you're really exposed to the dating atmosphere and it's exciting and everybody thinks you're cool if you're dating...I didn't date the first two years [in high school]. Not that I wasn't interested in guys. Not that I didn't [stutters] I think [long pause] I don't know. A lot of [my experiences] were racial [pause]. I think I had some problems because I was black (Twine, 1996: 216).

The impact of childhood and adolescent experiences of racism on subjects' narratives of selfhood brings us back to Giddens's point about the integrity of the self vis à vis feelings of shame, humiliation or inadequacy (1991: 65). Writers such as Wiesel, Brison and others have described the effects of trauma on people's sense of self in terms

of not recognizing their former selves.²³ Knowles (1998; 1999) and Westwood (1994) in their research on race, identity and mental illness, have documented the more severe effects that racist incidents and the memory of those incidents have on adult subjects in terms of maintaining a coherent sense of self. According to Westwood, memory is a crucial aspect of healthy subjectivity. She looks at the impact of racism on healthy self esteem, by drawing upon patients' narratives of remembered incidents of racism that continue to haunt their present selves. Similarly, Knowles examines the narrative of William Kafé, a black teacher in Quebec, who was the victim of constant racist attacks by his students. According to Knowles, all his stories now connect with the all-consuming drama of this period in his life. In his narrative we can hear the voices of a former self (the one who experienced these incidents), and a present self who has not been able to negotiate the trauma of the past (1998: 54):

I was very much sick, physically weak...feeling anguished, sometimes my voice is choked, sometimes they [students] throw objects at me and I have bruises with blood sometimes...I wasn't the same person...(53) my human dignity has been taken away. I have been reduced to an animal level...I want my human life back" (Knowles, 1998: 55).

Kafé is unable to separate the physical effects of racial violence from the profound psychological trauma that must necessarily accompany any violation of one's bodily integrity. According to Brison, when a subject is reduced to an object through human inflicted trauma (i.e. torture, abuse etc.), his or her subjectivity is rendered useless

²³ Brison's discussion looks the ways in which our relationship with our bodies can be affected by certain experiences that demand a reorganization of one's self-identity. She uses the writing of holocaust survivors such as Charlotte Delbo to frame her autobiographical discussion of the destruction of an old self after the physical and emotional trauma of rape: '...no doubt, I am very fortunate in not recognizing myself in the self that was in Auschwitz. To return from there was so improbable that it seems to me I was never there at all. I live within a two-fold being. The Auschwitz double doesn't bother me, doesn't interfere with my life. As though I weren't I at all' (1997: 19-20). Similarly Wiesel's book (1990), which is a first person account of a holocaust survivor, discusses the relationship between trauma, memory and selfhood.

and worthless (Brison, 1997: 14). When Kafé says that he is no longer the self that he was prior to this trauma, and in fact now feels like an animal, he is experiencing what Brison describes as the paradox of being unable to *be* oneself, even to oneself, since the self exists fundamentally in relation to others (Knowles, 1998: 14).

Furthermore, if the self also exists within time, then Kafé's account suggests that the memory of trauma disrupts the coherence or linearity of a narrative to such an extent that it is difficult to look either backward or forward. Brison asks: "How does one remake a self from the scattered shards of disrupted memory?" (1997: 20). If our sense of selfhood is derived in large part from our memories (the historical I), then how does a subject forget the past without simultaneously forgetting herself? But paradoxically, how does she remember painful memories without re-living them; that is, being the self that experienced the trauma?

Discussions around selfhood and trauma emphasize how important memories are in subjects' narratives: memories allow us to situate ourselves in the world, they remind us of the social contexts in which we are embedded and they offer us a continuity with ourselves that is necessary for the functioning of a 'normal person'. It strikes me therefore as imperative that we use this insight to ask about the impact of racialized memories that are located in childhood and specifically adolescence, a period of intense concern over who subjects are and where they fit in. If, as Knowles and Westwood suggest, a subject's ability to maintain a sense of coherent and healthy self is tied to her ability to belong and be accepted by larger society, a key question driving my research is whether pressures on this sense of self during a crucial period of *becoming/belonging* permanently rupture this coherence:

During my adolescent years, it hindered my development as an individual because everybody kept hounding me about the fact that I was different, that I looked different...it led to feelings of inferiority; difference became something negative. It happened all the time when I was younger and as I was growing up.²⁴

I do not remember when it began, me getting smaller than my body, the darkness of my steps, the shallowness of my voice, or the fear; the fear of discovery at the neighborhood mall: my mother and Mataji in saris as I dart and hide amongst the clothes in the nearby shops so nobody could see me with them. Or the fear of sitting beside another South Asian in high school. This made my brown feel darker and inevitable...those teenage years that still hover within me are about not being Canadian enough, not being Indian enough, not being white enough...not being" (Handa, 2003: 2).

Ronald Fraser writes that a person is both formed and *deformed* by the past.²⁵

What is the specific nature of this deformation in the case of racialized subjects and how does it relate to developmental categories? The above accounts certainly suggest that childhood and adolescent memories of becoming racialized can be quite profound in terms of subjects' present identities. They may be indicative of what Sarup calls the distortion of the *absolute present*, which he describes as a disruption of linear time in a subject's narrative. According to Sarup, "...an incident which occurred in the past can become a true present. There is a stagnation of time, a dread, a fear that chokes the subject. The traumatic experience becomes a style of being...The present strives to be the 'absolute present' which oppresses the person" (Sarup 1996: 38). If we read adult subjects' narratives of racialized selfhood through the lens of the absolute present, we may find an uncanny resonance between this stagnation or freezing of time and subjects' inability to let go of the 'turning points' that spoke them into existence as racialized subjects.

²⁴ Respondent N, in my MA thesis (1996: 122).

²⁵ R. Fraser, 1984. *In Search of a Past: The Manor House, Ammersfield, 1933-1945*. London: Verso, cited in Sarup, 1996: 38.

Conclusion

My intention in this chapter was to use the theories discussed in chapters one and two as resources for theorizing my own framework of analysis. Drawing upon psychology, sub-cultural theory, feminist theory, cultural studies, education and the constructivist literature on youth, I brought together a number of different concepts in order to construct an analytic framework that would allow me to ask the key question driving this thesis: how are developmental periods such as adolescence directly implicated in the production of racialized subjects? This question has not been properly addressed in either the race literature or the research on adolescence. The former, rather than exploring the existential dimensions of race (how it is acquired and lived by subjects), views racialized identity as little more than the structural manifestation of subtle and overt forms of racism. Similarly, the research on adolescence and race, while it provides important insights, has not theorized the specific nature of this relationship, which I have described as the crucial link between *becoming* someone and *belonging* somewhere. My discussion in chapter three was intended to address the gaps in the above bodies of work. I began by discussing selfhood as an important arena to study if we want to understand how local expressions of power are informed by, and also inform, larger societal structures and practices. I also emphasized the construction of subjectivity through poststructuralist notions of discourse and narrative. I then proceeded to outline the key theories and concepts that I will be using to analyze my fieldwork: how minority girls become positioned in complementary and competing discourses of dominant and marginalized girlhood; boundary events in adolescence where girls become aware that they are different; the creative and sometimes self-destructive strategies that girls draw

upon to deal with becoming racialized; girls' meta narratives of difference (i.e. their awareness that they are enrolled in certain discourses and social practices that configure them as Other); and finally, the role of memory, and the potential significance of adolescent memories of difference-making in terms of subjects' adult conceptions of self.

Chapter three was intended as a general framework for analyzing the links among adolescence, race and selfhood. Having synthesized several key elements of other paradigms, I articulated what I felt was a model that would allow me to explore a certain set of questions that did not fit that well with any of the other frameworks. Although I would argue that my framework (which I would describe as a narrative approach to racialized adolescence), could easily be used to understand the racializing processes of minority girls from varying ethno-racial backgrounds, this thesis is specifically interested in the adolescent racializing processes of second generation South Asian Canadian girls. While it is the case that racializing experiences are often similar in nature, there are some important distinctions that are directly related to the historical and contemporary position of particular ethnicized, racialized groups in nations like Canada and the United States. Therefore, the next chapter sets the stage for my fieldwork results, with a discussion of the South Asian experience in western societies. I begin with an historical overview of the South Asian diasporic experience in Canada, focusing on the systemic and everyday racism faced by these early pioneers. I then go on to discuss the situation of South Asian women immigrants, who have had to struggle against the gendered, racialized implications of Canadian nation-building and the sexism and patriarchy within the diaspora. Finally I end with a discussion of the second generation, focusing specifically

on girls and their experiences with family and community pressures, as well as the demands of mainstream Canadian society.

Chapter Four
Race, Gender, Generation and Age:
Narrating South Asianness in the Canadian Landscape

Introduction

The previous chapters attempted to map the role of developmental categories in the shaping of certain forms of subjectivity. In chapter one, I surveyed a broad range of literatures on the period of adolescence in order to demonstrate both the contributions and limitations of the major paradigms on youth. In chapter two, I outlined a constructivist account of modern adolescence in western societies, emphasizing how adolescence as a concept and set of discourses has been both directly and indirectly implicated in nation-based projects of difference-making. Chapter three attempted to synthesize the various approaches to adolescence in my analytical framework, which theorizes subjectivity as a narrative/biographical project. Using reports of field research on racialized minority girls, I argued that projects of selfhood which involve relations of power such as class, race, gender and ethnicity must be studied by taking into account the importance of developmentally specific experiences of Othering. To this end, I built on and modified existing ideas from the literature, as well as introducing my own concepts, in order to analyze the diverse and creative ways in which girls resist, negotiate and accommodate the process of being spoken into difference.

Chapter three stands as a general examination of racialized, gendered female adolescence. Although it is useful to construct a broad framework through which we can attempt to understand the complex interaction between age and other social relations, one significant limitation to chapter three is the homogenizing of racialized/ethnicized girls'

experiences. My discussion of gender, difference and adolescence, while necessary in order to construct a framework, was intended to set up the dissertation's more narrowly defined concern with the adolescent process of Othering for subjects from a specific ethno-racial group in a specific geo-historical context: second generation South Asian girls in Canada. Here it becomes important to note that the issue of generation cannot be reduced to the question of either racialized or ethnicized difference. As I pointed out in chapter three, minority girls who are racialized without being ethnicized (for example, African American girls), do not have to negotiate certain issues around belonging that arise when subjects are members of an ethnic community with particular traditions that may be radically different from a North American model of adolescence. However, even girls who are ethnicized, but not from the second generation, do not experience the same tensions around belonging as do subjects who are caught between trying to negotiate the museumized values of their immigrants parents, and the demands of mainstream peer culture.¹

The aim of Chapter four, therefore, is to map the links among race, gender, generation and age in the subject formation of South Asian girls. But in order to contextualize these identity struggles, it is first necessary to provide a brief history of the South Asian 'community' in Canada.² As I mentioned at various points in chapter three,

¹ For instance, Waters (1996) points to the differences between second generation Caribbean girls and their immigrant counterparts. The latter have less trouble with self-esteem about being an Other and generally have the same values and perspectives on culture and tradition as their parents. Many of them also planned to return 'home' after high school graduation.

² Although I discuss this in more detail further on in the chapter, it should be stated at the outset that while I will be using the category "South Asian community" for the purposes of discussion, I realize that there is no South Asian community in Canada *per se*. There are communities that are organized through origin (i.e. Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan etc.), religion (i.e. Hindu, Muslim, Sikh), and even geographic proximity (cities or neighborhoods). They share a commonality in terms of their designation within a diasporic context as being 'South Asian', a term that is historically and geographically specific, and only fairly

subjects' projects of belonging are rooted in an awareness of the specific forms of racialization that they encounter, depending on the ethno-racial group with which they are identified. Furthermore, processes of Othering take on specific shapes and forms based on the historical relationship between dominant and marginalized groups in society. As Aujla points out, the belonging of second-generation South Asian girls and women is constantly compromised by the gendered, racialized legacy of Canadian nation-building (2000: 41). Consequently, chapter four begins by examining the institutional forces arrayed against the first South Asian émigrés in the early part of the twentieth century; Canadian society's overt racism towards them and its sometimes tragic consequences; the impact of global concerns such as British imperialism, two world wars and post-war national identities on the everyday lives of South Asian immigrants; the setting up of new communities within the South Asian diaspora; and changing conceptions of South Asianness in popular culture over the last 20 years.

If immigration and re-settlement form the backbone of the above history, my own version of this story is an attempt to unsettle or question that narrative. Each of the sections following this history can be read as a disruption of the previous narrative of South Asianness; that is, what has been presented, at different moments, as the 'official' story of this diaspora. For instance, the early history of South Asians is a history of men, in terms of actual content as well as myth-making. Barbaric Canadian immigration laws coupled with patriarchal beliefs emanating from both Canadian society and the South

recently became both the mainstream and academic term for the shared culture and experiences of people from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. It is also specifically part of the Canadian cultural and social landscape (Handa, 2003: 173). I found during my research that it was not as widely used in American research (which more often refers to Indo-Americans or *Desis*), and although it can be found in the British literature, the latter also uses the general term "Asian" quite frequently (See for example, Hennink, 1999; Dwyer, 1999; Raj, 2000).

Asian community have gendered what Buchignani describes as one of the most “dramatic human sagas” of Canadian history (1985: 4). Accordingly, section two attempts to address what I would argue is the even more dramatic absence of women in this saga. Here I draw upon a prodigious feminist literature describing the historical and contemporary role of **gender** in the making of this ‘new’ community: the gendered nature of racist immigration laws in the early to mid part of the twentieth century; the diaspora’s internal struggles with issues of patriarchy; the intersection of race, ethnicity and gender in popular conceptions of the ‘Hindu Woman’; and the systemic and daily struggles with difference faced by South Asian women over the last twenty to thirty years.

Section three of this chapter challenges the essentialism of the category “South Asian woman” used in the above literature. One of the key limitations of this work has stemmed from its assumptions around the immigrant status of the subjects in question. Despite a comprehensive discussion of ‘the South Asian woman’s experience’, there has been very little discussion of non-immigrant women, that is, the experiences of those who are commonly referred to as second generation subjects.³ Influenced in large part by literature on second generation South Asians that has come out of countries such as England and United States, Canadian feminists have recently begun to excavate the stories of this previously ignored segment of the population. The theme of **generation** has now become *au courant* not only in the field of South Asian diaspora studies but also

³ In Josephine Naidoo’s 1994 annotated bibliography on South Asians (approx. 150 sources), there were over 80 articles, books and/or reports specifically on immigrant women; there were less than 20 on the second generation (almost all dealing with generational conflicts within the family), and of these 20, only a handful looked specifically at second generation women’s experiences.

in popular culture.⁴ Using this international literature to review the growing body of Canadian work on the subject, I highlight some of the key contributions made by researchers such as Puar, Handa, Das Gupta and others on diaspora, gender and generation.

The crucial importance of the generation literature for the underlying concerns of this thesis is obvious, given the ethno-racial focus of my qualitative research. The secondary literature on South Asian girls offers a necessary context to the interview material that I will be presenting in chapters five and six. But examining this literature also allows me to highlight a key concern that I have with research on race, ethnicity and generation: there is a noticeable silence on the issue of age and development in the production of South Asian girls' marginalized identities. Therefore, in the final section of this chapter I discuss the silence around age as a relation of power in the study of South Asian female subject formation. My contention is that within this body of literature, it is both the attention paid to non-immigrant women and the overlooking of childhood and adolescence as key periods when lives acquire race, which returns us to the core concern of this thesis: the importance of adolescence in the making of racialized subjects.

South Asian Pioneers in Canada

Since this section is intended as an overview of South Asian immigration, I have organized it thematically, rather than purely chronologically. Although there is some linearity to the discussion, the complexity of this history requires even detailed accounts such as Buchignani's to construct a narrative built around both chronological and non-

⁴ Witness the recent popularity of such movies as *Hollywood Bollywood*, *Monsoon Wedding*, and *Bend it Like Beckham*, which all deal with young South Asians' struggles to accommodate their westernized identities to the traditional demands of immigrant parents and community.

chronological events. I use Buchignani's formulation of the first three eras in conjunction with other sources, but have been forced, out of necessity, to omit a great many fascinating details. Nevertheless, I have tried to highlight some of the key moments in a narrative of racism and resilience that, in its own way, tells a poignant story about becoming and belonging.

1. The Roots of South Asian Immigration

Buchignani begins his narrative with the 1902 visit of Sikh soldiers in the British Imperial Army to Vancouver.⁵ Their reception was a warm one, as crowds of people came out to cheer these exotic turbaned men. News of this welcome trickled back to India, and young men seeking their fortune decided to try the dominion, some in search of a more prosperous life, some looking simply for adventure.

The first pioneers who arrived between 1903 and 1904 were, for the most part, treated well enough. Governmental attention was focused on the unwelcome presence of Japanese and Chinese workers, and Sikhs entered Canada without much legal trouble (Handa, 2003: 46-47). They were granted the rights and privileges of British subjects in Canada and there was no agitation against their presence. They found jobs easily enough in construction and sawmill industries, where they were paid less than whites, but considered to be hard workers. Because they were strangers in a strange land, had little money and were not always accepted as tenants, they often lived together in bachelor households made up of many men, older and younger, who took on different domestic

⁵ Also see Darshan Singh Tatla. 1999. *The Sikh Diaspora: The Search for Statehood*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 50.

roles. These arrangements show men's resilience in being able to construct familial arrangements, despite the absence of women and children.

However, by 1906, hostility had begun to grow against these "turbaned foreigners", who were taking jobs away from good Canadian boys and setting up communities whose values, customs and cultural traditions did not and could never mesh with the Canadian cultural landscape.⁶ A great deal of this growing hostility was fueled by the Vancouver media, who depicted these settlers as "dirty, savage and morally degenerate" men whose presence in Canada symbolized an implicit threat to the economy and culture of a white Canada.⁷ These fears were perpetuated by a growing drive on the part of Sikhs to gain some kind of legal status that would give them the same rights and privileges as Canadians. In 1907, the first legal restrictions were put in place and South Asians became disenfranchised both provincially and federally. The small community of South Asians in B.C. was outraged at what it considered to be discriminatory treatment against loyal supporters of the British Empire. As Buchignani points out:

For half a century the British in India had cultivated the fiction that Indians were equal members of the Empire; as the thesis went, Indians were British subjects, with the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities as Canadians and New Zealanders. Sikhs in particular had long played an important and privileged role in British India...indeed, many who had served the British in the army, in its police forces, or as government officials were intensely loyal to their colonial masters...by the denial of the vote local South Asians were being pointedly told that this loyalty was misplaced (1985: 21).

⁶ See Ralston (1999: 33): "They are not a desirable people from any standpoint for the dominion to have...the White population will never be able to absorb them...we must not permit the men of that race to come in large numbers."

⁷ See Indra (1979), for headlines coming out of Vancouver papers during the period between 1906 and 1914: "Horde of hungry Hindoos invade Vancouver city (Starving coolies roam the streets, menace to women and children)" *Vancouver World*, September 1 1906; "Declares Hindoos are filthiest, from sanitary point of view worst than lowest Chinese" *Vancouver Province*, January 12, 1912; "Bar Hindus from Canada says meeting", *Vancouver Province*, June 24 1914.

In 1908, the Canadian government instituted the “continuous journey” rule, aimed specifically at curtailing further immigration from either Japan or India (Buchignani, 1985: 23; Handa, 2003: 48; Stasiulis and Jhappan, 1995: 112; Nayar, 2004: 17). Essentially, the rule was that an individual had to purchase a ticket for ‘through passage’ from his home port all the way to Canada. According to Buchignani: “There were no ticketing arrangements between India and Canada; no shipping line plied between the two and those that sailed the first leg from Calcutta to Hong Kong did not have ticketing arrangements with those that sailed the second leg. A continuous journey from India to Canada simply could not be made” (Buchignani, 1985: 23; Nayar, 2004). However impossible this journey seemed, an attempt was made and ended disastrously, in the infamous *Komagatu Maru* incident.⁸

Despite the forces arrayed against them (i.e. the continuous journey rule, the disenfranchisement and the restrictions placed on family immigration), South Asians continued to fight for legal and social rights in their new ‘homeland’, lobbying both the B.C. and federal governments for voting rights, citizenship and the right to bring their wives, children and other family members from overseas. Most importantly, they steadfastly pursued these political goals over the next four decades.

From the early 1900s to the 1940s, South Asians were to be found only in the British Columbia area; because of immigration restrictions, they were mostly male-only

⁸ In 1914, an Indian entrepreneur by the name of Gurdit Singh Sarhali chartered a ship in Calcutta (The *Maru*), which went through Shanghai and then managed to sail all the way to Vancouver. The ship arrived in port on May 21 with 376 passengers who were greeted with massive hostility from the Canadian public, the media and the government. Only twenty two returnees on board were allowed to land. The rest waited to receive deportation orders, at which time they would be forced to return to the Far East. Despite massive protests and legal organizing from the South Asian population in Vancouver, the ship sat in the harbor for two months (during which time, rations and water were so scanty that several passengers became ill and one died). It finally set sail on July 23rd, and when it arrived back in India, most of the surviving passengers were arrested and held under British imperial orders (See Buchignani, 1985: 53-58; Handa, 2003: 48; Nayar, 2004: 17).

communities until after the 1920s, when the ban on family immigration was lifted. In terms of their diasporic roots, these settlers were predominantly Sikhs from the Punjab, from rural and farming backgrounds. The early sponsoring of (male) relatives and friends as workers added to the homogeneity of this group. One of the really striking aspects of this history is the fact that during much of this period, capitalist interests did not mesh very well with racist national policies. Companies such as Canadian Pacific Railroad Shipping brought South Asians over because they wanted to recoup some of the money that they had lost over the imposition of the Chinese head tax (Buchignani, 1985: 8). Once here, despite blatant racism from government, media and the local British Columbian population, employers were happy to hire South Asians, since Sikh workers were strong, hard working, accepted less pay and did not make rights-based claims on their employers (1985: 34). Capitalist interests actually created and sustained the growth of the South Asian diaspora in Canada.⁹

Notwithstanding these pragmatic benefits to the Canadian economy, there was continuing resistance to the South Asian presence.¹⁰ Between 1920 and 1930, only 422 South Asians (including women and children) were allowed to immigrate.¹¹ Despite British rhetoric about India being part of the imperial family, the Canadian government continued to restrict immigration from non-European countries such as India, and those

⁹ According to Handa (2003: 46), the intersecting needs of colonialism and capitalism led to the development of the South Asian community in Canada.

¹⁰ According to Buchignani et al (cited in Handa, 2003: 47), after immigrants from the British Isles, levels of acceptance and desirability went along the following lines: Northern Europeans were very acceptable, Eastern Europeans were tolerated, Southern Europeans were to be actively discouraged and applicants from African or Asian countries were viewed as impossible candidates for assimilation into white Canadian society.

¹¹ Many of these were special exceptions to the 1923 ban on all Asian immigration (Buchignani, 1985: 73). Also see Nayar, 2004: 17.

South Asians already in Canada were seen, much like the Chinese, as temporary workers rather than as potential citizens and members of the Canadian national imaginary. They had been recruited for menial labor in the building of a new nation, through its mills, railways, mines and forests, and when their jobs were done they were expected to get out.

During this forty year period, South Asians faced a great deal of systemic and everyday discrimination. They were refused jobs; landlords would not rent to them; they were not allowed into certain restaurants or theatres; the media vilified them; and they were regular targets of name-calling and physical attacks. Over two world wars, they were expected by both the British and Canadian governments to enlist, which they refused to do, arguing (quite justifiably), that they could not be expected to fight on behalf of a country that continued to refuse them citizenship or the vote and would not allow them to build normal family lives. Given their precarious situation, this refusal must be viewed as courageous and even daring.

According to Buchignani, there are several historical and cultural reasons why this community was able to sustain itself in a hostile country and even actively to push for political and social inclusion: the political history of the Sikhs within the Indian sub-continent;¹² the tightly knit diaspora community in Canada bound together by shared caste, class, regional and religious backgrounds; the growing political tensions in India concerning British colonialism which offered a strong example of political rebellion; and lastly, pressure on the Canadian government, by the British, in an attempt to quiet and at

¹² According to Buchignani, the Sikh religion developed in the 1400s, during the Muslim rule in India, and its leaders and followers were from the Jat community in the Punjab, a powerful land owning caste that often refused to acknowledge the superior status of Brahmins and Kshatriyas. The founder, Guru Nanak, was influenced by both Hindu and Muslim doctrines of tolerance and rejection of hierarchy. The religion became increasingly militant as its leaders were killed by Muslim authorities, and the use of force became an integral part of defending the faith (1985: 9-10).

least partially to accommodate Canadian-based Sikhs, lest news of their subordinate status make its way back to India, thus further inflaming the independence movement.

The most remarkable achievement of the "pioneer" era of South Asian history in Canada was enfranchisement, which was won through the combination of South Asian agitation, the presence of Indian soldiers fighting alongside British and Canadian troops in World War Two, the promise to grant Dominion status to India by the British after the war, and perhaps most of all, the federal government's recognition of huge geo-political changes in a post war world:

As both China and India became more independent politically, the denial of the vote to Chinese and South Asians began to be an embarrassment to the federal government. This was made doubly so by Canada's participation in the formulation of the original United Nations Charter; Canada's denial of the Asian vote directly contradicted the charter. Economic considerations also played a role in changing government opinion. In 1945, M.R. Ahuja was sent to Canada by the government of India to serve as India's trade commissioner in Toronto. Canada had high hopes of developing large scale trade with India and was sensitive to Mr. Ahuja's protests about the situation of South Asians in British Columbia (Buchignani, 1985: 97).

In 1947, after some forty years of struggle, South Asians domiciled in Canada were allowed to vote both provincially and federally as citizens. Although this political triumph did not greatly enhance their social and cultural status, they were at least legally entitled to one of the fundamental rights and privileges held by other Canadians.

2. The Central Canada 'Invasion'

The second era of South Asian immigration is marked by two key changes: 1) the diversification of the community, both in terms of the Canadian geographical landscape, and the regional, ethnic, religious and class make-up of new immigrants and 2) the elimination of racial and national criteria in the Canadian immigration selection process. The first change had been creeping up slowly during the post World War two era, as evidenced by the rise of a South Asian professional community located primarily in Central Canada, in the province of Ontario. But the real turning point of South Asian immigration history came in 1962. If enfranchisement and citizenship were the crowning achievements of the previous era, in the 1960s, it was radical changes to immigration policy. In 1962, the Canadian government removed most racial and ethnic restrictions from its immigration controls (Buchignani, 1985: 114; Stasiulis and Jhappan, 1995: 117). The new points system¹³ changed the face of the Canadian nation: large numbers of non-European immigrants entered Canada over the next 40 years. For South Asians, their numbers swelled. According to Buchignani, between 1962 and 1971 South Asian immigration was over twelve times what it had been in the previous decade (1985: 114).

Changed immigration criteria also increased the regional, ethno-cultural and occupational diversity of South Asians in Canada. The Canadian state could no longer afford to build a nation through overtly racialized practices; the economy needed people with education, training and certain skill sets, and class replaced race (at least to some extent), as the dominant social category through which immigrants were filtered (Ralston, 1999: 34). Unlike the early Sikh pioneers, a substantial portion of these immigrants were

¹³ According to Stasiulis and Jhappan: "A points system of selection was introduced which tied selection criteria (occupational demand, educational levels and so on) more closely to the labor needs of Canadian employers" (1995: 117).

middle-class, educated and anglicized; again, unlike the Sikh population in Vancouver, the majority of whose members were in the farming and lumber industries (or later, the professional occupations of real estate and entrepreneurship), members of this new central Canadian wave took up jobs as teachers, university instructors and bureaucrats. They were also from different regions in India and sometimes from other countries (such as Pakistan, Uganda or Fiji). Finally they were religiously diverse (Hindu, Muslim and even Christian).

South Asian men now had the option of citizenship and enfranchisement, they were also allowed to bring over wives and children under the family reunification rule and, for many, their educational backgrounds and anglicized identities offered them the opportunity to retain the middle-class lifestyle that they had enjoyed prior to immigration. Ironically, these privileges also prevented the formation of solid, closely knit communities that had characterized the lives of early pioneers. With the exception of Sikhs in Toronto (who built the first *Gurdwara* in the Toronto area in the 1950s), most South Asian families were nuclear, dispersed and did not necessarily find much in common with those who fell into the same ethno-racial category, a category that was derived from white Canadian assumptions about the relative homogeneity of this brown-skinned population:

To most people of South Asian origin, the term has about the same sort of meaning as does "European" to those who can trace their roots to Europe. While recognizing broad commonalities with other South Asian ethno cultural and national groups, members of any particular group primarily identify with their immediate group. Just like Europeans, South Asians usually hold an overlapping set of identities: perhaps with respect to family, village or town, caste, religion, ethnic group, language, nation, South Asian culture, and the world...popular stereotypes and widespread ignorance of South Asia have created a certain degree of commonality in

the lives of all South Asian Canadians. One result had been a made-in-Canada consciousness of being South Asian among people who might not have thought much about it before. In this sense, South Asians *are* those whom others call South Asian (Buchignani, 1985: 122).

As South Asians continued to populate areas outside Vancouver, a Canadian population that had had little prior contact with, or knowledge of, this group began to take notice. Prejudice began to rise steadily against immigrants, many of whom had not experienced much discrimination when they had arrived in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In 1969, an Edmonton survey showed that those polled wanted more social distance from South Asians than any other immigrant group. In 1973, a similar study showed that Torontonians also desired more distance from this group than any other. The battles over citizenship, voting, family life and immigration criteria had been won, but over the next two decades, South Asians experienced a resurgence of the same explicit racism that had characterized the lives of early Sikh pioneers in B.C.

3. *'Paki Bashing'*¹⁴ as a National Sport

Over the next two decades, South Asians from various class and ethnic backgrounds continued to come to Canada, mainly settling in large urban areas (i.e. Montreal, Vancouver, and Toronto). They became, for the most part, quite a prosperous 'community' (Henry, 1983). However, there were still barriers to overcome. South Asians were often discriminated against on the job market;¹⁵ despite higher education

¹⁴ See Handa (2003: 167) for a discussion of what she refers to as the 'Paki Bashings' in Toronto in the mid 1970s. Buchignani uses a slightly different term: "By 1976 'Paki Baiting' outside the school context by small groups of youths was more frequent in Vancouver and Urban Ontario and was on the rise in Edmonton, Calgary and Montreal" (1985: 215).

¹⁵ According to Buchignani, there was one controlled test of anti-South Asian discrimination conducted in Montreal in 1972. White and South Asian actors were provided with similar qualifications and dress, and

levels than most of their Canadian counterparts, they were generally paid less in professional jobs than native born white Canadians (Hou and Balakrishnan, 1996);¹⁶ South Asian culture was depicted in stereotypical ways: for example, textbooks in Ontario that characterized South Asians as backward, illiterate etc. (Stasiulis, 1989: 75). These stereotypes were reinforced by battles over cultural symbols such as the turban and its foreigner status in relation to Canadian cultural symbols such as the RCMP and the Royal Canadian Legion. Research on South Asians in Canada during this period demonstrates that despite multicultural rhetoric, South Asians were still seen as foreigners, and highly undesirable ones at that.

Perhaps the most defining feature of this era was the tremendous resurgence of racism against South Asians; the result, according to Indra, of large increases in South Asian immigration between 1967 and 1976, as well as the considerable economic and political gains made by the South Asian community (Indra, 1979, cited in Handa, 2003). There were frequent reports of racial assaults in Toronto, accompanied by police indifference and even hostility to victims of racism (Stasiulis, 1989). By 1977, harassment, violence and vandalism had become everyday occurrences in Metro Toronto and had spread across Ontario and the prairies back to British Columbia, home of the first racist attacks on South Asians. Right wing extremist groups such the Western Guard

applied for the same professional level jobs. In 13 of 24 instances, the white candidate was offered a position or told to apply for a vacancy versus only 2 of 24 times with a South Asian candidate for the same jobs (1985: 211).

¹⁶ These credentials were seen as suspect by Canadian officials and institutions. Buchignani (1985: 211) narrates a tragic example, probably one among many, of the struggles faced by immigrants in Canada in the early 60s and 70s: "He came to Canada with B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of Punjab. The Ontario Department of Education rated his B.A. as equivalent to Canadian grade 13 and apparently overlooked his M.A. altogether. He unsuccessfully applied for over a hundred jobs in his occupation...in 1971 he ended his life by jumping in front of a Toronto subway train."

arose and were vocal in anti-South Asian sentiment, as were the mainstream media; all this while both provincial and federal levels of government looked the other way:

In early 1976, a fifteen year old South Asian boy entered a Toronto area shopping mall. Without provocation, he was shot dead by a twenty-one year old man, who explained to police that "I just shot the nigger. For every one you shoot you leave a white girl with a broken heart" (Buchignani, 1985: 216)

On August 2nd, 1981, Khushpal Singh Gill, 21 years old, was beaten to death in Vancouver by four white youths...one of the murderer later proudly declared that "today, I've killed a Hindu" (1985: 217).

As the above quotes indicate, there was a strong 'youth culture' of anti-South Asian racism. According to Buchignani, the vandalism and property attacks were rarely carried out by those above the age of 25.¹⁷ By 1976, the school yard racist graffiti, and the harassment of South Asian children became an acceptable peer group activity in the Vancouver and Toronto area, and children were often forced to change schools to avoid racial conflict (1985: 215).

4. Global Culture and the Rise of High Tech

The shift in Canadian perceptions of South Asianness in the 1990s provides a sharp contrast to the virulent racism of the 1970s and 80s. To begin with, South Asians were no longer the 'new kid on the block' as far as immigration went. Concerns started shifting towards new arrivals from some of the African countries. The world was also changing economically in ways that at least temporarily problematized the older rhetoric about immigrants as a drain on North American social systems. The rise of the global

¹⁷ Although this is no doubt quite accurate, it is once again a demonizing of youth and adolescence, in this case white Canadian youth. Their expressions of racism, while often violent or overt must surely have had *some* connection to the racism of larger (adult) society: for example, the extremely negative media representations of South Asians, or the surveys indicating that the majority of Canadians (and I assume that most of those polled were probably adults) had high levels of intolerance towards South Asians and blacks.

high tech industry and its need for skilled workers meant more immigration from South Asian countries, and South Asian entrepreneurs and businessmen were now being welcomed with open arms:

...silicon valley...The wall street journal has identified five successful software Whiz kids from India...and nicknamed them the five angels ...although there are other groups in Silicon Valley, Indians are the largest group, it said... (Pragati, 2000: 8)

In addition to these economic shifts, hybridity, fusion and mixing (rather than cultural distance) were becoming the trends of the age. American pop culture icons such as Madonna and Gwen Stefani popularized the wearing of eastern clothing or adornments (*bindis* and *mendhi* tattoos). Throughout North American cities, people began exploring traditional Eastern medicines like *Ayurveda* (the Body Shop now has an entire section devoted to *Ayurvedic* herbal treatments), in part because of the mainstream success of health gurus like Deepak Chopra. In Canadian cities such as Ottawa, Montreal, Vancouver and Toronto, South Asian food became standard fare in many restaurants that had traditionally served only “North American” items. Ingredients for cooking South Asian food began to be available at most local grocery stores. South Asian writers started to number among the names mentioned when people talked about outstanding “Canadian” authors (*Ottawa Citizen*, 2000: c15). After a long and troubled history within the white Canadian context, it seemed as if South Asians had finally arrived. From being considered “...not a desirable people from any standpoint for the dominion to have...” (*Vancouver Sun*, 1913, quoted in Ralston, 1999: 33), they were now considered a ‘model minority’.

Inserting Gender: Narrating the Story of South Asian Immigrant Women

Gendering the history of immigrant groups in Canada is a necessary part of highlighting the complexities and contradictions that arise in struggles between dominant and hegemonic groups in any given society. Ethnicized and racialized women occupy a status within their own communities as well as white Canadian society that Yuval Davis (1989) and other feminist scholars describe as being the bearers of culture. This means that they are subject to the patriarchal structures within their own communities, which reduce them to their biology (as sexual partners and reproducers); furthermore, historically women in most cultures have been relegated to the private sphere of home, hearth and children, and as a result have been closely associated with being the ones who maintain cultural traditions and pass them on to their offspring.

Like many ethnicized and racialized women in white societies, South Asian women occupy the difficult position of being a minority within a minority (Ghosh, 1981), given their gendered status within South Asian communities and families, as well as their positioning as a lien and threatening to the Canadian nation. As both Ralston and Dua point out, the history of South Asians in Canada is a narrative of race and racism that is distinctly gendered (Dua, 2000; Ralston, 1999). The first Sikh pioneers were not allowed to bring wives and children into the country, for fear that they would settle down in Canada, and create an ethnic community whose existence would undermine the building of a (white) Canadian nation (Dua, 2000; Ralston, 1999). But the logic behind these concerns must be analyzed not simply in terms of racism, but also the specific identities available to both white and non-white women. Research into newspaper debates during this period demonstrates that these racialized fears were couched in gendered terms that

constructed “the Hindu woman’s question” through the dehumanizing lens of a white, colonial gaze:

The question of Hindu women’s immigration is not only a great question with us in British Columbia; it is the dominant question of the whole empire. It is a question of ultimate dominance between the Far East and the West, of the final supremacy of the yellow or the White (*Victoria Daily Columnist*, 4 March 1912, cited in Dua, 2000, 111).

As the above quote illustrates, the issue of imperial domination was not simply a question of race, but also of gender and the *engendering* of alien communities. The immigration of South Asian women was tied to a discourse that constructed all women as potential “mothers of a nation” (Valverde, 1992). Within this discourse, the motherhood of white Anglo-Saxon women was juxtaposed with the dangers that South Asian women presented in their perceived sexuality and threatening fertility (Dua, 2000: 112; Thobani, 2000: 46). If white women were idealized as mothers of an incipient Canadian nation, South Asian women were seen as potentially dangerous to this nation-building process: they represented the breeders of a community whose presence polluted the “white body politic” (Goldberg, 1993: 187).

Despite the fierce debates that raged over the “Hindu woman’s question” (Dua, 2000: 110), by the early 1930s, a small number of families had been established (Buchignani, 1985: 93).¹⁸ However, the real shift in terms of family relations came about as a result of the 1962 changes to immigration, which abolished race and ethnicity as criteria for immigration (Ralston, 1999: 34). Although these changes altered the face of the Canadian nation in some key ways, South Asian women were still subordinated by

¹⁸ According to Indra (1979: 173): “After 1919, legal South Asian residents of Canada were allowed to bring their wives and dependent children to this country, prompting the resumption of a very small flow of immigrants. About 800 South Asians came to Canada between 1920 and 1939”.

the gender bias of these laws, which viewed them as little more than wives, mothers and thus dependents. Ironically, their status as breeders, which had hitherto worked against them, was now the primary reason for their entrance into Canada, through the “dependent wife and family reunification” category (Ralston, 1999: 34). But they were not, and according to Dua, are *still* not perceived as subjects in their own right, whose economic and social contributions to the Canadian nation would be equal to or even surpassing, those of their male counterparts:

...Rather than desiring South Asian women as workers or “reproducers of the nation”, these women have been imagined as desirable only as spouses for South Asian men. Importantly, the legacy of this discourse has continued to shape the structural relationship South Asian women have with Canadian society. The politics of the Canadian state – especially on matters of immigration and multiculturalism – reconstruct South Asian women as spouses to male migrants and thus continue to marginalize South Asian women in their relationship to the Canadian economy and society (Dua, 2000: 114-115).

This immigration status also fostered a dependency for South Asian women within the family and perpetuated internal hierarchies, where women were seen by their husbands and other men in the community as nothing more than wives and mothers (See for example, Druvarajan, 1992).¹⁹ This was the case even when women were forced through economic necessity to find work (often low paying and low status), to keep struggling immigrant families afloat. The primary status of worker was given to men in the immigration process, which meant that women’s wages were supplemental. South

¹⁹ Nevertheless, despite their so-called subordinate status within the nation and within the South Asian family/community, immigrant women have over the last two decades become quite active in creating organizations that help other women deal with culturally specific concerns (See Agnew, 1991). In a paper presented at the 1997 Learned Societies Conference, I discuss the political organizing of one such group in Montreal whose association liaised with larger feminist associations in Quebec; offered support groups for refugee women; counseling to deal with issues of cultural adjustment; and also had connections to family services and shelters to deal with the problem of abuse within the community etc. (Rajiva, 1997).

Asian men's struggles with racism and discrimination, their sometimes patriarchal views on women, and their insecurities about the erosion of their culture often led to problems of family violence and, at the very least, to breakdowns in traditional family structures (Cassin, 1979).²⁰

South Asian women in Canada also have had to struggle against everyday forms of racism that are gendered in particular ways. Their proficiency in English has been questioned; the substantial education and job skills many of them acquired in their home countries have been dismissed;²¹ their cultural symbols of dress, food and ritual have been ridiculed. Scholars such as Bannerji and Srivastava point out that stereotypes of South Asian women position them as invisible in the social landscape, except as objects of pity, contempt and disgust: "Passivity, docility, silence, illiteracy, smell of curry and fertility are some of the common-sense things that the dominant culture 'knows' about us" (H. Bannerji 1993: 147). Regardless of the number of years that they have spent living in Canada, they are still seen as eternal foreigners, whose "...perceived gradations of color...accent...name" will – according to Srivastava – always be defined against their Canadianness, so that they are never quite Canadian enough to lose the stigma of Otherness (Srivastava 1993: 112).

The historical experiences of South Asian women in Canada offer a useful backdrop to the examination of contemporary practices of difference-making, and how race/ethnicity, gender and nationhood intersect to produce particular discourses around

²⁰ It is worth noting that Canadian social workers addressed these problems of family violence through westernized models, without taking into account the importance of cultural issues (Chattopadhyay, 1979).

²¹ According to Harrison (1981), women from South-East Asia and South Asia tended to be better educated than most immigrant women (for example, the proportion of South Asian women with university degrees was 24%).

belonging. These discourses in turn shape the political, economic and social experiences of those who are perceived as inappropriate national subjects. This body of work has contributed to a deeper understanding of both the experiential and the symbolic; that is, the everyday exclusions and struggles faced by women, as well as the South Asian woman as a signifier for the racialized, gendered Other (Dua, 2000: 109). However, much of the research in this area shares a similar blind spot: both the South Asian woman as embodied subject and the South Asian woman as despised symbol of Otherness are somewhat frozen. Despite the close attention paid to historical context, theorists maintain a kind of myopia about the following questions: how have the experiences of South Asian women changed over the past 100 years? How has the subject position or category changed? While it is absolutely necessary to document the racialized history of nation-building that has affected this group/subject position, there is little recognition that the Canadian nation-state has changed, and along with it the racialized discourses of belonging and exclusion:

Some visible minorities, notably the Arabs and the South Asians...earn higher average incomes than some whites, notably those of Southern European...and of French ethnic origins. The notion that all visible minorities are equally oppressed, impoverished, marginalized and victimized by a ubiquitous Canadian racism...is thus overly simple and indeed would appear to be quite false. Canada does not have a dichotomous racial stratification system with all whites above, and all non-whites, now recorded as visible minorities, below. This is not to say that there is no racism in Canada – far from it – but it is to insist that the role of visibility in the economic structure has to be analyzed more closely, and not simply assumed (Synnott and Howes, 1998: 143-144).

Synnott and Howes' point is well taken; while there is no denying the racist discourses and practices that have shaped the history of Canadian nation-building, the current economic, social and political context demands that we acknowledge racism's contradictions, as well as its resilience, as evidenced by its ability to change over time.

Discourses on South Asian womanhood are not the same as they were during the 1920s debates over the "Hindu woman's question". Nor is the experience of being a South Asian woman in Canada the same. Citizenship and immigration laws have changed radically; as well, there are now many South Asian women who do not fall into the category of immigrant, with its attendant problems of cultural alienation, economic and social discrimination etc. These women's lives have also been shaped by questions of race, nation and belonging. But because they cannot be comfortably fitted into the discourse on immigrant women, their concerns are largely ignored. A great deal of research on South Asian women in Canada continues to reference a purely immigrant context. However, this conflation of South Asian with immigrant only serves to reify the dominant perception of raced ethnic communities as eternal immigrants. Furthermore, it is not a suitable framework for understanding identity that is raced and ethnicized without being immigrant:

...The motions of the people themselves who "appellated" as refugees, immigrants or visible minorities, have to file past immigration offices, refugee boards, sundry ministries and posters of multi-featured/colored faces that blandly proclaim "together we are Ontario"... (H. Bannerji, 1996: 107).

This account of difference, although vivid in its portrayal of Otherness, assumes that refugee boards and immigration offices are the everyday experiences of those who do not belong. In this scenario, the Canadian national imaginary has not changed over time. Racism has always been, and can only be, blatant and systemic. But this is a slippery slope for theorists to walk: taken to its logical conclusion one could argue that if racism is not blatant and systemic, it does not exist. In such a scenario, second generation women who have never suffered through humiliating interviews with immigration

officers or worried that their accents, education or employment experience will not pass scrutiny, have nothing to complain about.

However, over the last ten years, there has been a growing recognition among race theorists that there are significant differences between the immigrant identity of Other and the Otherness of children born and/or raised in countries such as the United States, Britain, and Canada. In place of language difficulties, foreign credentials and cultural alienation, second generation subjects have to struggle with a discourse of national belonging that is flexible enough to exclude them even when they talk, act and live 'like everyone else'. For this group, growing up different has been the challenge. Unlike their immigrant parents, who have previous sources of selfhood to draw upon (outside their subsequent experiences of immigrant non-belonging within a western nation), subjects who develop in contexts of outsidership are spoken into existence through particular discourses of difference. How are these two experiences distinct? This is a crucial element of raced subject formation, but it has not been a major part of the research. A great deal of the Canadian research on South Asians, until recently, has overlooked youth. Most of this research has been primarily concerned with understanding the adult immigrant experience or, occasionally, the non-adult in the context of family. This research has not explored the question of youth and diaspora and the specificities of this subject position in terms of the multiple spaces that youth occupy (school, peer groups, family, community etc.). Work that is specifically on the South Asian female experience has theorized non-belonging through immigrant issues of language-difficulty, acculturation, citizenship and race issues in the feminist movement (see Ralston, 1991; H. Bannerji, 1993; Thobani, 2000). It has looked mainly at women's experiences, rather than

at the experiences of girls or non-immigrant minority females (key exceptions to this include Qureshi, 1992; Rezai-Rashti, 1994; Khan, 1998; Handa, 2003). In sharp contrast to British research, there has been very little focus on adolescence and the experience of growing up in a country where discourses of multiculturalism coexist uneasily with constructions of Canadian identity as white, western and Christian.²² However, this is slowly changing, as Canadian researchers such as Handa (2003) and Aujla (2000) offer compelling accounts of the key differences between immigrants and their children and point to the importance of theorizing these differences.

The following section reviews this research, but because of the relative paucity of work on specifically Canadian experiences, I also draw upon second generation research coming out of the United States and Britain; this research provides valuable insights into some of the central issues that affect Canadian second generation girls' struggle with belonging and will provide the backdrop in chapter six to the analysis of my own fieldwork. As well, notwithstanding the specific geo-historical experiences of South Asians in Canada, and the cultural specificity of Canadian identity discourses, there is a strong transnational flavor to the experiences of the second generation. Regardless of whether it is London, New York or Toronto, subjects have had to grow up in countries where, through similar racialized narratives, they have been constructed as outside the bounds of national belonging.²³ Finally, in the cultural fusion trends of the last decade,

²² According to Maira, this is also the case in the United States, where there has been research on immigrant South Asian communities, but not a lot of research on Indian American youth (Maira, 2002: 16-17).

²³ For instance, Buchignani points out that the term 'Paki' was actually a trans-Atlantic import: "In British Columbia....the earlier term 'Hindoo' ...was later supplanted nationally by 'Paki'. This term was a direct borrowing from Britain, where South Asian immigration was primarily Sikh and Pakistani; it surfaced first in Ontario and spread westward "(1985: 212).

South Asian youth culture has developed a distinctly global flavor (i.e. Toronto night clubs playing British based Bhangra-rap or Canadian and American diaspora youth being fans of the Hindi film scene back in India).

Generation and the South Asian Diaspora

Within historical accounts of any diaspora, the issue of generation is a salient one, for any number of reasons, among which are the questions that I have raised about processes of *becoming* and *belonging*. It may be helpful to think of generation in this context through Abrams' two-tiered definition: according to him, the sociological significance of generation is not simply a given, but rather depends on the specific historical experiences which connect individual identities with momentous social changes (1982: 255). He contends that a generation can be understood as a biological span of time during which identity is constructed through a relatively stable system of experiences. The history of many traditional societies can represent only one sociological generation. A sociological generation, by contrast, can theoretically encompass many biological generations, and comes into being only under specific conditions: "If a new sociological generation is to emerge, a new configuration of social action, the attempt of individuals to construct identity must coincide with major and palpable historical experiences in relation to which new meanings can be assembled" (1982: 255).

There are several reasons to assert the sociological importance of the second generation of the South Asian diaspora: first, there is a noticeable similarity of experiences across specific national contexts (i.e. Canada, the U.S. and Britain), which extends Abrams' point about a sociological generation encompassing more than just one

generation (or in this case, one specific geo-historical context); second, in all three of these countries, the recent interest in this 'generation' (in both mainstream culture as well as academic research), suggests that their identity struggles are substantively different from those of their immigrant parents; finally, there is a conceptual confusion around what constitutes this generation: are they simply the offspring of immigrants? Do these immigrants need to have had specific migration experiences themselves? Is there a time frame? The second generation talked about by scholars such as Puar (Britain), Maira (the U.S.), and Handa (Canada), is not a 'natural' or biological generation. In Britain, according to Brah, there were South Asians in Southall as early as the 1950s, and by 1965, there were white parents campaigning for busing Asian children out of Southall schools, because they were "holding back" white students (1999: 6). Within the Canadian context, there were South Asians born in Canada as early as 1935 (Buchignani, 1985: 93). In the Canadian literature at least, the use of the term 'second generation' is a narrative construct that refers to children born and/or raised in Canada who were the offspring of post 1962 immigration changes, which led to a substantial increase in South Asian immigration.²⁴ All the above points make a strong case for the sociological significance of 'second generation identity projects', which are fashioned through what Abrams describes as the "double construction of time": the coalescing of life histories with world history to transform each other (1982: 256).

²⁴ This immigration had its own internal hierarchies, which I suspect have shaped in part the designation of a particular generation of South Asians as second generation, rather than third or fourth (as is the case in parts of British Columbia: unlike pre 1962 immigrants (who were farmers, workers and generally from rural areas in the Punjab), many immigrants were drawn from the educated, professional middle class in India; they came from diverse national, religious and regional backgrounds and unlike early South Asian pioneers who settled almost exclusively in BC, the majority of post 1962 immigrants ended up in the two provinces of central Canada, Ontario and Quebec.

1. *Daughters of the Diaspora*

Contemporary feminist research on South Asian girls and women offers a number of crucial insights into the ways in which gender, race and generation intersect in the lives of non-immigrant subjects.²⁵ Like other racialized, ethnicized girls, South Asian girls growing up in countries such as Britain, the United States or Canada have to struggle with a fractured sense of self, which arises from negotiating contradictory discourses on ideal girlhood that emanate from families/communities, the dominant peer culture, mainstream culture, and even South Asian youth culture. As discussed in chapter three, girls use a variety of strategies in order to negotiate belonging in adolescent contexts, but as Handa (2003) points out, these negotiations are fraught with a great deal of internal and external tension as subjects struggle to fit into the competing and often incommensurable roles demanded of them: to be good daughters, good examples of South Asian girlhood, proud of their ethnicity (rather than *wannabes*) and yet still able to 'fit in' with dominant cultural narratives of youth and adolescence.

Parental pressures remain one of the major problems that girls encounter in their projects of *becoming* and *belonging*. If immigrant parents continue to see themselves through identities that were shaped by pre-migration experiences, second generation girls - having grown up and gone to school in a Canadian context - can only draw upon their parents' cultural understandings of childhood and youth in a second-hand fashion, which cannot compete with their primary experiences of socialization and identity-building. Research indicates that in the case of both dominant and minority girls, the period of adolescence is a point of disruption: power struggles between parents and children are

²⁵ It also corrects a major blind spot in feminist research on girls which has traditionally focused on white middle class girls, or more recently on the general experiences of minority girls.

generated by the pressures of a dominant cultural narrative in which the peer group 'naturally' becomes of all-consuming importance in one's project of belonging. As I pointed out in chapter two, the dominant discourse of youth turns the peer group into the eye of the social gaze. This gaze determines who belongs, and for South Asian girls, the criteria for inclusion are often in complete opposition to family codes of conduct.

One important difference between mainstream adolescent girls and their South Asian counterparts is the relationship between family and community. The western model of the nuclear family that minds its own business (where parents often do not know what their own children are doing, let alone the activities of their friends' or neighbors' children), is not available to most South Asian girls:

Muslim: In South Hampton I know a lot of Asian women or older men or women, they see an Asian girl walking with a boy, even if it's just good friends...they'd go spreading around rumors "oh we saw this girl with this boy".

Sikh: ...it's not what my mum and dad don't like, it's what's going to be acceptable, what the aunts and uncles are going to say if they find out you're going out and doing this...that's what it is, I mean it might not be them but the society (Hennink, 1999: 877).

Like many ethnicized groups, South Asian communities have fluid boundaries between the categories of family and community when it comes to policing the behavior of children, and particularly girls. This means that even outside the familial circle, subjects are under a great deal of scrutiny. Handa gives a nice description of this ubiquitous gaze: she describes an encounter in Toronto after a night of 'clubbing', with a Sikh taxi-driver, unknown to her or her family, who could still quite legitimately occupy the role of guardian, concerned elder and cultural gatekeeper:

An example of what I have jokingly and privately called the “uncle or auntie phenomenon”...the dialogue begins to follow a similar trajectory that often takes place in Toronto cabs when both the driver and passenger are from “back home”...he wonders whether I am married and if not whether I live with my parents and if they approve of me going out so late...what strikes me about [this] is that although this man is a complete stranger to me and has no direct connection to my family or relatives...he is still a representation, a symbol, if you will, of the kind of moral regulation that I grew up with...the gaze of uncle and auntie always weighs heavily on my shoulders...the interaction with uncle makes me reflect on my own investment in the self-representation of what I understand to be the script of the good unmarried South Asian girl. I construct a narrative and representation of self in relation to uncle that is congruent with racial and cultural loyalty. To relinquish this investment and expose the truth would automatically align me with whiteness and western-ness, labeling me a cultural renegade (Handa, 2003: 12-14).

The above quote points to Handa’s awareness of the gendered nature of the familial/community gaze, which clings to potentially outmoded stereotypes about ideal South Asian girlhood. The ‘good Indian daughter’ stereotype transcends the ethno-geographic specificity of being Indian, Pakistani, Sri-Lankan or Bangladeshi; although there are regional, religious or ethnic differences, girls belonging to any of these groups experience similar pressures to maintain gendered hierarchies within the family and community. These patriarchal notions are apparent in the different positions that boys and girls occupy in the family and larger community. Unlike males in the family, girls are often expected to help their mothers with domestic labor; they are expected to participate in the feminized work of organizing community festivals, ceremonies etc. (Maira, 2002: 124); they are also expected to be the carriers and reproducers of culture, which takes the form of knowing how to cook South Asian food, wear South Asian clothes, observe particular religious customs, etc. As Das Gupta and Das Gupta point out, “the daughters of the community [are] disproportionately burdened with the preservation of culture in

the form of religion, language, dress, food, and childrearing" (1996, 386 cited in Maira, 2002: 124):

...There's the whole issue of incredible sexism in the community. I only have a sister and I've often had this discussion with my father. Had he had a son, I think my life would have been very different. Had I been raised in India, my life would've have been very different...had I been raised in Malton, just outside of Toronto, I'd probably be married, and not finished my education just because of class issues, sexism and perceptions of what's a woman's role and a man's role.²⁶

...Stereotypes of Goan women within the community...very domesticated, good at making traditional dishes and sweets, they're also expected to want a lot of children and put their careers second.²⁷

As the above quotes suggest, diaspora notions of the good daughter in the South Asian community centre around girls' ability to reproduce cultural traditions that have been tied historically to women's roles. At the same time, South Asian boys, while under their own set of pressures, are generally privileged in South Asian households (narratives of ideal South Asian masculinity do not include "knowing how to make *Aloo Gobi*").²⁸ Boys are also freer to experiment with the western model of adolescence, while being charged with the responsibility to make sure that their sisters do not misbehave. In a similar fashion to the Iranian family described in chapter three (p. 121), boys in the family and the larger community evaluate female behavior by drawing upon discourses of authenticity, chastity and subservience. South Asian communities have social customs that are not compatible with western notions of 'normal' female adolescent behavior (i.e. working, dating, going out to parties etc) (Dwyer 1999; Puar 1995; Hennink 1999; Handa

²⁶ Respondent C, in my M.A. thesis: *Identity and Politics: Second Generation Ethnic Women in Canada* (1996: 184).

²⁷ Respondent H, in my M.A. thesis: *Identity and Politics: Second Generation Ethnic Women in Canada* (1996: 136).

²⁸ In the recent film *Bend it Like Beckham*, there is a particularly humorous scene where the South Asian mother is forcing her daughter to learn how to cook *Aloo Gobi* (a traditional north Indian dish); in the same vein, she later points out, "What family will want a daughter-in-law who can kick a football around, but cannot make round *chapatis*!"

2003). Despite diverse religious practices, South Asians as a group share similar expectations for appropriate female behavior.²⁹ According to Puar, Sikh girls and women are expected, like their male counterparts, to attend *Gurdwara* (Sikh temple) regularly, not to cut their hair, and not to have premarital relationships, particularly with non South Asians (and to some extent, South Asians who are not Sikhs) (Puar, 1995). Muslim girls have slightly different demands on their identities: they are also not allowed to have friendships or relationships with boys (even Muslim boys) (Hogsben, 1991), but as Dwyer points out, dress is an over-determining signifier for Muslim girls, because veiling is a central part of the discourse on women in Islam.³⁰ These examples show how girls, like women, are constructed as reproducers of a cultural collective; this becomes especially important in immigrant contexts, where encounters with racism are exacerbated by dominant pressures to conform and assimilate, thereby losing one's previous cultural heritage in the process (i.e. Handa's fear of being seen as a cultural renegade).³¹

Girls' strategies of coping with these familial and communal demands on their selfhood are often to create and maintain separations between who they are at home, in the community, at school, with their friends etc. Because they have to be vigilant about monitoring their behavior publicly, they often behave one way in front of family and community, and another way in the presence of the white peer group or other mainstream

²⁹ Nevertheless, religious differences are an additional problem of identity work for South Asian girls.

³⁰ It must be noted that veiling is not an uncomplicated practice within Muslim culture. As Khan points out, western society often depicts veiling as a point of solidarity for Muslim communities when, in fact, there is a great deal of internal dissension over the veil and its symbolism for Muslim women (1998: 472).

³¹ Post colonial theorists discuss this as a process of museumizing or fossilizing. According to Maira, this fossilization process creates a paradoxical situation, where South Asian diaspora communities are more culturally and ideologically conservative than those 'back home' (Maira, 2002: 85).

and/or non-adult spaces. As Handa points out, a large part of being a second generation South Asian girl revolves around lying, “wearing masks”, sneaking around and living with this deceit, which she describes as permanent membership in “a hall of shame” (2003: 107). According to many second generation researchers, this is one of the standard scripts for growing up South Asian and female in a diaspora context (See Maira, 2002; Hennink, 1999; Dwyer, 1999; Puar, 1995). Many girls “perform” ideal girlhood in front of parents, brothers, and community members and then, on the side, drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, take drugs, have South Asian or non-South Asian boyfriends and engage in pre-marital sexual activity. All of these are behaviors commonly associated with western youth that are prohibited within the South Asian community.

This is not the only way that girls deal with family/community pressures to be the symbols/guardians of authentic culture. Some choose to stay within narrowly defined religious, ethnic or regional communities, a choice that simplifies their lives in one sense, but may create other forms of pain and/or identity confusion. Still others defiantly politicize themselves in their various spaces: Iram in Khan’s article was proudly and aggressively Muslim at her mainstream school, but with her family/community she openly questioned and criticized the gender biases in Islam. At the same time, her narrative indicates her awareness of these contradictions, and the acceptance that her location in multiple identity spaces prevents her from being completely comfortable in any one of these spaces:

(When did being Muslim start making a difference, if it ever did?)...it probably started making a difference for me in high school...there was enough Western-promoted mythology about Islam...If I did bring it up, there would be a whole new series of attacks. (Why would you bring it up?) Because I was very proud to be Muslim...I remember when I was twelve or thirteen being kicked out, permanently from [Muslim] Saturday school...because I asked too many questions...at one point

he[the teacher] told me "look, either you believe what I say or you get out."...when a white person raises objections towards Islam, I immediately jump to Islam's defense...when one of my uncles or one of my relatives, or somebody I know who is a Muslim jumps to Islam's defense in terms of sexism, I immediately start criticizing Islam (Khan, 1998: 482-486).

As Khan points out, the subject's tensions arise through her inability to occupy comfortably mutually exclusive identity spaces. As she turns away from a racialized narrative of Canadian identity towards her cultural and religious roots, she is faced with the gendered narrative of subordination in Islam. She continues to defend Islam, "the way she defends her brown skin", because she cannot find complete belonging within a Canadian identity; yet, because of the sexism issue, she is not (and says she cannot be), a practicing Muslim woman. Iram's narrative of self lacks an underlying coherence because of these tensions, but Khan argues that her awareness of this confusion somehow does not affect her own clear-sighted understanding of who she is:

Iram's response indicates mutually alienating positions. The positions seem contradictory, and yet Iram does not experience confusion or uncertainty about asserting those contradictions. Thus, there is a structure of ambivalence...an ambivalence that is necessarily an inherent response to the contradictions within the space for Muslim Woman itself ((Khan, 1998: 483-486).

I disagree with Khan's interpretation of this narrative. The subject's style in her presentation of self (she is defiant, vocal and self-assured), must be separated from what narrative theorists call the "slippages" in her story. The ambivalence that Khan recognizes as structuring Iram's story must, by definition, create a certain amount of confusion for the subject. As I discussed in chapter three, subjects' self-reflections

regarding the contradictions in their stories do not make these contradictions any less real or powerful when subjects live them.

2. Belonging within Dominant Cultural Spaces

As already mentioned, one of the main differences between immigrant parents and their second generation children is that the latter have to negotiate peer group culture, which is dominated by concerns over style, popularity, coolness and other markers of belonging that are part of the discourses of western adolescence. But as I discussed in chapter two, these discourses are embedded in larger narratives of western nationhood that define certain ethnicized and racialized groups as permanently outside the parameters of national belonging. Youth culture influences and is influenced by popular culture, which often ignores the existence of Others within national borders, or includes them in stereotypical ways that reinforce how different they are from the dominant group. For example, the British South Asian girls in Barker's study discuss a television soap opera's portrayal of South Asian culture, and it is clear from their discussion that they are aware that they are being Othered, not just as racialized outsiders, but as *South Asian* outsiders:

B: I think, you know, that bit's exaggerated. I mean you know, what's his name again, Lahta's brother

C: Vikram

D: I mean you wouldn't see an Asian girl going to an English boy – oh I want it have it off with you

C: exactly

B: well it does happen, but listen

A: the girl came from India you know

B: you know Vikram, he's a hypocrite 'cos do you remember when it was that party, I can't remember when, and he was dancing with Philip's wife Julie and he [Philip] can't talk to his daughter, I mean sister

A: no but he didn't fancy her

C: he didn't fancy her, that was just a normal dance

A: he [Vikram] doesn't mind her having friends, like normal friends, but not like you know boyfriends and trying to have it off with them (Barker, 1997: 616-618).

Generally, South Asian families and communities have been negatively stereotyped in popular culture, particularly with reference to their supposedly backward and patriarchal treatment of women. When among white friends, girls often find it more difficult to engage in a standard adolescent discourse of parent bashing, because they are aware that they risk perpetuating these stereotypes. They are also more reluctant to turn to non-Asian friends or counselors when there are problems (even those that are considered to be 'normal' parent/child conflicts during adolescence). To discuss parental edicts about dating or pre-marital sex is to become immediately part of a scripted performance starring the ethnic father as villain, the white male as white knight/rescuer, and the ethnic girl as helpless, passive victim. This is both a profound betrayal of family/community, and a speaking into existence of oneself as a helpless passive Other:

I grew up thinking like an American. But in countries like mine, love is considered a transient emotion – and therefore unimportant...I will never agree to an arranged marriage...I have never been attracted to Pakistani men. In my experience, the majority of them see women as their property, an opinion I felt was confirmed when I visited Pakistan...I knew then that I did not want to marry a Pakistani man, which to me meant someone who would see me as an ornament, or worse, a slave. I have always been attracted to blond, blue-eyed men...I like them because they are the opposite of the men my parents expect me to marry (Durrani, *Glamour Magazine*, November, 1994, p. 70).

It's easier to turn to them [South Asian friends] than to my other friends sometimes, when they don't understand and I, I feel like I'm being put down, like my own character is being put down...they go "why can't you argue with your parents?" and I tell them that I try to. But I feel like they're putting me down... they go "But why don't you be stronger?" and they don't realize that I'm trying to be really really strong and they don't understand that and I get really defensive...they go "oh, but if I was your parents' daughter, they would die, they wouldn't last," and I go, "if you were my parents' daughter then you wouldn't be like the way you are now" (Handa, 2003: 122).

The two quotes provide interesting counterpoints to each other. In the first, Durrani had taken up a western discourse of normality that positions her South Asianness as deviant and backward.³² By contrast, Handa's subject is conflicted over this because she does not want to demonize her parents. At the same time, she is aware that her refusal to do so positions her as weak. Her friends draw upon a narrative of western adolescent rebellion against the family to pressure her into standing up to her parents. It is another indication of her self-reflection when she makes the extremely perceptive observation that her sense of self has developed in relation to her family and culture, as opposed to the individualistic model of identity that her friends occupy. Had her friends been brought up within her culture, they would not automatically occupy the "teen rebel" subject position that they take for granted, as being part of 'normal' adolescence.

These examples show how South Asian girls are pressured to conform to peer culture and be 'like everyone else'. However, unlike members of the dominant racial group, they must pursue belonging with the recognition that it is already, to some extent, a failed project, since their cultural differences and their racialized, ethnicized status within the nation mean that they can never be 'like everyone else'. Even amongst peer groups who accept or tolerate difference, girls are always in the position of explaining who they are, and why they follow traditions that are still seen as alien to British, American or Canadian national identities. Despite the economic and cultural shifts that have taken place over the last ten years, there still remains an implicit sense of western nationhood as being indistinguishable from whiteness. The following conversation

³² It is an interesting coincidence that Durrani's article is from a mainstream American Magazine *Glamour*, and is called Bridges, signifying the "culture clash" difficulties that second generation girls go through. According to Handa, this culture clash model is a standard discourse of Othering that operates through the usual dualisms: East/West as backward/progressive etc. (2003: 1-11).

between Handa and a second generation adolescent girl (who has grown up in the late nineties) indicates that although the tremendous hostility of the 1970s and 80s towards South Asians has been replaced with much higher levels of tolerance and acceptance, subjects are still involved in delicate negotiations around belonging:

Amita: Do you feel totally accepted by them [your friends]?

Nina: Yeah, I do. Like I mean we get into little things, like I mean as far as I'm different, like because of being Indian and everything. They say little things, you know, like "Ah yeah, stupid Indians," and like they know that I'm there...[and] I feel like I constantly have to explain to them why I am Indian, because of the way my parents are. I have to explain that I can't do this with you...because my parents are Indian and that's why I can't (Handa, 2003: 80-81).

What is striking is Nina's awareness of her involvement in these negotiations. According to Handa, Nina's friendships (with primarily "white jocks", whom she describes as the "in" group in school), are based on her divesting herself, at least partially, of her ethnicized, racialized identity (2003: 81). But a little while later, Nina herself claims that she is quite vocal about never letting her "white jock" friends forget that she is Indian. If Handa's interpretation is right, then Nina is practicing a combined strategy of accommodation and denial to deal with her difference from the mainstream white norm. However, if Nina is actually being honest about never letting her friends forget she is Indian, how does this play out in the face of their Othering remarks? Does she emphasize her difference through 'appropriate channels', i.e. through discourses of multicultural tolerance or exoticized/eroticized femininity etc.? Does she transgress these appropriate ways of being different, by talking about racism, discrimination etc.? Does she speak at length about Indian cultural traditions?

What is also significant is that at another point in the interview, Nina expresses worry about being considered a *wannabe* by her brother and other South Asians at school, thereby offering us a glimpse into her own ambivalence regarding the choices she makes. On some level she is aware of the implications of those choices in terms of what it means for her to hang out with the 'in' crowd, which is not only white, but *male* and athletic, in fact, the essence of Hall's "muscular Christianity". Whether consciously or not, this crowd is implicated in the perpetuation of peer hierarchies that, as I pointed out in chapter two, are part of larger projects of national Othering.

3. "*Real Indians*": Authenticity Narratives in South Asian Youth Subcultures

One of the most significant developments for South Asian communities in countries like Canada, Britain or the U.S. is the trend towards cultural fusion, which has resulted in what Maira calls *Indo Chic* (2002: 32). Unlike second generation girls growing up in the seventies and eighties, the nineties witnessed the birth of a specifically South Asian youth culture, with its own music, social spaces, clothes and above all, a strong sense of national pride in being South Asian. Difference was transformed from being a source of shame to being 'cool', as girls and boys in cities such as New York, London and Toronto challenged the subject position of despised Other through the creation of spaces where if you were *not* South Asian, you were in the minority:

I'm proud to be Indian and everything...you know in junior high a lot of kids have teased me about "your hair", oh you know, "your hair is so long, chop it off." You know sometimes I felt bad, but then other times I thought, oh they're just jealous. And *nowadays* [my emphasis] I get a lot of compliments and stuff [about my hair] (Handa, 2003: 140-141).

However, these spaces are themselves overflowing with difference and questions of belonging versus exclusion. Handa argues that popular South Asian culture represents both the possibility and limitations of belonging, because it subverts the colonized subject positions created by dominant discourses of race and nation, but it also leads to the creation of new discourses and thus new subject positions that perpetuate imbalances of power within the diaspora (Handa, 2003: 131). In this sense, as Maira points out, cultural phenomena such as *Indo-chic* must be deconstructed not just in terms of the complex relationships among consumption, ethnicity and global capital, but also for the implications it has in terms of internal hierarchies of region, religion, class, and gender.

For instance, Indian heritage (as opposed to Pakistani, Sri Lankan, or Bangladeshi) seems to dominate in many of these spaces (Handa, 2003: 131). Furthermore, within this *Desi*³³ youth scene, there are other religious, regional and class distinctions. The Bhangra music trend is a product of the Punjabi Sikh diaspora, and as the following example suggests, those who are neither Punjabi nor Sikh have to negotiate belonging in these spaces, often through a form of *wannabe*-ism that is eerily similar to minority subjects' strategies of accommodation to a white youth norm:

Nina explained to me that there is a popular preference for a Punjabi Sikh identity among South Asian youth: "My cousin was telling me that she asked this one girl, 'Are you Sikh or something?' and she said, 'No, I wish.' She's like Hindu and she [the girl] says 'are you?' and she [my cousin] goes, 'yes'. And she [the girl] goes 'Oh my god!...Can I see your *kara*?³⁴ Can I wear one?'" Nina reveals the desire for a Punjabi/Sikh identity and the symbols...associated with it (Handa, 2003: 147-148).

³³ *Desi* is a Hindi word, meaning "person of the soil": "Someone who identifies his or her roots somewhere east of the Khyber Pass, down slopes of the highest Himalayas, and east of Burma. It posits a bond of imagined kinship invoking alliances that cross thin borders of hostile nation-states" (Vaidhyanathan, 2000: 6).

³⁴ *Kara* is a steel bracelet worn by Sikhs as part of their five religious symbols (Buchignani, 1985: 10).

According to Handa's subjects, non-Sikhs (for example, Hindus), while tolerated in these spaces, are sometimes not particularly welcomed; and this includes *Punjabi* Hindus. Similarly, Christian South Asians who, ironically, are sometimes more accepted in white communities (through church-going activities), are not necessarily welcomed with open arms into Hindu-dominated spaces that are about reclaiming an authentic Indian identity, where Indian becomes conflated with Hindu.

I met this Indian boy, we were talking, he was just like, totally, very like pompous, arrogant, he was talking, and '...can you believe it? There's people here with names like John and', cause [there are] Indians who are Christian and he was like dissing them and saying all these things... 'they're not Indian'...and I was like, 'Yes, they are Indian, they just have a different – India is not a Hindu country (Maira, 2002: 144).

One particularly problematic aspect of this reclaiming of Indian/Hindu identity among diaspora youth is its relationship to historical and contemporary antagonisms between Hindus and Muslims. This carry-over offers an excellent example of the reinvigoration of ties to what is happening 'back home', and the ways in which adolescent social relations take up these concerns, through school or bar fights, teasing and clique-ism. In the example below, two girls give their take on the in-school fighting between Hindu and Muslim boys that had been going on during the time frame where the *Ayodhya* incident was taking place in India:³⁵

Alka: we have so many Muslims in our school that it's incredible. I mean they have everything...they actually get off school early Fridays just because they pray in school...we also celebrate Diwali too, but you know, we don't go through these dramatic things to get off school early.

Ayesha: It was mainly because of the, fights, in India and how the Hindus and the Sikhs were against the Muslims (Handa, 2003: 152-153).

³⁵ The demolition of an historic mosque in Ayodhya, India by Hindu militants who claimed it was built on the ruins of the most important religious city for Hindu Indians (the birthplace of Ram) (Handa, 2003: 152).

According to Handa, their different narratives mirror the two competing discourses within contemporary India, one which draws upon majority Hindu cries of minority favoritism, and the other which constructs the Muslim minority as victims of Hindu/Sikh prejudice. Alka does not mention the *Ayodhya* issue; instead, she suggests that Muslims are often given 'special' privileges and, as a result, Hindus (like the boys who got into the fight), are justifiably angry at this favoritism.³⁶ Ayesha, on the other hand, raises the *Ayodhya* issue as the catalyst for the school fight, but constructs it as being part of the larger history of Hindu/Sikh persecution of Muslims.

Finally, gender is still a central part of diaspora youth subcultures that have taken up many of the immigrant views on women and incorporated them as part of a project of "authenticity".³⁷ This means that although girls can use the Indian youth scene as a temporary escape from the familial/community gaze, their behavior is still being monitored. In a similar fashion to subjects from the dominant group who, according to researchers, worry about being considered 'slags' or sluts (Lees, 1993; Tolman, 1994), South Asian girls walk the fine line between being constructed as desirable by a youthful South Asian male gaze and being labeled as "dirty". Whether it is at an Indian dance, a club or even at school, girls are regularly evaluated by South Asian boys, in order to

³⁶ Muslims are a substantial minority in India and are often viewed by the Hindu majority as having unfair privileges (for example, although India is secular, Muslims are allowed to practice *Sharia* law – that is, their religious law – rather than the secular laws of the country). See Raj (2000), for a more detailed discussion of the ways in which second generation South Asian Hindu youths take up the national and religious rhetoric of their parents' 'homeland' concerns around Hindu/Muslim differences.

³⁷ For instance, South Asian boys and young men have a discourse of feminine beauty that is neither wholly 'Indian', nor wholly western, but manages to combine some of the most oppressive aspects of both. Girls are seen as desirable if they have lighter skin (a standard discourse of internalized racism within the Indian subcontinent) (Aujla, 2000: 44). However, unlike traditional standards of Indian female beauty (which require a plump and voluptuous figure), Indian male youth seem to have incorporated the conflation of thinness with beauty found in contemporary western nations.

determine whether they know their culture, are trained in the domestic niceties, and most of all, whether they are good girls or 'sluts' like white women.³⁸

I'll tell you, I've had one comment made about me by this guy who's seen me at a few places...and he told someone not to hang around with me 'cause I was a bad influence...just because I wasn't what he wanted me to be, that typical Pakistani girl... (Handa, 2003: 119)

Sunita commented that, in her view, men were sometimes ambivalent about the sexually alluring [South Asian] femininity performed at remix parties: "Indian guys are totally like that, they're like, I won't marry her, she's da-da-da, she's disgusting, yet they're willing to , you know, use her for something they want" (Maira, 2002: 174).

John commented on the attributes of women whom Indian American men would presumably like to date in the college years... [and] contrasted this "promiscuous" American femininity with the nurturance and responsibility for family that he conflated with traditional Indian womanhood... "More Americanized and outgoing, the parties, and this and that...[but] as you get older, you want the so-called typical Indian woman who stays home, but will take care of the family, and you know that they'll nurture the kids the right way" (Maira, 2002: 174-175).

The above concerns illustrate the gendered nature of youthful interaction even within diaspora spaces. John's distinction between 'party girls' and good wives is not simply an extension of a common masculine discourse of female sexuality (i.e. the Madonna/whore complex) that cuts across cultures. In the case of South Asian girls, their behavior as young women is also tied to their "market value" on the arranged marriage circuit. It is a common western assumption that cultural traditions such as arranged marriages are forced on youth, and in some cases this is true. However, part of the interesting thing about South Asian youth culture is how these traditions (and some of the

³⁸ In similar fashion to white western discourses that construct South Asian women as licentious, and sexually promiscuous, South Asian narratives of white femininity construct white girls and women as 'easy', and amoral; they are sexual objects with whom one can have a good time before settling down and marrying "a nice Indian girl".

gendered hierarchies that go with them) are often strongly upheld among the “young, brown and hip” crowd:³⁹

Tina: Okay, there's this girl...I saw her walking into the mall with her father, plain face okay? When we saw her in the mall later on, she left her father and she was wearing bright red lipstick and makeup and everything, and I bet she like washes her face by the time she goes and see her dad again...I don't have respect for girls who do that, especially being Indian...like my dad, right, he doesn't say much about anything, but with clothes and stuff if he doesn't like what we're wearing he'll be like... “Why are you wearing that...you know you're not supposed to wear things like that.”

Amita: Like, do you sometimes feel embarrassed in front of your dad?

Tina: Yeah...we change later, that's what we do (Handa, 2003: 124-125).

Desi youth culture offers a wonderful example of the ways in which South Asian youth have accommodated to both the western discourse of adolescence (i.e. ritual, rebellion etc.), and familial/communal demands to remember their ‘roots’. It is also a fascinating glimpse into how subjects, marginalized and invisible in mainstream popular culture, have created their own spaces of style, coolness and belonging. Finally, this subculture has had its own impact on mainstream culture: in nightclubs, fashion trends, music etc. *Desi* cool has made being South Asian more acceptable for adolescent subjects growing up in the last ten years. These cultural shifts have both contributed to, and been influenced by, the changing economic and social trends described in the first section of this chapter (i.e. high tech, global consumerism and consumption). As a result, for second generation girls growing up in the 1990s and beyond, contemporary pop culture, and by extension adolescent culture, seems to be much more open to, and aware of, difference

³⁹ Maira's description of the new South Asian youth scene in New York city. According to Handa, one example of this strange blend of radical politics and cultural conservatism can be found in the music of *Apache Indian*, a British musician who blends rap and hip-hop with Bhangra sounds. His work is both progressive (songs like “Arranged marriage”, and “caste system” challenge gender and caste hierarchies), and traditional, when he sings about finding the perfect woman, who is “pretty like a princess”, “has the right figure” and can make him *roti* (Handa, 2003: 143-144).

(Handa, 2003: 160-161). Does this perhaps indicate, following Abrams, that these two sets of growing up experiences are quite distinct, so much so that perhaps they cannot even be lumped together as “a second generation experience”? What is the second generation experience? Is it the narrative of shame and internalized racism of authors such as Handa, Aujla and others? Is it the radical Otherness of subjects like Iram in Khan’s article? Is it *Indo chic*? Is it all of these things, and are these just examples of different strategies that South Asian youth draw upon to negotiate both subtle and overt forms of Othering? And how- if at all – do these strikingly different narratives return us to the question of *becoming* and *belonging* for racialized subjects:

Since the time that I was in school, fed steadily on a diet of Dick and Jane stories, Blonde Barbie and Nancy Drew...culture... [has] changed. In fall 2001, blonde Mary-Kate and Ashley Olson paraded on the cover of their magazine in *saris* and *bindis*...in this snapshot, it looks like we made it. *Bindis* and *mendhi* (henna) have ornamented bodies like Madonna and Prince...the product menu at Iguana, an online gift shop, lists items like Kama Sutra oils and Indian lunch boxes featuring Krishna, Ganesh and dancing Shiva...seeing [this] makes me experience many things. On the one hand, there is a feeling of acceptance that comes from knowing that my culture is part of the public domain, that in today’s consumer society, it too is considered marketable. But I still wonder whether Mary-Kate and Ashley’s cool is the same as ours. It is doubtful that South Asians would be able to set a market place trend on a cover of a magazine in the same way as the Olsen twins. Brown girls in *saris* are immigrant and ethnic, not mainstream and fashionable (Handa, 2003: 161).

From the early struggles of immigrants against violent racism to the Wall street angels of the late 1990s, from fears over the Hindu woman to white women wearing *bindis*, from what Vaidhyanathan (2000), describes as the shift from people asking what tribe she was from to people asking what caste she belongs to, how have all of these cultural changes affected *becoming/belonging* for South Asian adolescents? In fact, what significance, if any, does adolescence hold in the context of the second generation diaspora? The last section of this chapter explores this question of age and/or

development, in an attempt to understand why, even in research like Handa's, which is explicit about theorizing the nature of modern western adolescence, there is a blurring of the concepts of age and generation. All the above literature references developmental periods such as childhood or adolescence through discussions of "growing up", but this is never explicitly theorized. As a result, certain questions are never asked. For example, are there specific boundary events in adolescence that speak South Asian girls into difference, and do these vary depending on the period in which the subject grows up? Do they vary depending on the particular national contexts in which girls grow up? How do girls themselves articulate their projects of selfhood/becoming within peer culture and do they see these projects as implicated in adolescent concerns around belonging? And finally, as I mentioned in chapter three, of what significance is the retrospective element in second generation *women's* accounts of racism and struggles over belonging? When experiences of racism or exclusion are narrated by second generation women, why are they invariably (unlike the stories of immigrant women), part of their pasts, their childhoods and those teenage years that Handa describes as still hovering with her?

Age as a Relation of Power

One of the key contributions made by the literature on second generation South Asians is the recognition that the subject is not passively oppressed, but instead actively engages in attempts to resist, accommodate or reconstruct discourses that position her as Other. Much of the research on South Asian immigrants still operates through the colonial model of oppressor/oppressed which assumes *a priori* the uncomplicated existence of a dominant racial group in society and clearly identified Others (see

Grossberg, 1996: 88). In reality, the mass migration of peoples from various parts of the third world to first world countries and the resulting political and socio-economic shifts, have complicated our notions of belonging and community, even for diasporic subjects living in nations where they are outsiders. None of this negates the historical and contemporary effects of racism, but critics of the colonial model argue for more complex accounts of racialized selfhood that take into account the issues of resistance as well as privilege that characterize racial belonging and exclusion within the nation.

Furthermore, culture itself does not stand still. The effects of political, social and economic trends on minority/majority relations over the past twenty years cannot be dismissed simply as cultural appropriation or elision. Rather, the cultural space of the dominant group becomes creolized⁴⁰ not only by the immigrant/ethnic presence of those on the margins, but because of the imbrication of various cultural practices that are part of both dominant and oppressed groups. While this does not mean that racism or exclusion is now a thing of the past, it is still important to understand what impact these shifts in culture have had on specific discourses of ethnicity and racialization. But work on the second generation, while recognizing that racism is not a thing of the past, is much more attentive to the issue of resistance through the symbolic. As a result, it offers a more nuanced account of the complexities of occupying subject positions within racialized discourses of belonging. Rather than neatly dovetailing together to produce a monolithic sense of the Other, these discourses are often contradictory and even mutually exclusive,

⁴⁰ Cultural creolization refers to the hybridizing of cultures through processes of immigration, diasporic communities, globalizing trends, etc. as Anthias (2001: 621) points out hybridity is tied to the idea of cultural syncretism, rather than cultural difference that is maintained by a multicultural narrative of 'separate but equal'. Rather than viewing dominant and marginal cultural spaces as mutually exclusive because of both histories of racism, as well as contemporary exclusions, concepts such as hybridity or creolization recognize the synthesizing of dominant and marginal cultural practices and forms. It should be stated, however, that this synthesis is not always something to be celebrated since it can also reflect the age-old tradition of erasing the presence of the Other through cultural co-optation.

in large part because the experience of Otherness in western societies is not one-dimensional. Work on youth and diaspora uses postcolonial concepts of creolization to explore the connection between popular culture and negotiations with belonging. Youth culture, which is informed by, informs, and also transforms popular culture, is invested with social meanings that are embedded in larger discourses and practices of racialization. At the same time, South Asian youth culture intersects with mainstream pop culture to create spaces of resistance through music, film, art, fashion and literature. In such scenarios, youthful narratives of self and nation are reworked and offered up as radical sites of Otherness within music, art, film etc.⁴¹ Hegemonic narratives of belonging and exclusion are contested as artists talk back to societal demands that they be one thing or another. These new spaces of belonging may arguably be in danger of co-optation from that very mainstream which celebrates and then erases the Other, but they cannot be simply dismissed as “richly syncretic produce” that feeds the continued exclusion of the Other (see Banerjee, 2000: 65).

However, despite the pivotal attention paid to both generation and the emergence of a distinct youth culture in the South Asian diaspora, what still remains unclear is the extent to which subject formation for youth is bound up in the relationships among race, gender, generation *and* age. There are at least four areas where the importance of age merits closer attention than it has been given so far in the literature on South Asian girls: 1) the ways in which categories such as childhood, adolescence and adulthood are narrated in South Asian cultural contexts 2) age as a relation of power within the

⁴¹ See, for example, novels and short stories such as Meera Syal's *Life isn't all ha ha hee hee* (1999. Great Britain: Transworld Publishers), and Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company).

family/community, specifically its effect on intra-gender relationships 3) the nature of modern adolescence as a concept and set of discourses that render it a period of ontological significance for racialized subjects in terms of turning points or boundary events and 4) the importance that subjects themselves place on childhood and adolescence in their retrospective accounts of becoming a racialized subject.

To begin with, although western adolescence is narrated as a time of rebellion and growing independence from the family, this understanding may be completely absent in specific immigrant communities. There is still a great deal that we do not know about how non-western communities understand childhood, adolescence and adulthood, or whether these are even meaningful categories to them. For example, in her discussion of teenage pregnancy in South Africa, Macleod points to how researchers' conceptions of adolescence are based on notions of childhood, youth and adulthood that are derived from European understandings of these life stages, as well as informed by the history of Apartheid. As a result, although researchers recognize that within certain communities, motherhood in adolescence may actually confer a certain status on girls, they are still unable to move beyond negative constructions of the "teenage mother" (2003: 430).

Research on countries such as India or Sri Lanka shows that the persistence of extreme gender discrimination (Basu and Chakroborty, 1996: 259), as well as strongly collectivist and conformist values, has a big impact on how childhood and adolescence are experienced in these contexts (Niles, 1998: 334; Kuebli et al, 1998: 235; Reddy and Gibbons, 1999:620).⁴² According to researchers, individuality is not valued as much as

⁴² According to Reddy and Gibbons, the traits of individualism and autonomy that characterize western notions of adolescence are not universal (1999: 627). Their study found that males from the elite social class in India demonstrated the qualities associated with western adolescence, but females and males from lower social classes did not show these developmental traits. In addition, peer groups do not hold the same

conformity in South Asian countries; to quote Carson, “interdependency among family members tends to last much longer than in many developed and developing nations...even today, parents remain the primary socializers of children and youth in ways unparalleled in many regions of the world” (1999: 212). If parents occupy such a central role in this cultural landscape, how does this play out in South Asian diasporic contexts? Does it undermine or complicate the hegemonic discourse of development prevalent in North American society? How do South Asians view identity or subjectivity? Is the whole discussion of the autonomous self a western narrative that has very little relevance for ethnicized communities? Take, for example the following argument between Handa and her parents during her teenage years:

As I entered teenage-hood and attempted to assert my individuality, my parents equated this with the influence of Canadian/Western culture...one evening...I asked if I could go to a party that a girl at my high school was having. This question came at a time when we had been having our first series of disagreements around curfews and social activities. “No”, my parents said... “But it’s my life!” I exclaimed... “Your life! Your life! *You* think it’s *your* life! Where are you learning such nonsense! This is not your life. That’s a Western rubbish, you are Indian!” (Handa 2003: 34).

The above account certainly seems to resonate with Reddy and Gibbons’ argument that the private self in India is organized more around the “we”, the “our” and the “us” than it is around the “I” (1999: 620). If selfhood, even in diaspora contexts, is seen as a joint or communal endeavor rather than an individual one, second generation girls may end up caught between two incompatible projects of self: the “I” of western individualism versus the “We” of a collectivist South Asian community. I also suspect that their fraught negotiations with family and community in terms of carving out

significance: according to several researchers, both children and adolescents in India are less focused on friendship or peer relations than they are on immediate and extended family relationships (Kuebli et al, 1998: 235; Carson et al, 1999: 212).

identities are complicated further by their non-adult status. Researchers describe the gendered restrictions that girls face, but do not actually examine how these restrictions are also governed by their non-adult status within the family unit. There is, again, an implicit acceptance of this age-related hierarchy, but the position of even temporary economic dependency combined with the subordinate social status that non-adults occupy within the family/community hierarchy may have a major impact on girls' sense of frustration and resentment towards parents.

Ignoring the importance of age in terms of family/community hierarchies also allows scholars to gloss over what I would argue is a key difference between immigrant women and second generation girls: the asymmetries of power *between* women in families/communities. The literature on both the immigrant and second generation points to how South Asian women have to live within community/family narratives that inscribe them as subordinate to their fathers, brothers, uncles, husbands and even sons. These narratives take on even more significance in immigrant contexts where patriarchal control over women becomes a compensation for Asian men's loss of status and power in a racist society (Lim, 1993). But if women are subordinated within the family as wives and mothers, daughters have even less power. They are often expected to adhere to cultural norms that arise out of gendered hierarchies within the family and community (Hennink, 1999; Puar, 1995; Qureshi, 1992), where because of their age, economic dependency and family status, they are often silenced by both men and *older* women. South Asianness - constructed in contexts of non-belonging and maintained by both fathers and mothers - has a profound effect on the lives that girls lead as *daughters* of the nation:

It's a bit embarrassing 'cause when you go shopping and some of your middle school friends which are boys come to you and say "hello", and you just feel a bit of tension between your mother and you saying hello to this guy. So that's a bit difficult (Hennink, 1999: 874).

As I was reaching for a second dip of chutney, a group of aunties encircled me. "Doesn't she look lovely?" one said. "So, when is your turn coming?" another one asked. "Well, Auntie..." "Come on, it's time a girl of your age got married," a third one remarked. "You know, it's such a shame, a lovely girl like you going to waste..." "yes, but she's going to be busy studying to be a doctor, isn't that right?" I bit into my samosa in an effort to buy time...I caught the gaze of a woman dressed in a blue silk sari who stared at me disapprovingly. She was the only one who had not spoken as yet....blue sari auntie looked at me as if she knew all my secrets...and no matter how hard I tried to fit the image of goodness on the outside, inside my heart skipped away with beats of anxiety, defeat and swallowed feelings of shame (Handa, 2003: 108).

Both of these quotes suggest strongly the need to explore how immigrant South Asian women (in the role of mothers, aunts, older sisters etc.), enforce patriarchal standards upon their daughters. Doing so will move feminist South Asian literature away from reifying, albeit unintentionally, a common narrative in dominant discourses of Othering: the ethnic father as patriarch and villain. It may also offer feminist scholars new perspectives on issues that hitherto have been examined either through a white middle class lens or more recently through the experiences of African-American, Asian or Hispanic groups.⁴³

My work goes well beyond the current literature by focusing on the potential importance of adolescence for minority girls, in terms of dominant and marginal discourses of girlhood, and their own often creative responses to being Othered. We still do not have enough details on the experiences of becoming a 'brown girl' for South Asian subjects. For instance, how do girls negotiate the hugely contradictory discourses

⁴³ For example, hardly any research has been done that focuses specifically on the South Asian community in terms of such standard feminist areas as mother/daughter relationships; policing among girls; first, second and third wave conflicts over the changing status of women, feminist identities etc.

around South Asian femininity in mainstream culture (i.e. undesirable/desirable, promiscuous/chaste, victim/predator etc.)? Researchers such as Puar, Maira or Handa have offered some remarkable insights into these issues, without directly linking them with the experience of adolescence. Are there specific turning points or boundary events where South Asian girls are spoken into existence as 'brown girls'? For instance, Maira (2002) uses a sub-cultural/cultural studies framework to examine Indian American 'youth' culture in New York city, but her focus is on college-age subjects. She actually points out that some of her subjects experienced a major shift from feeling ashamed of being Indian in elementary and high school, to a sense of pride when they got to college and found well established associations and a South Asian 'scene', but this shift is not deconstructed at all. Similarly, Dwyer's research (1999) on South Asian Muslim girls raises really interesting questions on the links among gender, religion, nation and identity, but she does not pursue the significance of age in subjects' pointed accounts of the importance of 'fitting in', a concern that is embedded in a western narrative of adolescence, when the peer group replaces the family as the key agent of socialization.

Handa's discussion (2003: 36-38) does the best job of recognizing age and adolescence as a major concern. She traces the history of the concept of adolescence in modern western societies and discusses the discourses of fear, desire and danger that construct youth as both the problem and solution in contemporary culture. She raises the important point that adolescence operates as a metaphor for race, pointing to how concerns associated with youth (i.e. moral decay, delinquency and cultural degeneration) are bound up in discourses of western progress, rationality and ultimate superiority over non-western Others. She even discusses the relationship between age and gender in terms

of the regulation of sexuality for adolescent girls and women. Moreover, part of her qualitative research consists of interviews with 14 young South Asian girls/women, most of whom are under the age of twenty. Nevertheless, there is no accompanying analysis of the potential significance of their age and location in the developmental category of adolescence (and all its attendant problems).

For instance, in her discussion of *Indo Chic* trends, Handa points to how girls growing up in contemporary Canadian society distinguish between cool Indians and FOBs or REFs.⁴⁴ According to Handa (2003: 84), “ ‘uncool’ becomes the signifier for ‘new’ South Asians and ‘normal’ represents second-generation South Asians”. But Handa’s analysis of this trend, while extremely insightful, is limited to its racialized aspects and the discourses of normalization through which subjects take up difference as a ‘cool’ thing if it is packaged acceptably. While I agree wholeheartedly with this point, I think Handa makes a crucial mistake by not linking this point back to the issue of adolescence. After all, discussions of coolness, forms of clique-ism etc. are all standard parts of the modern adolescent narrative. Similarly, Handa observes the desire for a Punjabi Sikh identity among South Asian youth, but does not really examine the age-related reasons behind this. My own reading of this identity work relates back to the nature of Sikh identity both in India as well as in diasporic contexts such as Canada. Within Indian cultural narratives, Sikhism is associated with traits of independence, autonomy, and most importantly, the use of power and arms in the defense of one’s beliefs (Buchignani, 1985: 10).⁴⁵ Sub-cultural groups with South Asian youth culture

⁴⁴ FOB stands for “fresh off the boat” and REF for “refugee” (Handa, 2003: 82).

⁴⁵ Unlike Muslims, Hindus or Christians, practicing Sikh men must always carry a *Kirpan* (dagger) even in the daily round of life.

have taken names like *Punjabis with Attitude* and, according to Maira (2002), in Bhangra dance clubs DJs often talk over the music about “shouting out” if you are Punjabi.⁴⁶ Furthermore, Sikh male youth are often seen (by both mainstream media and the South Asian community), as aggressive and even violent (Handa’s subjects describe several bar fights between Sikh youth as normal occurrences). What strikes me as interesting is how much this Sikh identity resonates with Hall’s ideal of the “muscular Christianity” of western adolescence. Perhaps the appeal of Sikh identity for South Asian youth is that it performs a kind of mimicry of western masculine adolescence and the determination of popularity through such things as physical prowess and athleticism.⁴⁷

Like a great deal of the other research on South Asian youth, Handa’s observations offer very important avenues for exploring how the hierarchical nature of modern adolescence plays out within racialized contexts, as well as how racialized subjects themselves take up these projects of difference-making. But she herself does not ask these questions, and this is characteristic of a larger problem in much of the research on youth. As I argued in chapter one, there is a bizarre taken-for-granted treatment (or non treatment) of age as a social relation, in work that is supposedly focused on age dependent categories such as adolescence. Theorists such as Aujla, Das Gupta, Puar, Handa or Maira offer vivid descriptions of youthful attempts to belong; they theorize the importance of gender in diaspora contexts; they provide important insights into the strategies that subjects use to handle being Othered. But nowhere in this material is it

⁴⁶ Expressing loud and vocal pride about being Punjabi.

⁴⁷ I suspect that this is a specifically adolescent issue. I doubt very much whether the desire for Sikh identity has any meaning at all for adult South Asians (from either the first or second generation).

explained *why* growing up different is so problematic in terms of identity formation. If, as the research states, the first generation is thrust into a context of difference, while the second generation grows up in this space, what is the actual ontological significance of this difference? On the face of it, the second generation should find belonging a much easier task. According to Min and Kim, second generation ethnics are less likely to face the same systemic barriers that their immigrant parents faced (Min and Kim, 2000: 754). Changing historical contexts coupled with a stronger comfort level vis à vis the dominant culture mean that young ethnics have an easier time succeeding on the job market and integrating socially into mainstream western culture. Yet Min and Kim also point out that despite the fact that immigrant professionals have more disadvantages in the labor market, and more unpleasant job experiences than their western born counterparts, the latter have higher levels of insecurity and self-doubt (2000: 750-755). Their identities are seemingly more fragile and more open to confusion. One reason for this may be the relationship to a home country and, thus, the alternative of belonging to another national imaginary. Immigrants can draw upon a prior set of experiences that have shaped their sense of identity. This means that when they experience racism and systemic discrimination, they can contrast it with an often idealized past where they did belong, at least to the extent that they were not racialized as “inappropriate national subjects” (Chuh, 1996). As Aujla herself points out (2000: 46), parents of second generation South Asians may be more Othered due to accents, clothes and other cultural markers of difference. However, they come to Canada with some sense of non-Othered identity, and this is not the case for their children. This is a central theme in the second generation experience of *becoming/belonging*: at the crossroads of race, ethnicity, generation and

age, the material and the symbolic seem to part ways. Being an immigrant means traditionally having to suffer not only the symbolic/discursive effects of exclusion, but also the material impact on one's life. Being a second generation ethnic may mean that the biggest battles are waged at the symbolic level. For the second generation, belonging is no longer *primarily* about struggles over citizenship or dealing with economic disparities.⁴⁸ It is not about hostile immigration officers or degrading jobs that do not require the high levels of education one has received in one's home country (education that is seen as worthless 'here'). Instead, it is about the awareness of difference as a second skin that has shaped your entire life story. For young South Asians, there was never 'a time before'⁴⁹ (that is, before the loneliness of "unbelonging"). There is no glorified past to reference,⁵⁰ no prior social space where you were once, at least racially, an insider. As a result, there may be only "the ego chill" (Portis, 1985: 463), of never having belonged *anywhere*:

When I was younger, I hated my brown skin...when I was younger, I was ashamed and embarrassed of my Indian heritage...I developed creative strategies of denial and pretense to cope with and survive in a racist environment (Karumanchery-Luik, 1997: 54 cited in Aujla, 2000: 45).

"Well, when I was younger, because everyone used to say, 'Oh my God, they're so disgust -, they're so dirty,' whatever, right? And then that kind

⁴⁸ This is not to suggest that second generation subjects do not experience problems with the job market, citizenship issues etc. See, for example, Kundnani's article (2001) which calls into question the positive material shifts that Min and Kim see as distinguishing first and second generation subjects.

⁴⁹ Khan (1998) points to a key difference between her two subjects' sense of Islamic identity by suggesting that Karima, the forty year old immigrant, can sustain her sense of self with the myth of a previous Muslim identity of belonging, whereas Iram has only the experience of growing up in Canadian society and experiencing the full force of racialization practices.

⁵⁰ Note the images of nostalgia in the following poem: "now lounging in our bite-sized backyards, and pretending we do not see the curling vapors of our neighbor's burger feast, (the third this week) wafting across the picket fence, we know that careless of our birthright we have sold it for a mess of pottage" (Srivastava, 1993: 106).

of gets your self-esteem down, right? So I kind of, I'm like why, why me?...I was in grade eight, so I was thirteen" (Handa, 2003: 77).

Radhika's refusal to automatically adopt an ethnic label in part stemmed from the racial harassment she experienced as a child in a predominantly White school in Queens. She commented that "little kid jokes...can have a great impact on you as an individual"...it started from when I was growing up, and how I was treated in school and although you're just being teased and stuff like that, it can have a really great influence on you (Maira, 2002: 5).

The recognition of this generational difference is a key contribution of the literature on the second generation, but it is not pushed far enough theoretically. This brings me to my third concern: the element of retrospection in subjects' accounts, the importance of which was discussed at the end of chapter three. Aujla's discussion of second generation South Asian women's struggles to belong in Canada raises really interesting questions about the development of selfhood, but she does not unpack the meaning behind subjects' *retrospective* accounts of belonging. Similarly, Handa, and Maira as well as Das Gupta include girls' accounts of childhood and adolescent racism that have affected their sense of self; however, their stories are *never* deconstructed, except in generational terms. But my point is that these narratives are not simply driven by generational differences. Again, researchers implicitly recognize this when they say that growing up as the Other is what is so hard for the second generation. But they take this as a statement of the obvious and do not unravel its ontological importance: growing up different is crucial to the question of identity precisely because childhood and adolescence are two periods when a subject's sense of self is in the process of being constructed. It is one of the key differences between immigrant and second generation identity, but it has not been explored meaningfully in either the more general literature on

diaspora and identity, or the research on second generation South Asians in western societies.

From the standpoint of knowledge production, it is in the re-telling and thus recovering of these biographies that we discover crucial insights into the moments where lives “acquire race.” It is significant that as adults who do not, for the most part, experience overt forms of Othering, second generation women’s narratives are still haunted by what Sarup (1996: 38), describes as “the absolute present” of these past experiences. If adolescence is already lived as a suspended mode of subjectivity, how do experiences of racialization and racism during this period threaten a subject’s ability to move towards the more ‘stable’ and secure identity space of adulthood? Again, I return to Giddens’ point about experiences of shame fundamentally rupturing a person’s ability to create and sustain a coherent narrative of self. Shame is a word used a great deal in the literature on the second generation, by both subjects and authors. We need to know a great deal more about *why* and *how* childhood and adolescent memories of shame at being Othered linger on in adult subjects’ narratives of self. It is especially important because it validates the experiences of those whose lack of voice has driven a large part of feminist research goals. Feminist researchers studying second generation subjects’ experiences of racism have tried to create spaces for these hitherto silenced or ignored girls/women to be heard. Continuing to ignore subjects’ flagging of certain issues is antithetical to this political project. From a feminist methodological standpoint, researchers unintentionally privilege their interpretations, which do not (as far as I have seen), include any discussion of the importance of developmental discourses of selfhood, beyond the facile recognition that growing up different is difficult. More importantly,

when researchers ignore subjects' attempts to cite childhood and adolescence as key periods in difference-making, they are 'voicing-over' subjects, and thus unintentionally performing an act of epistemic violence. It is for these reasons alone that it is worth paying closer attention to the question of memory and retrospection in South Asian women's accounts of difference-making.

Conclusion

This chapter was an attempt to outline both the history and contemporary situation of the South Asian diaspora in Canada over the last hundred years. I began with a rough sketch of the four main eras in South Asian immigration: the racism faced by the first wave of South Asian immigrants at the turn of the twentieth century; the move from western Canada into central Canada and the class make-up of this second wave of immigration; the re-emergence of blatant racism towards South Asians during the 1970s and 1980s; and the effects of globalization on the mainstreaming of the South Asian community in Canada during the 1990s and beyond. I went on to discuss the problematic nature of gender within the South Asian diaspora: the position of immigrant women as subordinates within their families and communities, as well as their specifically gendered encounters with systemic and everyday racism in Canada. I also discussed the key issue of generation and the important differences identified by theorists between immigrant and non-immigrant South Asian women in terms of their negotiations with identity, racism, belonging etc. Finally, I pointed to the lack of explicit theorizing of age as a relation of power in the identity struggles of second generation girls, who have to negotiate *becoming* racialized in childhood and adolescence.

Although it provided an historical overview as well as covering the significant literature in the area, chapter four is also trying to tell another history: a history of absence. Each section in it marked a silence around a key social relation. The first section told a story of immigration that was about men; the second, a story about women that ignored generation. The third section brought generation in, but implicitly conflated it with age. The concluding section of the chapter was, therefore, meant as a strong intervention into these silences around the intersecting of race, gender, generation and age. It was also meant to address the gaps in research that I discussed in previous chapters. My overall argument in this thesis has been that certain key connections have not been made across several bodies of literature. None of the research that I have examined - on adolescence, on racialized adolescence, or on a specific group of minority youth (i.e. South Asian girls) - has explicitly theorized the importance of the relationship between developmental categories such as childhood or adolescence, and the construction of particular subjectivities. Even literature that traces the racialized history of western adolescence does not offer any empirical data on how subjects come to be positioned in unequal terms within the national imaginary of western countries such as Canada, Britain or the U.S. Furthermore, although it is a truism within studies of youth and youth culture to assert the importance of the peer group in western societies, this acknowledgment has not translated into a sustained treatment of how this question of belonging within the peer group becomes inextricably linked with the question of identity or becoming, specifically the process of becoming a racialized subject. If subjects do not simply 'have' race in some *a priori* fashion, but instead "acquire" race through their everyday interactions, we need to recognize the crucial importance of experiences of difference-making in periods

such as adolescence, where the subject is in the process of constructing a self within the social gaze.

Starting from the premise that age is a relation of power that intersects with other relations of power to produce certain types of subjects, I want to begin exploring how second generation minority girls actually negotiate these tensions in their everyday lives. The last two chapters deal with the empirical part of my research agenda in this thesis. Over the course of the thesis, I conducted in-depth one-on-one interviews with ten second generation South Asian females. Chapter five focuses on some of the methodological concerns that I faced during my fieldwork process, as well as the difficulties that I had negotiating questions of interpretation, knowledge-making and researcher/participant relations. It also sets up the context for my final chapter, which is the analysis of these interviews through the framework that I constructed in chapter three.

Chapter Five Methodology

The purpose of the preceding chapters was to lay the theoretical and historical groundwork for my exploration of how adolescence as a constructed “stage” in identity development is implicated in racialized subject formation. In my review of the literature on youth, I found that the major paradigms used in social science research were, by themselves, inadequate for understanding modern adolescence as a key developmental ‘moment’ in the construction of self/other relations. I argued that we should eschew the tired and possibly trite dualism of identity/difference, and instead re-work this relationship as a more dynamic and agonistic tension between *becoming* and *belonging*. My re-interpretation of identity/difference, while potentially useful even in ‘adult’ focused theory or research, holds particular significance for the study of non-adult contexts, which are driven by shifting and often capricious rules of belonging to the peer group/community, as well as a fluid and incomplete sense of subjectivity.

In chapter three, I used this reworked relationship between *becoming* and *belonging* to inform my framework of analysis, which synthesized poststructuralist, narrative theories of subjectivity with the existing material on minority girls (this framework will be used in chapter six, when I analyze the findings of my field work). However, chapter three covered only the general research on minority girls, and this thesis is specifically interested in processes of racialization for second generation South Asian girls in Canada. Hence, chapter four offered an historical and contemporary backdrop to the Canadian South Asian ‘community’: the racialized history of Sikh

settlers at the turn of the twentieth century; the changing nature of Canadian national discourses; the gendered implications of Canadian immigration policies; South Asian women's struggles both within the family/community and in Canadian society; the problem of generation for family relations; and the pressures that South Asian girls face in these diaspora contexts. I ended chapter four with a critique of the literature on South Asian girls, specifically in terms of what I argue is a crucial oversight on the part of researchers: the inattention paid to subjects' own accounts of the importance of childhood and adolescent experiences of difference making. My work in this thesis is an attempt to address this silence (also found in more general research on adolescence and race) at both a theoretical and practical level.

I have argued strongly throughout this thesis the following three points: 1) as Lesko and others point out, modern western adolescence is a concept and set of discourses rooted in larger racialized, gender, sexualized, and classed practices of Othering 2) existing youth paradigms (including those used by scholars such as Lesko), cannot properly accommodate my particular research agenda, which is concerned with scrutinizing the role that adolescence plays in the acquiring of difference for minority subjects and 3) neither the general research on minority girls, nor the specific research on South Asian girls has provided an adequate explanation of how age operates as a relation of power that intersects with other social relations such as gender, race, class etc. The following chapter adds a fourth concern to the above three points: my own framing of the question of adolescence and difference, while an important theoretical contribution, must be read through the experiential. To this end, I conducted 10 interviews with South Asian girls and women in order to explore some of the issues raised in the first four

chapters. Chapter five outlines my experiences “in the field”. I begin with a brief discussion of the value of qualitative research in terms of gaining a better understanding of the complexities of subjects’ experiences, focusing specifically on narrative methodology as an important tool in the interpretation of people’s accounts of their lives. I also discuss how feminist qualitative methods are a good fit with narrative theory, given the value that feminists place on the experiential and biographical as important sites of women’s resistance to larger institutional inequalities. I then go on to outline my fieldwork process and some of the narrative and feminist methodological issues that came up during, and after, the interviews: the question of exploitation between researcher and researched; the uneasy position occupied by an insider researcher; my concerns around the interpretation of a narrative/text versus its “invention” (Clifford, 1986: 2); and the tensions that developed out of my attempts to work through the theoretical concerns of the thesis by drawing upon the ‘real life’ stories of South Asian girls and women.

Combining Narrative with Feminist Methods of Research

Qualitative methods are premised on the notion that getting an in-depth understanding of people’s experiences is as important, if not more so, than producing a larger quantity of ‘thinner’ data. Quantitative research is both useful and necessary for the generation of large data sets which allow researchers to make broad claims that are relevant to a larger number of people within a given population. However, because qualitative research relies on a much smaller sample, it can produce a richer set of data,

one that gets at the details of people's experiences.¹ Qualitative research is particularly useful for exploratory research such as mine, where there is not a wealth of prior material to draw upon. Very little quantitative research has been done on Canadian South Asian youth experiences and, as I pointed out in chapter four, the qualitative work in this area has not offered enough information on whether or not adolescence is an important period of Othering for second generation South Asians.

Narrative methodology is a type of qualitative method that offers what I consider to be a fairly unique method of interpretation. Unlike research that focuses on such issues as the veracity of subjects' accounts, or the necessity of semi-structured interviews with specific research questions, narrative as method brackets the concern with truth, focusing instead on what the subject says, how she says it, and *why* she says it. In other words, what information is being offered to the researcher, even when the subject's story is "false, "distorted", or otherwise guilty of gross inconsistency? Narrative theorists are interested in the relationship between subjective accounts and larger structures of power. They argue that the question of distortion sets up a false distinction between truth/fiction, thereby positioning the researcher as the privileged adjudicator of truth claims. This is problematic because it reduces the participant to an object (the known), and elevates the researcher to a god-like subject who can interpret objectively, outside the research field, and without any influence from her own biases, distortions etc. Furthermore, following Franzosi (1998), it is precisely the distortions, inconsistencies etc. that make people's accounts fascinating sociologically. As Davies points out, people tell stories about themselves, their lives and other people to make sense of their worlds, and while these

¹ It should be added that even quantitative research begins with data generated from small qualitative studies, such as focus-group material, in order to determine first what questions or issues should frame the larger research agenda.

stories are not purely solipsistic, they are also not *fact* so much as they are “lived fictions” (1993: 151).

Feminist theorists have long recognized the value of the experiential, although there are still ongoing internal debates about objectivity, and the privileging of women’s stories as truer, given their historical position as outsiders in a patriarchal order. But feminist research falls in well with the goals of narrative research (which they refer to as oral history, biography etc.), for a number of reasons. First, narrative research subverts the traditional scientific approach to knowledge which positions the researcher outside or above the contaminating influences of the subjective realm. For feminists, this “God trick” (Haraway, 1991: 208), has allowed white male researchers to produce science that claims the status of “objective truth”, while simultaneously obscuring the power relations that underlie these accounts. Second, narrative as a method allows researchers to unearth the voices of the historically absent, thus enriching our understanding of many taken-for-granted events, experiences and relationships. While other forms of research can arguably effect similar change, because there is an explicit emphasis on the everyday as a legitimate and potentially interesting locus of knowledge, ordinary people in ordinary situations can tell stories about their lives that researchers find useful. Third, like feminist research, narrative can create a space for the previously silenced or marginalized to tell their stories. These are stories which, following Steedman (1995), exist in the spaces between dominant or hegemonic accounts that work to disguise and even elide the presence of difference in their master narratives.

However, unlike narrative researchers, feminists have an overt political agenda that is underpinned by emancipatory ideals. In recent years, a great deal of concern has

arisen over the question of subject exploitation, researcher privilege; or at a more epistemic level, what research tools allow for 'better' (although not necessarily truer) accounts, and enable us to answer the postmodern challenge that research may simply be the constructed understanding of a constructed subject's constructed account (Crapanzano, 1986: 74).

I grappled with many of these concerns during my own research process, as well as the sometimes slippery nature of narrative as both method and mode of analysis. Perhaps most importantly, I struggled with the overwhelming desire to hide myself in this research. The inclusion of my voice as a researcher unsettles me and made the writing of this chapter particularly difficult. Unlike researchers such as Handa (2003), Puar (1995) or Aujla (2000) who ground their theory and fieldwork in their own experiences, using a strong first person voice and weaving their biographies into their scholarship, I have worked quite assiduously to avoid such a method of writing. During most of my interviews, I avoided talking about my life, and hoped to be able to listen to, discuss and analyze the material, without having to speak myself into existence as an embedded researcher. However, if doing the interviews rendered this increasingly difficult, writing this chapter made it impossible. Therefore, the following account is itself a narrative of identity-making, dis-locating and dismantling; what I will call, following Davies, the "lived fiction" of my fieldwork experience as a daughter of the diaspora.

The Research Design

I found subjects by combining my own network of personal contacts, with a form of snowballing, where I asked friends, acquaintances and even strangers I met in social contexts, to aid me in my search, and then through some of the interviewees, found other subjects. I did sacrifice regional differences through this method (all my subjects came from Pakistan or India), but managed to get some religious diversity (Hindu, Muslim, half Sikh half Hindu, Jain, and Christian), and a fairly even spread in terms of class (the subjects ranged from upper middle class to middle class, to lower middle class and possibly working class²). My primary concern was getting a diversity of age, and here I was fairly successful: subjects' ages ranged from 16 to 34. I also wanted to get as even a spread as possible between adolescent girls, women in their early twenties, women in their late twenties and women in their early thirties. I ended up with three adolescent girls, four women in their early, mid or late twenties, and three women in their early thirties. Below is a brief description of each subject:³

1. **Mary** – Sixteen; high school student; parents from Goa, India; Catholic
2. **Sarah** – Seventeen; high school student; parents from North India; Mixed religious background (Hindu and Sikh)
3. **Shazia** – Eighteen; high school student; parents from Lahore, Pakistan; Muslim
4. **Ritu** – Twenty four; law student; parents from Kerala, India; Hindu
5. **Aleena** – Twenty five; government worker; parents from Northern Pakistan; Muslim
6. **Crystal** – Twenty eight; graduate student; parents from North India and the Punjab (Delhi and Amritsar); Hindu
7. **Asha** – Twenty nine; white collar worker; parents from the Punjab; Hindu
8. **Anjana** – Thirty; journalist; parents from North India; Hindu
9. **Rose** – Thirty three; maternity leave; parents from Kerala, India; Christian
10. **Anita** – Thirty four; doctor; parents from Gujarat, India; Hindu Jain

² I say possibly because the subjects were asked to identify themselves, and none of them described themselves as working class, even those whose parents held down blue-collar jobs.

³ Both the subjects' real names as well as the names of people in their stories have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

The interviews were conducted one-on-one confidentially and they took approximately an hour and a half. Because I wanted to maintain the narrative flow established by the subjects themselves, I did not use a set of formal questions but had, on hand, a set of loose prompts (please see appendix A at the end of this thesis). This allowed subjects to determine the content and structure of their stories, as well as giving me the flexibility to ask questions that came up spontaneously, as a result of the particular interview. Each interview was tape recorded and later transcribed. I read each transcript and made my decision to include certain excerpts on the basis of questions, themes and concepts that were of central concern in the dissertation, as well as both patterns and anomalies that emerged from the transcripts themselves. Furthermore, instead of conducting shorter interviews with a larger number of subjects, I opted for a micro-level analysis; to this end, I modified Gubrium and Holstein's narrative method (1998), which pays close attention to the details of individual narratives on two levels: form (*how* subjects tell their stories), and content (*what* they are actually saying). Below is a detailed description of this method (Gubrium and Holstein, 1998: 166 179):

:

First Level of Analysis: the Structure of the Narrative

1. Narrative Linkages and slippages: the use of cultural categories and storylines to frame a personal narrative and the persistent gap between these cultural devices and how a subject's narrative unfolds in practice. Ex: a subject's recognition of systemic racism or sexism alongside her belief that it is an individual's responsibility to "be the best that they can be". Given that racism or sexism is a social problem, the idea that the individual is responsible for rising above this is a contradiction.
2. Foregrounding/backgrounding: the storylines the subject is highlighting and those she renders less important. Ex: interviews with two racialized female school administrators on issues of success and inequality, where one subject acknowledges discrimination but avoids talking about it and another talks openly about racism and constructs herself as beating tremendous odds.

3. Metanarratives and editing: the subject's awareness of the account as 'her' story, and her monitoring, managing and modifying of her account (when she perceives discrepancies, contradictions or wants to shift storylines). A reflexivity on the part of the subject, who knows she is engaged in a process of meaning-making rather than 'truth' telling in some final fashion, and is thus aware on some level of her own agency and narrative authority when she tells her story.
4. Topicality and local reference: The larger cultural/structural context in which the subject's discussion is located, which limits the subject's ability to make claims that have no relationship to reality. As "practitioners of everyday life" subjects call upon cultural resources that provide structural constraints on their narratives. They do not tell endlessly creative stories that are not indexed to a world outside their own consciousness.
5. Narrative rights: forms of control (institutional and cultural) that construct "...who is, or is not, entitled, obligated, or invited to offer their stories and under which social, institutional, historical and material circumstances", for instance women in gendered societies or minorities in racialized societies. How does this silencing affect the stories that subjects tell about themselves? How does it manifest itself in their identity constructions?

Second Level of Analysis: the Content of the Narrative

1. How is difference incorporated into subjects' accounts of their lives?
2. How do subjects negotiate Belonging within particular contexts?
3. How are certain relations of power (i.e. race, ethnicity, class, gender and religion) experienced in subjects' social spaces (school, community, family, culture, work, peer group)?
4. How is raced adolescence experienced differently depending on the social and historical context in which it occurs?

The Interview Process

An encounter between researcher and participant has both a professional face and a personal one. No matter how informal, there is still an underlying structure to interviews, and therefore an awareness on the part of both people that this encounter is not simply a discussion between friends or acquaintances, but is in fact geared towards

the production of some type of project. However, this 'work' structure is complicated and even undermined by the intimate nature of a one-on-one interview, particularly when the researcher is engaging the subject in a discussion of the latter's personal experiences. Negotiating this is difficult for both researcher and subject, because it requires a constant intuitive monitoring of oneself as well as the other person: it is an intimate encounter with a stranger, where both parties are obliged to show certain parts of themselves and hide others, all the while having to suss out what is and is not appropriate. There is also the question of talking across a power differential: the subject speaks, all the while knowing that the researcher is not simply recording, but also making internal judgements about the story being told. Meanwhile, the researcher knows that the subject may be wondering why she chose this topic, what her research is aiming to find or change, and whether the researcher's own personal history has informed the questions that she asks others to answer, perhaps because she is unwilling to answer them herself, in terms of her own life.

Finally there is the issue of objectification. Regardless of how conscious the researcher is of power relations in the interview, ultimately the subject is objectified: her story is dissected, categorized, and even questioned. At the same time, the researcher's selfhood is never deconstructed, it remains pristine and untouched. But, according to Fine (1994), it is precisely those multiple and overlapping spaces between the researcher Self and subject Other that must be recognized, troubled and re-worked if, as feminist researchers, we want to do meaningful, non-exploitative research:

When we opt...simply to write about those who have been Othered, we deny the hyphen...strain to white out self and refuse to engage the contradictions littering our text...by working the hyphen, I mean to suggest that researchers probe how we are in relation to the contexts we study and with our informants, understanding that we are all multiple in those relations...to see how these

“relations between” get us better data, limit what we feel free to say, expand our minds and constrict our mouths, engage us in intimacy and seduce us into complicity (1994: 72).

Fine’s quote applies equally to outsider and insider research.⁴ As an insider researcher, it was difficult at times for me to distinguish between myself and the subjects I was interviewing. However, at other times, I was alienated from their stories, and felt myself pulling away, essentially as a way of Othering them in my own mind. In the end, because of my own multiple subject positions (as researcher, adult, woman, racial insider), I was not able to disappear from the process, as I would have liked, nor were my subjects able to respond to me unproblematically, as simply a researcher interested in their experiences of *becoming/belonging*. They were very much aware of my identity, as it related to, and differed from their own. This relationality manifested itself in three ways: my uneasy location as a racial/ethnic insider; my age status vis à vis both the girls and the adult women; and the inherently hierarchical nature of the interview process which privileges the researcher. Interestingly, all three returned me in different ways to some of the key questions that I grappled with in this thesis, questions around the relational nature of subjectivity; the ways in which age creates certain hierarchical relationships; and who belongs to what category in which context.

⁴ The traditional view of knowledge production about Others holds that the researcher/observer needs to be a ‘stranger’, an outsider who goes into another culture (community, context, etc.), and relies on ‘insider’ information from informants/subjects to get a sense of the whole picture (Hammersley, 1995: 8). It is the very fact of being a stranger and at the same time being part of the scene – what Rosaldo (1993: 189) describes as the paradox of participant observation that creates the tension needed for objectivity. Both post-structuralist and feminist research have critiqued this supposed objectivity, by pointing to the imperialist, racist, classist and masculinist agendas that have been promoted through this type of research, as well the perpetuation of what Code describes as the mythical “view from nowhere” (1995). Feminists have argued that insider research (research done by a member of the particular group or community under study) can circumvent the ethical problems of researcher privilege, while at the same time making transparent the researcher’s ‘situated’ identity and the ways in which this identity shapes the research produced.

1. Girl Talk: Negotiating Age in the Research Process

Although I have argued throughout this thesis for the importance of recognizing age as a relation of power, the interviews with adolescent girls really reinforced my growing sense of the age-related hierarchies within both the South Asian diaspora, and in larger mainstream culture. In the case of the former, these age scripts structured my encounters with the girls and their families in ways that felt comfortable and familiar to me as a South Asian woman. At times I was reminded of Handa's pointed jokes about the "Auntie/Uncle" phenomenon (2003): the gaze of the community, which is not just about insider status or gender, but equally about age, and the underlying discourse of "respecting elders", that is ubiquitous in eastern cultures. For instance, older people in South Asian culture are rarely addressed by their first names, by younger people. If they are strangers, they are called Mr., Mrs. or Ms., and if they have more than a passing acquaintance with the family, they are called auntie or uncle. This is a way of constructing familial relations outside the actual blood family, as well as maintaining a hierarchy based on age. We see examples of this in the languages spoken by various South Asian communities. In Gujarati, people use the word *mota* to express respect for a someone older than them (i.e. an older brother is *Motabai*). In Hindi, you often add the suffix *Ji* to someone's name as a sign of great respect (i.e. Gandhiji). In Malayalam, the words *Chechi* and *Chetan* follow the names of older sisters and brothers respectively (and are also used to address older siblings of your spouse's family). How does an insider researcher come up with a method that can at least temporarily suspend these built-in power relations that are bound to manifest themselves during the fieldwork process?

From the outset, the discrete identity spaces between scholarly researcher and young Indian woman became blurred in the presence of South Asian parents, with whom I came into contact *only* during my interviews with the adolescent subjects. All three girls had to be interviewed at their homes (or relatives' homes), because they were not allowed to come to my apartment, nor were we allowed to meet at a coffee shop. The parents/adult relatives of all three girls came in (either just before, during, or right after each interview), to meet me and ask a familiar set of questions that South Asians often ask 'young people,' even when they are total strangers.⁵ The interviews took place in the girl's bedroom, the basement and in one case, the living room (during which time there were several interruptions by her mother). Although I knew that there was some level of trust because I was South Asian, I also sensed parental concern about why I wanted to talk to their daughters, and perhaps even fear about what their children might expose about the family, the community, themselves.

Once I had gotten past the parental/community scrutiny, and managed to set up a relatively confidential interview space, I found myself confronted, once again, with the issue of age, this time in terms of my relationship to the girls. I initially felt that the adolescent subjects were a little more passive in the telling of their stories or, put another way, a little uncomfortable talking about themselves, their families or their peer experiences. They also did not seem to understand fully what I wanted them to talk about. This may be due, in large part, to the fact that they were still adolescents and therefore had not yet engaged in what Hey, Lim and others describe as the creative re-telling or reinterpretation of one's past in order to recover it (Hey, 1997: 109; Lim, 1990: 306-307).

⁵ i.e. Where are your parents from? What do they do? Are you Hindu, Muslim, Christian? You are doing your phd? What is this project all about? Do you want something to eat or drink?

Pipher, a psychologist who works with youth, argues that girls in adolescence are living in the eye of the storm and cannot articulate their experiences, because they do not yet have the emotional (and one could add discursive), tools that would allow them to order a rather chaotic set of experiences (1994: 73). There were certainly moments in all three interviews, where I felt that the subjects themselves were somewhat baffled by the gap between my questions and their experiences, which they sought to make sense of through mainstream cultural discourses around youth and adolescence, regardless of whether these discourses had any particular resonance:

Sarah (17): I would never look back at it and the things I experienced as being bad or unhappy, like I think I've learned from everything I've been through as an adolescent, you know changing friends, changing groups of people, like meeting people, finding out who I am more, has like shaped who I am. I've always been like an active person, like in and out of school, like doing like extra committees and clubs and like I'm co-pres. right now, and stuff like that, which has I think really shaped me to be who I am, so I not only like look at my adolescence, I don't just look at it as between friends and school, like I think of it as everything else that I have done that has contributed either to my school or to my friends or my community or that has helped me just become who I am, so that you know when I go into university, when I start my career like I'm able to balance more things. So yeah, I would never look back on my adolescence as not a good time in my life or not a fun time like it has its challenges, like there's things that you deal with as a teenager that maybe you don't wanna re-live again..

Shazia (18): (so do you feel like a typical teenager?)...um I think I was. Felt sort of the same. Obviously there's not that, like I don't date, and stuff like that either, so that wasn't there and all that kind of stuff, but I think so, it's mostly the same, everyone goes through something or a little bit but (What kind of stuff?) I guess just like realizing your life changes, like, you become, it's a different maturity level, and you realize that I don't know (mock serious voice), you're growing up, things like that.

In the above quotes, Sarah draws upon a narrative of ideal adolescence, a period of learning and growing, of facing challenges, and most importantly, figuring out “who you are”. While this account may convey some of what she experienced, it is still the case that her description mirrors mainstream cultural clichés about adolescence. Shazia, on

the other hand, also attempts to lay claim to a “typical” teenage identity, despite the fact that by mainstream standards she is not typical at all. She does recognize her alienation from this narrative in some ways (i.e. not dating), but she emphasizes the experience of “maturing”, growing and “becoming”, which re-inscribes her as a “typical teen”. However, her tone of voice is somewhat curious: she talks about this issue in an almost cynical fashion, as if parodying the very discourse in which she is attempting to be located herself. It is almost as if she is aware, in this moment, of both the fictional quality of this cultural story about adolescence, and her own attempts to be part of this fiction.

Another worry I had with my adolescent subjects was the difficulty of talking across age and, as a result, not sharing the same language or vocabulary for interpreting experiences. It is possible that the interpretive tools that I was using did not speak to my young subjects, because I had formulated them as an adult researcher looking back on her adolescence. The self looking back on itself, is able to reflect on the past through the omniscient status of the narrator. It knows what will happen to the self of the past and, as a result, as I discussed in chapter three, is able to reinterpret events, and in doing so, reconstruct them or re-read them. However, my own understandings of adolescence that found their way into the research design may not have resonated with youthful subjects. What if the particularities of their existence existed outside or in-between my categories of school, friends, family, community? What questions was I not asking, what cues was I not picking up, that would allow me entrance into their spaces? Anderson and Jack suggest that feminist researchers must always be very conscious of listening with “the third ear” (1991: 19), and by this they mean going beyond a conventional approach to interviewing which takes at face value what is being said. They argue that women, as

marginalized subjects, often use different channels of communication to indicate that there is more being said than is actually being said. The differences between interviewing girls and women made me wonder whether the questions/prompts I had used were unintentionally catering to adult subjectivity. Perhaps questions such as “what are some key memories you have of adolescence?” or “was being a teenager a period you enjoyed?” had no meaning for girls living through adolescence. Perhaps I should have had two separate sets of prompts for the two groups. And during the interviews, maybe I should have picked up on what they were telling me was important, rather than what I was looking for, which was sometimes missing. In the aftermath of the fieldwork process, I wonder whether my racial/ethnic insider status fooled me into ignoring the very argument that my thesis was built on: the importance of age as a social relation in the construction of subjectivity. Feminist researchers have struggled with the complexities of being women interviewing other women. They have moved from a naïve belief in the comfort level of sharing gender identity, to the recognition that this does not somehow magically erase differences between women. Sharing gender identity as well as racial identity did not prevent the age differential from playing what I see as an important role in the interview process. I also had to question whether this age difference between researcher and researched has had a really crucial impact on all the research that has been generated on minority girls. When girls tell their stories to adult researchers, they have not escaped the eye of the social. They are still accommodating to adult questions, adult research agendas and adult interpretations of their lives.

The added tensions of being an adult woman interviewing girls, and a South Asian female interviewing other South Asian females also may have precluded a more

honest encounter between myself and my adolescent participants. For instance, as an insider quite a bit older than the subjects, I felt that they were actively engaging in 'respectful' behaviour dictated by our cultural sameness: they did not address me directly by name; they did not swear at all; they never interrupted me; they waited for me to ask my questions; and they seemed anxious to please. They were also quite shy: discussions around such things as sexuality, drugs, alcohol etc., were negotiated through what I felt was a somewhat scripted performance, where I pussyfooted around the questions, and so did they.⁶ Here I found myself in the awkward position that Anderson describes, of *knowing* the unspoken set of rules to which both I and my subjects adhered. Anderson talks about how the "don't pry" rule of the small rural community structured her discussions so that, often, when her subjects hinted at very personal or private concerns, she herself did not know how to create a comfortable space for them to talk. She describes lost opportunities, where the subject opened up a little and she, as a researcher, felt uncomfortable with pursuing the direction (for fear of being seen as "prying"). As she points out, looking back she has an uneasy sense of having unintentionally silenced her subjects on issues that she either did not want to hear about or did not know how to handle (1991: 13). Although this was a major concern for me with all the interviews, it was particularly problematic in terms of the girls' stories. Here I was, supposedly creating space, à la Giroux, for previously silenced voices to speak. After all, other than the handful of researchers talked about in chapter four, who has really listened extensively to South Asian adolescent girls? Part of my use of narrative as method was to

⁶ I would break the responses down loosely into three storylines: 1) "I don't do that because it would be wrong and/or my parents would not approve" 2) "I do some of that stuff, and choose to hide it from my parents, and therefore do not wish to expose it to an insider adult who may judge me" and 3) "I don't do that because my parents would not approve, and although I myself feel that they are too strict, it would be wrong of me publicly to criticize them too harshly."

be able to allow subjects to tell me what was important to them. Another part was to be able to get a holistic sense of their experiences, rather than just having them answer more structured questions, which restricted them to what I wanted them to talk about. For this reason especially, I tried not to use my prompts, except at moments where they were needed. But this backfired in ways that, on reflection, seemed to be strongly related to my insider/outsider status as a South Asian *adult* researcher. I wanted to listen and not get in the way of their narratives (i.e. be overly directing of the themes etc.). At the same time, I did not know how to draw them out, namely because I had a strong sense of their embarrassment and unwillingness to talk about certain issues. They knew and I knew about the rules governing “our” community around issues such as dating or sex and, at times, I felt that there was a trust issue, that they were not sure whether they could trust me not to betray their secrets. I was confronted in different ways, with the *official* story of South Asian girlhood. In Sarah’s case, she was dating, with her parents’ knowledge (although she had initially lied to them), but she was ostensibly not engaged in pre-marital sexual activity. She was quick to tell me that she did not see anything wrong with pre-marital sex, but there was a strong parental/community presence in her discussion about this issue. Similarly when I vaguely brought up dating with Shazia, an eighteen year old Muslim girl, she explained that she did not date because that was against her religion. Sex was not even discussed and I could not, in good conscience, bring this up with someone who, to a large extent, claimed to believe in her religion’s restrictions around these issues. Again, I was in the borderlands between insider and outsider: I felt it would be a betrayal of our shared South Asianness, what Handa describes as being positioned as the cultural renegade (2003), and I felt a strange and uncomfortable

resonance with my own framework in chapter three and the worries that subjects have about being labeled a 'wannabe'. I did not want Shazia to perceive me as "whitewashed", which seemed, even in the moment, an odd and inappropriate feeling, since why should a researcher be concerned with her subjects' personal opinions of her? But at such times, the boundaries between myself, my subjects and my research became painfully blurred, as I struggled to find ways to distance myself from my own racialized project of selfhood.

The questions of religion further complicated the equation of racial sameness and age difference. My own passiveness with Shazia (in terms of pushing her on some of her statements), also arose because of an intuitive sense I had that it would be an attack on her Muslim identity, by a non-Muslim. As an insider/outsider, I had wondered, before going into the interviews, whether religious differences in the community would play a part in comfort levels or even silences around certain subjects. Shazia seemed more distanced from "Canadian" cultural models, perhaps because her religious identity as a Muslim was much more meaningful to her than it was to either Sarah (half Sikh/ half Hindu) or Mary (Christian). Unlike Shazia who did even seem to have a discourse of sexuality that she could access as a Muslim girl, at least Sarah and Mary mentioned dating and sex with some embarrassment (and even laughter), although they did not pursue the topic very far.

In all three cases I felt that, because I was South Asian and an adult woman, there was a shared sense of the taboo nature of discussing (or admitting to) such things as dating or pre-marital sex. Sharif, in her insider/outsider research on upper middle class families in Egypt, describes how occupying the "Egyptian female category" meant that she was often forced to "feign modesty" when topics arose around men, marriage and

sexuality (Sharif, 2001: 442). It is still not clear to me what the “real story” was in terms of how these girls view sexuality. Were they feigning modesty about these issues and did this also have to do with the fact that their families were in the near vicinity and might hear them? Was my shared ethnicity a constraint? Had I been a white female researcher, would I have been constructed as western, liberated (or even promiscuous), thus allowing my subjects freedom from a culturally specific discourse of female chastity? It is quite possible that, in such a scenario, they may even have felt the need to explain more fully the cultural reasons behind these taboos, while simultaneously distancing themselves from it (so as not to be seen as ‘backward’ by a white researcher).

Finally, I wonder whether my own lack of comfort with the topic was read by my adolescent subjects. I did feel very uneasy discussing these issues. Although my researcher identity required that I push the boundaries on precisely this type of material, I also had a strong sense of my responsibility as an *older* female in the diaspora. For example, it was not my place to challenge Shazia’s matter-of-fact acceptance of the religious rules against dating. Regardless of my personal opinions as a feminist, I felt obliged to refrain from actively or even passively encouraging girls to flout their parents or communities, not because I necessarily uphold these values, but because of the often painful consequences for girls who do challenge these conventions (some of whom pay the price of alienation, hostility, complete exclusion and sometimes even physical violence). My concerns around this were intensified by their non-adult status; I found myself falling back into an infantilizing notion of non-adults (as easily influenced and vulnerable to dangerous suggestions), and this was layered by my own ambivalences about occupying the subject position of South Asian woman as cultural

bearer/reproducer. In these moments, I felt pressure to *be*, or at least be perceived to be (possibly quite falsely), a good daughter of the diaspora.

2. Shared Spaces of Selfhood: Interviewing Adult Women

Although some of the same issues cropped up during my interviews with women in their twenties and thirties, there was a little more willingness to either allude to (or sometimes discuss openly), the secrets of the diaspora, and this reinforced my strong sense of the presence of age as an organizing relation within the interview space. The adult women I spoke to were more willing to discuss their experiences of growing up in a South Asian family, or at least offered much more detail and even analysis. One reason may have been the fact that, as adults, they could draw upon two sets of periodized memories - childhood and adolescence – as resources for the understanding and narrating of their identities. Also, in sharp contrast to the girls, whose stories were seemingly more spontaneous (perhaps because they had given less thought to the relationship between experience and identity), there was a less jagged or unfinished quality to the women's stories. They had clearly thought more about the experiences and memories, and their narratives had more coherence to them.

In general, the women were more comfortable with me, seeing me, I suppose, as a contemporary. Some of them even offered intimate details of their personal lives.⁷ Again, unlike the girls, they seemed to have less difficulty discussing the taboo subjects of the diaspora. In fact, there seemed to be, at times, a cozy sense of belonging for both myself

⁷ By intimate, I do not mean simply transgressive behavior (i.e. dating, pre-marital sex, drug taking etc.). I also include issues that under normal circumstances would only be shared with really close friends: for example, Aleena's experience of sexual abuse, Asha's parents' divorce and the complicated reasons behind it, Crystal's sister's relationship with a non Indian man and the way that the family dealt with that.

and the subjects: they spoke about these issues as if I could completely relate, and had gone through similar, if not identical, experiences. At times, this too felt like part of the script for South Asian diasporic girlhood: the next 'scene', where the daughter either rebels or finds some way to accommodate her 'Canadianness', while maintaining the cultural traditions of her parents and community. There was a great deal of laughter shared between myself and many of the adult subjects over 'typical' parental concerns. At such moments, I felt most strongly the privilege of insider status, because I knew the complicated lives that some second generation women lead in order to accommodate both ethnic and mainstream cultural criteria for belonging. There was a shared identity between myself and the subjects, and questions that might have been perceived as offensive and stereotypical if I were a white researcher, were accepted and answered quite naturally.⁸

Unlike with the adolescent subjects, who I felt did not really want to be discussing these issues, this part of the interviews with the women was easier work for me.⁹ In most cases, I sat back and listened, and only occasionally interjected with one of my prompts, if the conversation was veering off topic. Olson and Shopes (1991: 196-197) point out that although feminist researchers should continually scrutinize their fieldwork processes, they should not get too obsessed with themselves and their privileged positions as researchers; exploitation is an important issue, but people also like to talk about

⁸ For example, issues around dating non South Asians, or South Asians of a different religious background, or the possibility of an arranged marriage, or even some of the sexist or patriarchal attitudes in the community were discussed openly, despite the fact that these issues are often the subject of controversy between 'Canadian' society and South Asian culture. The whole concern around dress for Muslim girls, for example, is a delicate topic because it draws upon both the realities of being Muslim as well as the racializing practices used to Other Muslim girls and women.

⁹ There were, however, moments during some of the interviews with women that were neither easy nor comfortable, as I discuss later in this chapter.

themselves and tell their stories, and they enjoy having a captive audience that is genuinely interested in their lives. I found this to be truer with the adult women. Several of them told me after the interview was over that they had really enjoyed talking to me, and could have gone on for hours, except that they did not want to bore me.

Many of the women did not have trouble admitting to their ambivalence over South Asian cultural norms. They seemed less bound by the storyline of respecting your elders. Although several of them mentioned it - some with affection and pride, others with annoyance - most of them had challenged it, if not openly, at least in their private lives. Handa's descriptions about sneaking around (2003) applied more to the women who had, as young adults, begun to challenge certain conventions and find ways of circumventing the familial/community gaze. A couple of them talked openly about their experiences of growing up different and while, from a researcher point of view, this made the interviews easier and more interesting for me, it also made me question, again, what I had missed with the girls.

3. Researcher Privilege

Feminist researchers have engaged in lengthy debates about the ways in which researcher privilege manifests itself in the fieldwork process. Most researchers do not pay their participants, and even when they do, there are sticky issues around the commodifying and selling of personal knowledge and experience as part of a capitalist economy. What, then, are the benefits for people who participate in research projects? The benefits to researchers are clear cut: they finish dissertations, publish articles, get scholarly recognition, receive grants, find jobs etc. But participants often do not

experience any obvious change for the better in their lives. They are interviewed and then sent back to their social contexts, some of which are fairly brutal or difficult. Often, the researcher has no connection to the subjects' communities, and the research does not even indirectly benefit the community, except perhaps to the extent that the marginalized or silenced have been given voices. Although the use of privilege to carve out a space for the silenced should not be underestimated, the existence of such a space still does not solve the moral dilemmas involved in any kind of participant research that is concerned with questions of potential exploitation.

As an insider researcher, I had a connection to the South Asian diasporic communities, which allowed me to feel that my research was giving a voice to those whose experiences had been overlooked in the literature on youth and race. As a second generation South Asian girl growing up in Canada, I saw no representations of myself in popular culture; as a young graduate student, I found little understanding of my experiences in the literature on South Asian women. To this extent, I felt that I could safely describe myself in Olsen and Shopes's words, "as a citizen scholar who digs where she stands" (1991: 202). However, as a researcher essentially using the voices of these girls and women as a stepping stone to building an academic career, what was I giving back? With the adolescent girls, I offered to give them advice on their future educational options. All three were planning to attend university at some point in their lives, and I suggested that they feel free to email or call me if they had any questions or needed help. Of course none of them did, a fact perhaps explained by their lack of ease even in the interviews. I represented to them the adult Other, and if they were going to get advice from older people, it may as well be from people they knew well, not some relative

stranger. Once more, I was confronted with the age gap, and I was well aware even as I was saying it, that they had no intention of contacting me once the interview was over.

Again, interestingly enough, some of the adult women were different. One subject knew (through a shared acquaintance), of a particular hobby of mine (tarot reading), and asked me quite directly if I would do a reading for her, after the interview. For the record, I was willing, both for the fun of it, and also because it was some kind of compensation for the time she was going to give me. However, I did feel as if I was part of some strange barter economy and was secretly thankful that I had something to offer on the market! However, unlike the tarot reading which took about 30 minutes and then was over, there were other requests made that created personal and ethical problems for me. A couple of the participants who were closer to my age actively pursued a friendship with me after the interviews were over. I felt a great deal of ambivalence about this for a number of reasons. For one thing, I already knew so much about them, while they knew little or nothing about me. Generally, the possibility of friendship rests on the belief that you know the person at least slightly, and see yourself as being compatible with them on a particular level. The desire for friendship in a fieldwork context seemed more like the artificial intimacy of a patient/doctor relationship, where the doctor either knows your body (physician) or your psyche (therapist), extremely well and still does not judge you. To a great extent, the interview dynamic represents a form of unconditional love and acceptance. The subject is allowed to talk about themselves, and regardless of subtle and non-verbal clues that suggest otherwise, generally the researcher does not make harsh, argumentative or judgemental statements about the subject's life or reflections. But this dynamic, while suitable within an interview, breaks down in inter-personal relationships.

While I found all my subjects interesting and felt compassion for several of them, I did not necessarily see all of them as people I would choose to befriend, however obliged I was to them for willingly participating. Negotiating this without hurting people's feelings was very tricky, and possibly in some cases unsuccessful. One participant called me several times and pressured me to go out with her for drinks etc. I did so a couple of times, with secret misgivings, which were only exacerbated by her repeated jokes about how I 'owed' her, because she had participated in my study. Eventually, I was forced to come up with excuses (prior commitments, works etc.), as a way of subtly discouraging further attempts at friendship, but not without a certain amount of guilt on my part.¹⁰

Like other feminist researchers, another major concern I struggled with was the intrinsically unequal nature of the interview process. On the surface, the interview is a dialogue or conversation between two subjects, one of whom actually gets more air time than the other (who performs a sort of therapeutic role). But because my biographical details were not being presented for scrutiny and analysis, the most benign spin I could put on it was that they talked and I listened/recorded. However, in reality, I controlled the topic, even if loosely. I dictated the overall subject matter, and my prompts steered subjects in particular directions. Although there were, as I described earlier, moments when I felt anxiety around my status as an insider/outsider/rebel daughter, this was an inner monologue. I did not have to worry about my story of self, and whether it could hold up under intense scrutiny. My subjects were clearly aware that they were in this position. For instance, one consistent theme throughout the interviews was the question of judgement. Regardless of whether subjects were talking about the most intimate details

¹⁰ I have wondered several times since then, whether my taking of the person's life story to be used as part of my research, did not in fact oblige me to accommodate her demands for friendship.

of their lives or something more casual, I felt that they were constantly watching me and monitoring me for my reaction. Often they would question me a little anxiously, or make self-deprecating comments about how I must think they're crazy, hypocritical etc. In these moments, I could recognize their insecurities about their own narratives; for a host of complicated reasons, they needed me to *believe* them, to indicate through both verbal and non-verbal messages, that I agreed with them or understood where they were coming from.¹¹ When I nodded and smiled, I sensed that this re-assured them. When they made statements that I supplemented, they were pleased. When I made remarks about something that they had said, which agreed with their own interpretations, they would respond with statements such as "exactly, that's exactly it", "yeah, yeah, for sure," or they would express their agreement in body language (i.e. vigorous nodding, enthusiastic and relieved facial expressions etc.). Part of feminized conversation, even outside the formality of an interview, relies on validating each other's experiences. As Minister points out, women talk to each other using a community model that tries (not always successfully), to create a non-hierarchical dialogue (1991).¹² Rather than open competition and one-upmanship which, according to her, characterize male conversation patterns, women work at trying to share experiences, by letting the speaker know that she is not alone, and that other people have gone through similar problems. However, in a

¹¹ Explicit examples of approval seeking include statements such as Aleena's ("That sounds so bad...but I feel like that. It sounds like I'm a bad traitor, you probably think that"), but also nervous laughter, anxious glances, a quickening of speech (a sort of babbling tone), after a statement was made, to which I did not respond.

¹² According to Maltz and Borker (cited in Minister, 1991: 30), girls learn to use speech to create and maintain close and intimate relationships, criticize others in acceptable ways and accurately interpret what other girls are saying. Boys on the other hand, learn to use speech to assert dominance, attract and maintain an audience and re-assert oneself when someone else has the floor. Although I would cautiously agree with this model, some of the research that I talked about in chapter three suggests that girls are also capable of engaging in verbal power moves, using both insults and other non verbal forms of cruelty to convey a message.

formal research context, I was once again occupying multiple and contradictory identity positions as a racialized/ethnicized insider, a woman, and a researcher. The first two allowed me to create an aura of shared experience. But the latter did not, because not only was I not sharing my own experiences (which is what people do in informal conversation, they share stories), I was also not always able, as a researcher, to understand or agree with subjects' statements.¹³ Although I did not voice this directly, the women I interviewed were quite aware of the subtle signals I was giving them. For example, when I looked confused at something they had said or asked them to explain, they became flustered and tried to explain or qualify their statements. At other times, when they looked to me for agreement and I simply nodded or did not make any positive statements (i.e. "I know what you mean"), they became uneasy and sometimes back-tracked or contradicted themselves. Just as I was studying them for clues, they were studying me. However, ultimately, my opinion of them was far more important and this stuck in my mind as a huge, possibly insurmountable problem that a feminist researcher must continually face in the field.

¹³ Frankenberg offers a nice description of this when she talks about interviewing white women about racism, and the difficulties of conveying sympathy and letting the subject talk without judgement even when the person was expressing racist views (1995: 36-40).

Transcription, Translation and the Space In-Between

Transcription is more than simply the act of capturing the live interview in written form. It raises a whole new set of methodological questions around the researcher's limited capacity to transfer live data directly and unproblematically, from the spoken word to the written page. Any researcher knows that no matter how meticulous she is, a great deal gets lost in translation. This is not only with respect to actual words and intonations, but the pauses, silences and other 'live sounds' from the interview that, by definition, escape conventional methods of transcription. As Tilley points out, a transcript is not a direct replication of some objective reality; it is a researcher's representation/interpretation of an event, not the event itself (Tilley, 2003: 751).

The gap between what is said and what gets read creates both ethical and epistemological dilemmas for the researcher. Although research such as mine is less concerned with the issue of objectivity and the search for Truth, I am uneasy about the slippages that necessarily occur between what my subjects say and what I present them as saying. First, this reinforces the ultimate power of the researcher over her subjects; even when I attempt to leave nothing out, I still have final authorial control over what comes to be presented as their stories. Furthermore, because of the translation gap, it is impossible to achieve a perfect copy of the interview. The final product is a pale imitation, with pieces missing. It represents not what the subject has said, but what I have *heard* her say, and that is not the same thing. As Anderson and Jack point out, it is precisely at those moments when you think you have understood what the subject is saying, that you are in danger of making assumptions that have more to do with your subjectivity than hers (1991: 19).

The following section discusses some of my concerns during the transcription process: my failed attempts to capture certain nuances that would have allowed my adolescent subjects to be seen as more multidimensional; the intractable problem of writing the remembering body; and finally the realization that the one-on-one interview conducted between researcher and subject is actually an illusion. The subject speaks to both the researcher *and* an imaginary audience, comprised of family, friends, community and larger culture.

1. Freezing the Moment

As I mentioned previously, a large part of my worries during the research process revolved around my interactions with the girls. During the interviews, I was concerned about their passivity, and their positioning of me as an older, female insider. I also worried that I was not asking them the right questions. Afterwards, I wondered about the limitations of my understanding, in terms of their adolescent subjectivity. Etter Lewis (1991: 44) describes how existing norms of self in texts have failed to account for the black female experience; despite my best intentions, perhaps my own understanding of the processes of selfhood did not capture my adolescent subjects' lived experiences.

For instance, when I return to the transcripts, I find myself questioning whether they were actually passive, or whether my perceptions were coloured by my feminist concerns about girls' "loss of voice" during adolescence. Maybe the girls were simply speaking through "a channel" (Anderson and Jack, 1991: 11), to which I was not fully attuned. Or perhaps they were actually resisting my attempts as an adult researcher, to speak them into existence, to "effect a closure" on their identities at that moment. Perhaps

they, more than anyone, are aware of the fluidity of their selfhood, and they found my questions and categories too static, too essentializing.

Nevertheless, when I re-read the transcripts, I am troubled by the experiential consequences of the undecidability of adolescence; it recalls Lesko's description of the adolescent subjects being trapped, like the native, in some ethnographic no-man's land, and having only the past of childhood and the future of adulthood, with no present in which to root itself.¹⁴ The three girls that I interviewed did not seem to be able to articulate a rich or detailed account of childhood or early adolescence, yet they could only speak in hypothetical terms about the future. Their discussions of adolescence were rooted in the present, in their momentary experiencing of adolescence, yet this was almost impossible for them to describe outside the storylines of a conventional teen narrative (i.e. "I go to school, I like boys, I have friends, I have conflicts with my friends, I have conflicts with my family, I am maturing"). If, as Lesko suggests, adolescents do not really exist in the present, this may have been a large part of why these interviews were challenging and to some extent frustrating for me as a researcher. I could not pin my subjects down, I could not grasp a coherent sense of self or a strong narrative thread, and while that may have more to do with what I have already identified as flaws in my research design, it might have just as easily been produced by the ontological ambiguity of the subjects themselves. As I have argued throughout this thesis, adolescence has been constructed and lived as a period of liminality. Strangely, as a researcher, I found myself refusing to acknowledge this as I struggled, without success, to capture and freeze the moment of metamorphosis, of subjects' *becoming*.

¹⁴ According to Lesko: "Adults are people who *are*, adolescents *will be* in the future. In these ways, adolescents, like the natives portrayed in ethnographic accounts, are imprisoned in their age as absence and suspended outside historical time" (2001: 129).

2. *Navigating the Extra-Discursive: What the Body Remembers*

Both narrative and feminist methodology emphasize the importance of what the subject is saying, as well as how the subject is saying it. This focus allows researchers to bracket the question of truth in favour of exploring how subjects make sense of their experiences and the institutional realities that they face in their everyday lives. The question of how the subject speaks is of particular interest because it requires that researchers pay attention to the kind of narrative being told and the manner in which a subject constructs, edits, contradicts and acknowledges the contradictions while she is speaking. Nevertheless, focusing on how something is being said does not actually allow the researcher to create a methodological space outside the linguistic. Feminist methodologists have talked about meta-narratives, what women are not saying, what they mean in terms of certain pauses, silences or uncertainties regarding their own stories. But these are still viewed as being within the realm of the discursive.¹⁵ Although there has been a great deal of theoretical discussion about the “post Cartesian” subject,¹⁶ I found that when I interviewed subjects, I had no methodological tools that I could draw upon to understand what their bodies were trying to tell me. Throughout all the interviews, subjects conveyed messages to me, through pauses, facial expressions, tightening or relaxing of muscles, voice changes, sudden bursts or anger, excitement or enthusiasm. But during my transcription phase, I did not know how to describe these things. Julia Kristeva’s beautiful phrase about women and embodiment comes back to me: she

¹⁵ Even Burns’ recent work on embodiment in the interview process (2003), does not really address how the researcher goes about capturing the performative aspect of interviews.

¹⁶ According to Giddens (1991: 58-62), the post Cartesian subject is one that is always embodied and on display to others as a means of symbolic understanding.

describes women as “dancers who suffer as they speak” (1981: 167-168), and urges feminist writers to work at uncovering the meanings behind this “word flesh” (McCance, 1996).¹⁷ Clearly, some of my questions had evoked pain: as I watched subjects re-live certain memories that they had excised from their present project of self, I could see this pain in the way their emotions played across their faces. But from a researcher standpoint, how does one translate this language of word flesh? How could I convey - through the use of such wooden descriptors as “she laughed”, “interrupted” “said mockingly” - the wealth of hidden meanings behind subjects’ words, meanings that could only be accessed through a corporeal reading? It seemed to me that their bodies were actually remembering these moments. How could I, as a researcher, bring to life the subtle meanings behind Asha’s long pauses when she struggled to find words to explain how she felt about her mother’s financially-based decision to kick her out of the house? Or the drop in Ritu’s voice, accompanied by a strange blankness of expression, as she narrated a particularly harrowing experience of racism? How could I make real the significance of Aleena’s clenching and unclenching of hands when talking about her experience of sexual abuse and her family’s botched attempts at handling the revelation of this? Or the sadness on Anjana’s face when she talked about how her adolescent experiences had left her with a permanent sense of doubt about her self-worth?

Finally, there was my own wordless sympathy in these moments. *My* remembering body, like that of my subjects’, could not be captured through the discursive. When I re-read the transcripts, I find myself somewhat horrified by my ostensibly formal and business-like attitude in the interviews. I don’t remember it that

¹⁷ Kristeva is writing from a feminist psychoanalytic position, but I found some of her discussion of the play between the semiotic and the symbolic useful in trying to understand how much of our storytelling is conducted through our bodies.

way. I remember vividly some of the rooms in which the interviews took place, some of the background sounds from the window or inside the house, as subjects were speaking. And most of all, I remember my non-verbal interaction with many of the subjects, through laughter, pauses, and the expressions of sadness or anger that I could feel on my face during the recounting of certain incidents. I remember tensions in my own body as certain parts of someone's story reminded me of pieces of my own life. But none of these things appear on the page and it seemed to me that, as I went through the interviews and then later transcribed the material, really important things were being lost in this translation from body to word. In such contexts, even listening "with the third ear" cannot compensate fully for seeing with the third eye. All the subtleties of embodied interaction between myself and my subjects could not be pinned down and made black and white on the printed page.

3. Ghosts in the Room

As previously mentioned, one concern that I had was around the question of judgement and my sense that subjects needed me to 'be with them', in their narration of selfhood. This validation issue is a slippery slope that has implications for the later stages of research (i.e. analysis). What if I had mis-represented my support during a particular moment, only to find myself later faced with the desire to critique or question a subject's account of something? What if I had been silently unsupportive and this had actually affected the subject's comfort levels? How much was I, the researcher, implicated in the stories that they ended up telling me?

All of these are important questions for a researcher to keep in mind. But, again, following Olson and Shopes (1991), it is important for the researcher not to overstate her importance in the process. Getting out of your own way is sometimes a necessary part of fieldwork, and allows you to see certain things that would otherwise be taken for granted as being produced by the research dynamic. For example, when I went back and looked over the transcripts, I was struck by what seemed to be the presence of other listeners in an otherwise empty room. At the time, I had assumed that the hesitations, qualifications and anxieties were simply over my responses to what was being said and subjects' attempts to present a coherent project of self to me, the interviewer. But, on reflection, I realize that there were other listeners - eavesdroppers if you will - to my one-on-one encounters with these women. Minister describes the oral history interview as a public performance, acted out "to a ghostly audience" (1991: 29). She uses this phrase to describe the performative aspect of an interview, where the researcher is fixing the equipment, while the subject pretends not to notice that this "ordinary conversation", is actually being monitored or taped.¹⁸ But I would argue that the ghostly audience is not simply represented by the researcher or her equipment. The question, then, is who makes up this audience, and how do I, the researcher, identify its members? In the process of listening to the tapes, it occurred to me that when my subjects justified, rationalized or tried to make sense of their thoughts and actions, it was often to someone other than me, since as a researcher, I did try my hardest to avoid making negative statements. All of this

¹⁸ According to Minister:

When narrators are plunged into the interview, they see the interviewer's body poised towards them and, as they hear the first question, they note how the interviewer's facial expression turns into an expectant audience gaze. Narrators now realize that they are expected to "take the floor"...the participants pretend that a tape recorder or a video camera and recorder just a few feet away does not "exist" and that a "live" microphone is not making what ordinarily is ephemeral into a repeatable audio or videotape that may be listened to or watched by strangers (1991: 29).

suggests that one-on-one interviews are not so much a dialogue as a polylogue,¹⁹ with many people speaking and many people listening:

Anjana (30): I remember asking a guy, saying, "So, do you want to go out with me?" type of thing or "should we go out?" and I remember people finding out about it and just laughing their heads off. And so that sunk in my mind forever. Kind of like Anjana is below everybody, she's not our equal that way, she's not, she hasn't, the precedent is why would you ever go out with anybody who looked like her.

Aleena (25): When I was seventeen I had my first experience and after that things just went downhill. I went a little buckwild and ended up with a lot of guys, very suddenly. I mean I really like sex, that's so bad (laughs)... (So there was never any judgement from your friends? You know, typical teen stuff with girls?) No, because my friends weren't Indian or Muslim. I find the Indian and Muslim ones are the ones that judge. Nobody cared what I did, like honestly my friends they wanted to protect me, but they never like, like my best friend was this girl Lori and Neela, who's still one of my best friends, they didn't judge me, they were like "as long as you know what you're doing", but they never thought "oh my god, what a slut." Like I would say, "oh my god, I'm so bad," and they would say, "oh who cares, have fun."

Ritu (24): If I'm at home, well, you can't go out, you can't do stuff, because it would make them uncomfortable and they would worry. Heaven forbid that they worry, because they always have to be happy, that's my job, as the youngest child. Seriously, it is my job, like I argue and fight, but the actual "my God, is she like dying somewhere?" that's only if I'm at home... of sight, out of mind. So long as I'm not in their house. But I can't date, still, they'd find that awful if I did that (Well, but they must've figured out that those kinds of things happen, considering you said your sister married a white guy) Oh they're terrified, they're terrified of what will happen to me, because I'm their last hope, right, so, either they haven't decided yet whether to put their foot down and say "you have to marry a Malayalee", I'm sure they want to. And the other side of it is "Oh do what you want", and they say that, my mom especially says that, "you know you should find someone, and we'll support you, don't worry" and I know it's crap, it's absolute crap on her part, she's just saying that, I don't know why she even bothers. (Really?) Absolute crap.

In the first quote, we might read Anjana's bitterness towards her adolescent peers (who, according to her, made her feel like "a second class citizen"), as a dialogue with the social gaze of her adolescent world, a gaze that spoke her into difference. I would argue that it may be a bizarre act of mimesis, with Anjana occupying the voice of her oppressor. It is interesting to note that the words "that sunk in my mind forever" connect

¹⁹ I've appropriated this word from Kristeva. 1987. "Talking about Polylogue", in Toril Moi (Ed.), *French Feminist Thought: A Reader*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.

the first sentence (her memory of the peer group's Othering of herself), with the second sentence, a blanket statement about her objective lack of self-worth. In the first part of the quote, she is describing other people's opinions of her, but in the second half, she appears to have collapsed the distinction between the social gaze and herself, by using the pronouns "she" and "our" to describe the situation. By talking about herself in the third person, and aligning herself with the group voice (represented by "our"), she may in fact be trying to disown that despised self, by occupying the subject position of racialized white peer culture.

In the second quote, Aleena's strong sense of friendship, particularly with non South Asian friends, can be read through her childhood trauma of sexual abuse at the hands of a relative. In her discussions about her own sexuality, she is grateful for her friends' refusals to judge her negatively; yet, throughout her narrative, I hear a strong sense of confusion and self-judgement. My own feeling is that she too goes back and forth, (although in a slightly different fashion from Anjana), now speaking in the voice of "tolerant Canadian society", now speaking in the voice of "South Asian/Muslim patriarchy." She wants to believe in the legitimacy of the self that her friends present to her (the self as a sexual subject), but I wonder whether she is secretly beset by doubts, having internalized both mainstream and South Asian cultural notions about female chastity. Entangled with these doubts is, perhaps, a feeling of shame that abuse victims often feel: she describes her sexuality through the use of "moral language" (Anderson and Jack, 1991: 19), where, despite her friends' support, she still ends up seeing herself as "bad".

Finally, the anger that Ritu expresses towards her parents reads like a scene that has taken place many times before in her family, a scene that she is tired of, because it only reveals her parents' hypocrisy. She is quick to dismiss their concern for her and reconstruct it as control (i.e. they don't care if I'm dead somewhere as long as it doesn't happen while I'm under their roof). Moreover, although she seems to offer them a voice in the argument, this is actually quite misleading. While the content of the statements is presumably theirs, Ritu erases their presence through structure, that is, through intonation and facial expression. Their voice is nullified by her delivery: her sarcasm, her tone of mock concern, as well as her repeated profanity, is meant to interrupt and negate the formal articulation of their worries.

The tensions in the above narratives suggest that at key moments during the process, the researcher is not so much an interviewer, but a facilitator/mediator between several, often hostile, parties. The subjects themselves do not speak in one coherent voice, particularly when talking about their past experiences. They access other selves, in this case younger selves, and give them a voice. They also argue with, accuse, reach out to, and accommodate an invisible panel of people that includes mothers, fathers, siblings, friends, detractors, communities and larger Canadian society.

Feminist Researcher or Born-Again Hindu? The Writer as Creator, Preserver and Destroyer²⁰

Finding subjects, interviewing them and transcribing their stories onto a dead page comprised the bulk of difficulties that I faced during my fieldwork process. However, there remains one crucial area of concern: the analysis of these interviews. According to Borland (1991: 64), feminist researchers have to struggle constantly with the tension between respecting women's own interpretations of their lives and not relinquishing responsibility in terms of both the content and structure of our research. It would be easier to cling to the comforting falsehood "that the data can speak for itself" (Acker, 1991: 141), but that is an abdication of responsibility on the part of the researcher. It also dilutes the importance of any feminist aims that are geared towards understanding and helping to change the gendered structures that shape women's lives across cultures and societies. Nevertheless, empowerment and emancipation, although wonderful in theory, are slippery concepts to work with in practice. As Anderson and Jack point out, under the rationale of empowerment, there is always the dangerous potential for silencing and appropriation (1991: 2). How respectful is it to one's subjects to tell their stories and then offer one's (often quite contradictory) opinions about their lives? It not only assumes that 'ordinary' women know less than feminist scholars, it also suggests that what they do know about themselves and their worlds has been filtered through a state of false consciousness. In these moments, the feminist researcher is

²⁰ Although Hinduism is a pantheistic religion, the essence of divinity is always represented through the *Trimurti*, or the three faces of God: Brahma the creator of life, Vishnu the preserver, and Shiva the Destroyer. Any writer, be it of fiction or otherwise, occupies this divine status vis a vis her work: to a lesser or greater extent, we create our subjects/characters, we choose which of their experiences we want to focus on, and we write over their own understandings of life.

confronted with what Reay calls the ever present seductions of “knowing better”, rather than “knowing differently” (1996: 62).

I wrestled with these and other concerns in the analytical phase of my fieldwork: the question of making and un-making subjects; picking and choosing whose stories were more valuable or more ‘appropriate’ for my work, and my own reluctance to take responsibility for re-interpreting subjects’ experiences. In the end, I reached the unpleasant conclusion that power relations haunt any feminist research project before, during and after and, try as we might, there is never any complete escape from “the God trick.” The bald truth is that my subjects offer me their “lived fictions”, which I then co-opt in order to tell my own fictional account of their lives. Regardless of whether or not they fit, I ruthlessly squeeze their experiences into my narrative structure/framework. And because I get the final say, I am the ultimate arbiter of their stories. My control over this narrative is multi-faceted: I am the creator, writer, narrator, editor and omniscient voice of the story; and that is a heavy burden to carry.

1. Naming, Un-Naming, Being Named

Just as all creation myths begin with the naming of creatures, both great and small, so also does the presentation of fieldwork require a naming of subjects. Of course, the latter is a fairly standard requirement, seemingly devoid of any dramatic significance: for the sake of confidentiality, subjects’ real names have to be changed to protect their identities. However, if we read this statement symbolically, then we are left with the process of un-making and re-making subjects within the *research* narrative. Here, the researcher gets to name her subjects/objects, and in doing so, speaks them into existence.

The issue of naming in research is further complicated in the context of race difference. In race and postcolonial theory, the power of naming is essential to the power of knowing and being known. Constructing Others through particular categories of difference (i.e. black, South Asian, Oriental etc.) reaffirms the hegemonic status of whiteness. This is mirrored in the mis-naming (mis-recognition) of subjects, through the improper pronunciation of their names; the re-naming of subjects through an anglicizing of their names; or the un-naming of a subject *qua* subject, through racial epithets. An excerpt from Handa's short story offers a nice illustration of the power relations embedded in seemingly innocuous "labels":

My name is Amita Handa, not Anita or Amoeba or Amityville Horror. And it's pronounced like Ami-*tha*, even though I always introduce myself to the outside world as Amida or Amita"...these were the small triumphs I was dreaming about in my grade ten science class...instead as my hand rose up to inquire about the difference between reflection and inflection, the teacher said, "Amanda Handa?" (1990: 40-41)

One attempt to subvert the multi-layered power relations implicated in the process of naming, was to offer subjects the choice to name themselves. I asked each subject to pick a name, and if I felt that this was different enough from their actual name, I used it. But I found that this fairly straightforward request was complicated by a subtle relationship between subjects' projects of selfhood and the names that they chose. For example, Sarah and Crystal both decided on very anglicized names. In Sarah's case, this reflected her real-life choice to anglicize her South Asian name (for example, when someone named Surinder calls herself Sue). She was also, interestingly, one of the subjects who had managed to position herself quite successfully within a mainstream discourse of belonging. In Crystal's case, her real name was both a common South Asian and western name, but her choice was interesting, not only because of her repeated

attempts to position herself and her family as not traditionally Indian, but also because her brief attempt at belonging to the “Indian scene” at university had resulted in a certain resentment towards Indian culture.

On the other side, there were subjects whose name choices illustrated the complex nature of racialization, where despite the apparent whitening of themselves in which they had engaged, they were still on some level unwilling to relinquish completely their ethnicity. For example, Aleena’s obvious hostility towards the Muslim community and her enthusiastic embracing of white Canadian culture should have led to her choosing an anglicized name; however, again, the ambivalence towards her ethnic/religious identity (she continued to see herself very much as a Muslim), revealed itself in her choice of a very Islamic name. Similarly, Anjana suffered from a tremendous amount of insecurity and self-loathing, and had internalized a great deal of racialized beliefs about South Asian culture, yet she still chose a very Indian name; as did Asha, who had had very little contact with the South Asian community growing up (except, like Crystal, for a brief encounter at university, which had not left her overly enthusiastic with the “brown crowd”).

What was especially intriguing, if a little disturbing, was the fact that two of the three adolescent girls refused to name themselves. Both Mary and Shazia did not want to choose their own names and said that they would leave it up to me. I felt strongly that this reflected an uncertainty around their identities and who they were at that moment in time. In Shazia’s case, this passivity was also present in her lack of animation or enthusiasm when talking about herself and her teenage experiences, and it seemed to be reflective of larger issues. For one thing, she was unable to accommodate the obvious contradictions

between her strong Muslim identity and her awareness of some of the gender inequalities occurring in her own family. Although she claimed that Islam is a religion where women actually have more rights than men, this did not quite mesh with her everyday observations that her younger brother was given more freedoms and privileges because he was a boy. I felt that Shazia did not have a firm grasp on who she was or who she wanted to be, that she was caught between being a strong, independent young woman who stood up for herself, and a traditional Muslim Pakistani girl who followed the rules of her parents:

I still have guy friends and stuff like that, like if I wanted to marry someone...it would be okay... (Would they have to be Muslim?) yes, but the race doesn't matter at all. I mean obviously my parents would prefer someone who was Pakistani but they couldn't really say too much if he was Muslim (And you're okay with that?) Um, in the beginning, when I was little, I was like "no, I'm not marrying some Paki", whatever, but it's a given and I sort of understand now that I think about it, because it's like their culture is not gonna move on unless you marry someone who's the same (6).

I was very very shy. I was going through my university application a few weeks ago, and I was going through my OSI files...all these comments from my dad about how I used to be so shy...but that was one of the things, when I confronted my friend, I think that totally changed me...one of the things that I said to her was "little Shazia isn't gonna say anything? Well, she's gonna say something now!" you know what I mean. Like I was always the nice, quiet girl, but not anymore.

The above quotes, which are taken from different parts of the interview, suggest a strong desire on Shazia's part to abandon the good girl persona who follows along with either friends or parents. However, despite her claims that she has successfully overcome that former self, large parts of her story do not bear this out. She has clearly given up, at least for now, her earlier attempts to resist her parents' cultural demands in terms of marriage. Even more importantly, she claims to understand why they are making these demands, and this claim offers her a certain degree of control: in this storyline, she is

choosing to go along, because she *agrees* with her parents, not because she feels helpless. It is these and other contradictions in Shazia's story that made me question the connection between her identity work and her refusal to name herself for this thesis.

In Mary's case, her real name was already typically western (because of her Catholic background), and as a result I assumed that she would simply choose something similarly western. Interestingly, she was not willing to name (or re-name) herself. Unlike some of the adult subjects who were quite amused and pleased at the idea of choosing "ideal" names (for instance Aleena, Anjana, Crystal, Asha and Ritu), Mary claimed that she could not think of anything and preferred that I come up with something suitable. Given that I was already uneasy about age hierarchies with the younger subjects, and felt afterwards that they were more passive than the adult subjects during the interview, I was left feeling as if I had been forced back into an authoritative role. At a symbolic level, I have to wonder what it means when subjects refuse to name themselves, even for bureaucratic/technical purposes. While I do not want to fall prey to what Cottle (2002) describes as the "myth of vulnerability",²¹ I do find it troubling that Mary's unwillingness to be named also coincided with what I felt were subtle moves of self-effacement (even possibly self-erasure) that ran through her storylines with both friends and family. At various points in her interview, she is reluctant to criticize others, trying to occupy what Gilligan describes as the status of "perfect girl".²² As I mentioned in chapter one, structural feminists argue that adolescent girls often whitewash their narratives,

²¹ The myth of vulnerability is when "we imagine that people of certain groups or those having had certain experiences are so 'damaged' they cannot speak for themselves" (Cottle, 2002: 536).

²² See chapter one, p. 237, for Gilligan's description of a girl who does not want to acknowledge the dynamics of cruelty and exclusion in her peer group, maybe because she is directly implicated in maintaining them. Interestingly, it turns out to be Neeti, 'the perfect girl' (See chapter three, p. 149-150).

“choosing not to speak what is unspeakable” (Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 98). For example, despite obvious indications that Mary’s brief estrangement from her peer group because of internal group dynamics was still upsetting to her (it was one of her key memories of an ongoing adolescence), she refuses to question seriously the power struggles implicit between herself and her girlfriends. Even when talking about how much she hated the girl who caused the estrangement, she is quick to point out that this is wrong of her. More importantly, she does not want to acknowledge that this girl managed, even if temporarily, to fragment her social group because of already existing power dynamics. The girl claimed that Mary wanted to control the group, and Mary vehemently denies this because she thinks it would be wrong of her to want this control. Yet earlier in the story, she had alluded to the fact that, although everyone is ‘equal’, there is actually a *de facto* leader, her best friend Paula:

I don't know, it's just that Paula was kind of like the leader of our group, not that, I mean, like we don't have a leader because everyone's equal, just that she was everybody's friend and we all kind of became friends through her or something. And then she didn't want to hang out with me so much, not, I mean she never came out and said that, but like, I just got a sense and then some of the other girls, they were sort of, they started keeping their distance or whatever.

In this scenario, Mary struggles to accommodate her intuitive sense that friendships should be equal, with the fact that one of the girls is actually in a position of power vis à vis the others. But Mary herself claims that she does not desire this status. She is more than happy to go along and be the best friend of the girl with status. Similarly, with her family, although she is cognizant of the fact that her parents are more authoritarian than the parents of her non Asian friends, she would rather go along and not rock the boat, because she is close to her family and does not want to upset them:

But she's not, I mean she has this idea in her head, like of what a good girl is I guess, and it drives me crazy sometimes, you know? But overall, it's fine. Like I get along with my parents, I would say more than my white friends do, like we fight, but it's different. (Why?) because like I mentioned before, there's just things you don't do if you're from our culture, like you don't swear at your parents or yeah maybe you might fight with them, but then in the end like you kind of have to go along, because they're your parents and it's a respect thing.

Just as her peer group seems to have the power to position Mary as subordinate, so too does her family, by drawing upon a cultural narrative where obedience and respect are negotiating tools in the maintenance of familial security and love. Mary's voice seems muted in these negotiations; she does not seem to experience the same anger that both Shazia and Sarah express at different points about friends, family etc. Things seem to get filtered in Mary's narrative through an "everything's fine" storyline, and coupled with her willingness to be named by me, this remains one of the more troubling aspects of my encounters with South Asian girlhood.

2. Difficult Daughters: Working the Hyphens of Self and Other

Although feminists stress the importance of locating themselves in the research in order to trouble the categories of researcher self and subject Other, the actual practice of this can be quite a fraught negotiation for both parties. One of the more dangerous pleasures in both the interview and analysis stage was recognizing myself in some of the accounts. Researchers whose own identities are located in the margins are sometimes tempted to 'hear' the stories that resonate most for them as individuals. As Reay points out, "the affirmation of finding myself at the core of some woman's account contains enormous power. I can read my centrality where so often there has only been my partiality" (1996: 65). This is problematic, in terms of the co-optation of subjects' lives

through a discourse of sameness. It is also problematic because it implicitly Others subjects who do not tell the story that the researcher wants to hear. For example, some of the subjects that I interviewed did not have much to say about their adolescence and/or had not experienced either overt racism or subtle forms of Othering. Given that the central argument of this thesis is that adolescence is a key period of difference making, narratives that did not speak to the issue of racialization were problematic at best. I considered interviewing other subjects and only including these narratives supplementarily. Since my research is exploratory and does not aim to make definitive statements about racism in Canadian society, it made sense to augment my interview material with more stories of racialization, using the argument that although there are subjects who do not experience racism growing up, my research is interested in the experiences of people who have been racialized. However, this still seemed to be a kind of manipulation of my field data, as well as raising all the thorny issues of authorial control with which feminist researchers grapple. I felt uncomfortable with the idea that people's stories could be disposable in the context of my own work. Because their experiences did not fit the argument that I was making, I could – again, in God-like fashion - speak them out of existence, in effect, replacing their stories with ones that worked better and validated my arguments. Ultimately, I decided to use their narratives as an opportunity to challenge or interrogate my own assumptions: I felt that their stories might force me to work harder at identifying the subtleties of difference-making, and perhaps even deepen my own understanding of the relationship between *becoming* and *belonging*, along the lines of what Spivak describes as theory and practice bringing each other to productive crisis (Gilbert, 1997: 99).

One tension that arose out of the above stories was the possibility that subjects were being disingenuous about the experiencing of racism or difference. Krieger has a nice discussion of this when she describes feeling that some of her subjects were offering inauthentic definitions of themselves, and how this lack of authenticity compromised her own project of self (1985: 315-316). It was hard at such moments to distinguish my analytical position from my personal one. Reading the transcripts where subjects talk about how they had never experienced a moment of “feeling different”, I found myself feeling resentful and annoyed. Perhaps they were telling the truth, in which case they were immediately positioned in relation to myself and other subjects as privileged: their selves had never been compromised, they had never felt compelled to use strategies of resistance, denial or accommodation in order to belong. Or perhaps this was actually a strategy of denial, and they were glossing over their sense of difference because it was too painful to deal with. Reay points to the temptations of leaving a subject’s story out of the research because it threatens both the argument, but more importantly, the researcher’s sense of self. Although I chose to leave these stories in, the blurred spaces of self/other between myself and my subjects complicated a more direct representation of their experiences. Their untroubled racial identities called into question my own experiences of Othering. Like the paranoid subject position that I discuss in chapter three, I was attacked by a sense of insecurity over the “realness” of my own sense of being different. Maybe it had always been just ‘in my head’. The narratives of Aleena, Asha, Crystal and Anita actually engaged me beyond the status of a researcher/analyst: in such moments, I was just another racialized subject faced with an idealized narrative of national belonging whose powerful hegemonic status silenced me.

Ironically, these difficult stories have now made me question whether I worked hard enough to create a safe and comfortable space for subjects to speak. One of the dangerous assumptions with insider research is assuming that *subjects* actually recognize you this way (that is, through a narrative of sameness). When I look back on some of the more challenging interviews, I have to wonder whether my participants really felt comfortable enough with me to talk about experiences of racism. At the time, I felt a certain amount of aggravation: they had agreed to the interview with a general sense of the themes guiding the research, so why participate if they did not want to share their stories of race, or had no stories to share? But in the aftermath of the fieldwork process, I have to question how my subjects read *me*, not as a researcher, but as a South Asian woman. What self was I unconsciously representing to them that might have sabotaged their ability to speak about their experiences of Othering? Throughout the fieldwork process, I was intensely conscious of what Reay describes as the dangers of mixing one's personal history with those of one's subjects (1996: 57). After all, despite shared identity spaces, I was not interested in writing a "vanity text", and I did not want to talk about myself as a way of manipulating subjects into feeling close to me. But I have since realized that I invested energy in writing myself out of the research story only to be forced back in through a number of different channels.

My final interview was a particularly painful insight into the impossibility of minimizing or even erasing one's biographical presence in the field. During the fairly brief interview, Rose spoke about her shame at being different as an adolescent, but there was a wary, closed-off expression on her face, and she did not offer a great deal of detail on her adolescence. Although I tried drawing her out, I felt increasingly frustrated at her

short responses, and eventually concluded the interview with the sense that this encounter would not provide me with a great deal of material. After I had turned the tape recorder off, she asked me why I had chosen this topic. This was a question that I had been asked by only one other subject, and I had always assumed that the answer was self-evident (a second generation South Asian woman doing work on second generation South Asian women was surely more than a happy coincidence). When I explained this to Rose, and described my own adolescent experiences of Othering, her facial expression changed dramatically. She visibly relaxed, and then said that she had more to say and asked me to turn the tape recorder back on. I left that interview wondering why she had needed an explicit recognition of my Otherness in order to feel 'safe'. I was suddenly reminded that Anjana, the only other person to ask my reasons for doing the project, had expressed surprise that I had ever encountered issues of Othering; she had stated quite frankly that she saw my project of self as one that would be successful within mainstream Canadian society, thus rendering me relatively invisible within a racializing gaze. She had also expressed relief that, at the time, I simply read as the sense of having a shared experience in common. This brief discussion took place before the interview had started, and after my interview with Rose, I began to wonder whether my revelations had affected Anjana's narrative, allowing her to feel comfortable enough with me to talk about her own struggles. I did not discuss myself with any of the other subjects, and I now question whether those subjects who claimed that they had never experienced racism or Othering did so because they did not see me as a safe space. Perhaps my presentation of self contained its own denials of racism, and although I was not aware of it, those denials

were read and interpreted by other South Asian women in ways that precluded the kind of trust required in this particular research context.

3. From Lived Fictions to Written Ones: Authorial Control and the Issue of Interpretive Conflict

Etter Lewis, in her work on black women's life histories, describes the interview text as a site of interpretive conflict (1991). The subject has her own views on the structures, discourses and experiences that have shaped her life, and sometimes the researcher does not fully agree with these views. Although full transcripts are sometimes presented in research, the reader/audience of the text is usually offered decontextualized pieces of people's interviews, accompanied by the researcher's analysis. What this means in narrative terms is that the story is not read through the first person voice, it is told by an omniscient narrator who stands apart from, and to some extent, looking down on, the protagonist. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, my participants were not given my life story and asked to analyze it. However, they gave me their life stories, with the understanding that I would have something meaningful to say. However, their narratives were a spontaneous performance - a form of 'improv' if you like - while I was allowed the luxury of sitting back, watching, listening and then going through the transcripts at my leisure, endlessly mining them for information. Some of this information was what the subjects told me, some of it I gleaned from my own observations (for example, the embodied elements of the interview). But whether I was analyzing the structure of the narratives (the slippages, contradictions, uncertainties etc.), or the content (how subjects saw certain experiences as playing a part in shaping their identities), I was still making

judgements about their lives, and drawing conclusions that were, sometimes, in direct conflict with their own perceptions of selfhood.

For example, re-reading the notes of my interview with Aleena, I found myself keenly aware of the determining impact that her experience of sexual abuse had had on her racialized narrative of self. She constructs South Asian culture, in particular the Muslim community, in very negative and stereotypical ways, in stark contrast to her idealized version of White Canadian society. Despite this love affair with Canada, she has never really been involved with a white man, which would seem to be the most obvious transgression of her culture's values. Instead, her romantic relationships have been primarily with South Asian men, but oddly enough none of them have been Muslim. Although their South Asianness might be seen as a form of accommodation, Aleena complicates this by making sure that they are religiously different, knowing full well that for her family and community, dating a non Muslim would be just as problematic as a non South Asian. Her dating patterns become even more significant in light of the fact that despite her overt antipathy towards Muslim culture (the entire narrative is imbued with this), she is deeply conflicted over being/not being Muslim. She is still an active, if dissenting, member of her Mosque, she does not eat pork (even on the sly), and she claims that she would never want to have alcohol in her house (although she does drink at non-Muslim social gatherings). And throughout all of these tangled narrative threads around ethnicity/race, her sexual identity dominates; it weaves itself into almost every part of the narrative, drawing our attention to the profound confusion and self-judgement she experiences in her efforts to become a sexual subject:

I've never dated a Muslim person (What have they been?). Indian. Mainly Sikh (laughs). For some reason, I just end up (no white guys?). My first kiss was a white guy, but that's it. And he was a friend of mine, and we stayed friends, like it was when I was sixteen...I mean I really like sex...to this day, it's like the most important thing to me, like one of my cousins doesn't think it's anything and she's amazed that I think it's the most important thing, I feel like a guy when I say it. But it's seriously one of the most important things in my life. And um, I don't know why. And now that I'm older, this is the hardest part because I have to marry technically within my culture and he has to be Muslim, I'm having a hard time dealing with the fact that I need to know how they are sexually. It's so stupid, but it's such a giant part of my life. And I was just talking to my aunt who's 27, yesterday, and I was meeting someone to do something with last night (laughs), and I was like "you must think I'm so bad" and she was like "no, it's just amazing to me, because I don't think it's important at all, like I'm never the instigator, and I just look at you and I'm amazed because it's so important to you, and I guess people are different". It's so important to me. See in high school, I started doing it, and I was doing it with the wrong people, like I was bad.

My own sense is that Aleena's conflicted ethnic/racial identity is bound up inextricably with her early trauma. According to her, she has never experienced racism and has always felt that she belonged (in some ways much more so to the white mainstream than her own community). But her early victimization at the hands of a male relative has played a determining factor in how she reads race in her own life: she has constructed South Asian/Muslim patriarchal culture as the villain of the story, but her own fragility of self, both racially and sexually, leads her to seek out relationships continuously with men who occupy the subject position of South Asian man, *without* being Muslim. Her story is one of the most fascinating illustrations of the diverse ways in which "lives acquire race," not always through overt or even subtle practices of racialization, but through the intersecting of difference with individual experiences. However, she herself did not seem to recognize any of this in her story, and perhaps would be upset and offended by my analysis. It is particularly difficult as a researcher, in such moments, to offer an analysis of something as serious as sexual abuse, without

sounding either flippant or presumptuous. I am, therefore, deeply reluctant to give my interpretation in this context. Following Reay, this seems like a clear example of my falling prey to the seductions of “knowing better.”

The concerns of “knowing better” were also present during my analysis of the difficult narratives that I discussed in the previous section. Because of my own ambivalences, I worried that I was writing race/difference back into these narratives, regardless of whether or not it fit, what Reay describes as “appropriating the data to the researcher’s interests so that other significant experiential elements which challenge or partially disrupt that interpretation can be silenced” (1996: 65). What if I needed to find race/difference in these stories in order to justify both my research agenda as well as my own sense of self? What if, for some of these women, there was no story of *becoming/belonging* to tell? Perhaps my intuitive sense that their stories were whitewashed was simply a case of wishful thinking on my part. As Cottle points out, in any self/Other encounter, we run the risk of pushing our stories against the Other’s story, or demanding that she rethink her story in light of our stories (2002: 535). We have to be on guard against making the story of the Other what we want it to be, or hearing the Other as we wish to hear her, not as she wishes to be heard (2002: 536).

At the same time, as a researcher I cannot simply leave subjects’ stories hanging in mid-air, so to speak, with the assumption that there will be an obvious transparency to their lives. Furthermore, although it is important not to create a hierarchy of knowledge, wherein the researcher is positioned as knower and the subject as ‘known’, a neurotic fixation with this can lead to an unconscious reification of that most sacred cow of masculinist scientism: the belief in Objectivity. The subject’s knowledge is privileged

above the researcher's simply because she is the experiencing subject. However important it is to validate the experiential, if we privilege this uncritically we are assuming that subjects being interviewed have their own transparent understanding of the Truth, rather than recognizing that the selves of both researcher and subject are constructed through power relations. Following Burns, I also collude with certain discourses, power relations etc., some knowingly, some unconsciously, and undoubtedly my narrative has discrepancies, contradictions and moments of disruption that someone else might be able to see more clearly (Burns, 2003: 234). Although we resist, and sometimes re-shape the discourses positioning us, I assume that my subjects do not have any more power than I do to recognize and "transcend" all the power relations shaping our lives.

For example, Anita claimed never to have experienced feeling different in adolescence because she was Indian, yet she describes her adolescence as an unhappy time, and "not the high point of my life," because of the fact that her parents were very strict with her and her sister. It seems odd that she would not notice that she was different, when she clearly felt resentful that she was not allowed the same freedoms as other girls her age. Furthermore, she describes her high school as cliquy and full of rich popular kids, in relation to whom she was positioned as a geek. She claims that this had nothing to do with race, yet her own description of the popular crowd is unintentionally racialized:

The high school that we attended was a very cliquy high school, with majority of the people being um, a large portion of Jewish people...everybody had a group, and what you did and what you got invited to and what you didn't get invited to, and how popular you were was based on where you were socially... especially the girls in the popular crowd, you know they were all blond and tall and I suppose you would call them pretty, and you know they always had some guy on their arm, and you know they were all the cheerleaders, who were dating the

guys on the football team and it was kind of clichéd, but you know, and that's what you saw... (So you don't think even the whole cliqueism issue had something to do with being different?) n o, I t h i n k (long pause), h m m, I n e v e r thought about it that way before. (Long pause) yeah, I mean, to a certain extent, it may have. I'm not sure it was racially, I don't think it was, (Overt?) yeah, overtly. I mean, yeah, I think that all the, a lot of the Jewish girls hung around each other, the Jewish people hanging around each other, and they were, because they all knew each other outside of school, because they all went to Hebrew school together and they all, you know, all the families knew each other, so we all hung out in school, but ah, but whether that was a discriminatory thing, I don't think so, that was their social circle for most of their lives in school and their social life outside. Did I think that (pause), I don't know if I felt that I wasn't popular because I was brown, I mean I never felt that. Ever. I just thought I was not popular because I wasn't really good looking or had a great boyfriend or had all the freedom in the world to do whatever I wanted, or wore tight jeans, whatever it was. I didn't think it was because I was brown. (Okay) I mean I never thought that. Maybe it was. I don't know.

According to Best, even when we are not conscious of it, race categories are part of social interaction and talk, as one of the ways in which people make sense of, and experience, everyday life (2003: 897-898). Anita does not 'see' race, as least as far as her own difference is concerned. Yet at the same time, her identification of Jewish identity as a factor in being part of the "in-crowd", as well as her descriptions of the pretty girls who were all blond, suggests that on some level there was an awareness of difference. Perhaps, like Matthews' subjects who refuse to recognize racism as a tactic,²³ Anita has chosen to ignore any subtle racializing practices so that she can exercise greater control over her storyline. There is a strong individualizing tone to her overall narrative: she comes from an upper middle-class family background and is herself a doctor. She has clearly not been held back by systemic racism, and for many people, this is what comes to mind when they are asked to describe the experience of difference. She has not been a victim of systemic racism or overt everyday racism, ergo she is not different and has never been on the receiving end of any racializing practices.

²³ Please see chapter three, p. 136, for further discussion of Matthews' work.

These two examples do not represent the totality of my analytic problems, nor are they necessarily a template for all my subjects' stories. There were also subjects whose self-reflections were more consistent with my own sense of their stories. But I used Aleena and Anita's stories in order to highlight the difficult editorial decisions that researchers have to make during the analysis of their fieldwork. I see no way to get around this problem since "the data does not speak for itself" (Acker, 1991: 141). Part of my learning process has been to accept the responsibility of being the storyteller, and the power that this gives me in terms of shaping the reader's perceptions. It is an unequal relationship between myself and the subject that I do not choose to gloss over, by adopting, for example, a postmodern style of polyvocality. As Mascia Lees points out, the postmodern emphasis on multiple voices denies the existence of hierarchy, fostering the false notion that all voices are equal with each voice telling its own (equally valid) story (1989: 29). According to her, this "heteroglossia" that gives all voices the status of author replaces the view from nowhere, with the view from everywhere (1989: 29). Most importantly, far from taking away authoritarian voice, it only disguises it, rendering it invisible to the reader.

However, my analysis is also not simply authoritarian in the style of researchers who actively want to re-insert the privileged status of the author. I choose to view my method as a form of layering. Even if all participants do not have equal status, it is still a struggle around interpretation. The subjects' voices are present in the numerous excerpts that I provide throughout my analysis. Presumably, the reader will also have his or her own opinions about the text. Finally, as Reay points out, even for the researcher, there are many possible readings of an interview transcript, and we need to accept that

interpretation is always incomplete. Like the subjects that it seeks to represent/invent, a researcher's analysis is also *en proces*:²⁴ it is open to both external and internal criticism, questioning and revisioning, long after the ink is dry.

Conclusion

This chapter was an attempt to outline some of my experiences in the field, as well as engaging with some of the major debates in feminist qualitative methodology. I began by outlining some of the similarities between narrative and feminist methods, and the importance of combining these concerns in research such as mine, where the boundaries between researcher and subject are even more complicated by virtue of the my insider racial/ethnic status. I then went on to locate myself in the fieldwork process in a number of ways, keeping in mind Bourdieu's point that reflexivity is not the use of the first person voice; nor is it found in a text where the observer is caught in a moment of observation; instead it is subjecting the observer to the same critical scrutiny as the constructed object.²⁵ Aldridge describes the reflexive writing of a research account as a "poetics of sociology", and a moment where "the sociologist as creator of meaning [rather than]...apparent channeler of disembodied knowledge, can be made visible" (1993: 55). I hope that the above account has managed, at least to some extent, to achieve this, while at the same time setting up the final chapter of this thesis: the analysis of the fieldwork results.

²⁴ Here I am borrowing from Kristeva, who coined the phrase "*sujet en proces*" to describe what she calls the subject on trial (Kristeva, 1981: 167-169; 1980: 8).

²⁵ Cited in Reay, 1996: 60-61.

I recently received a phone call from the person who had set up the meeting between myself and Rose, the subject that I mentioned on page 273. I had only met Rose once (at the time that I interviewed her), but our mutual acquaintance had spoken to her, and apparently she had done a great deal of reflecting since our brief encounter. Some of our discussion had really challenged her to re-think her life experiences and question certain identity struggles, and she wanted to let me know, via this third person, that she was glad that she had met me and done the interview. As a researcher who cannot give back economically or politically to an “imaginary community”, I was quite touched. After all the soul searching that I have done in this chapter regarding my research process, I feel grateful that my research has on some level given something back, even if it was only to one person. One of the great benefits to narrative as theory and method is the agency that it offers subjects, in terms of discursively constructing or re-constructing their lives. The subjects I interviewed had the opportunity to tell me their stories, without interruption, and in doing so, perhaps some of them were able to reclaim or recover their racialized pasts. If the past both forms and deforms us,²⁶ then hopefully what I offered subjects in that brief time and place of the interview was the opportunity to talk back to some of the ghosts still haunting their projects of self.

²⁶ Please refer to end of chapter three for reference.

Chapter Six
Brown Girls, White Worlds:
Adolescence and the Making of Racialized Selves

Introduction

Throughout this thesis, I have asked certain key questions about the relationship between adolescence and race, specifically, how does age operate as a relation of power in the construction of racialized identities? Using Davies' concept of being spoken into existence through discourse, I have argued that periods such as childhood and adolescence are potentially significant in the making of racialized subjectivities, and need to be explored more explicitly as key biographical moments in the process of becoming different. To this end, I relied heavily on Knowles' contention that despite the use of biography in other areas of social theory, race theory has not taken up the important question of "how lives acquire race," through spatial arrangements, social practices and discursive positioning (1999: 130).

The final chapter of this thesis attempts to address the above concerns, through an analysis of qualitative interviews that I conducted with ten second generation South Asian girls and women about their experiences of adolescence. There is still not a substantial amount of in-depth research on the second generation South Asian experience in countries such as Canada or the United States. My rationale for conducting qualitative research was that in order to understand how culture works, it is necessary, as Hey points out, to scale down our gaze in order to try to understand how public meanings of power are produced and reproduced in the everyday (1997: 24). Using narrative as both theory and method, I examine the multiple ways in which subjects are racialized during the period of adolescence, through a dialectic of *becoming* and *belonging*. At a time when

peer culture is of prime importance, subjects have to negotiate “fitting in”, while simultaneously struggling with familial and community restrictions that compromise their attempts to belong to mainstream Canadian culture. At the same time, idealized notions of adolescence that are implicitly racialized continue to position them outside the imagined community of white Canadian national identity. Although the experiences of adolescence range from explicit acts of racism to experiencing no overt form of Othering, all ten subjects have lived difference in one form or another. As Knowles points out, one of the key aspects of race as a relation of power is that it sustains many forms of alterity (1999: 123-124). Even for those who have not been victims of either direct or indirect racism, the “interiority” of their lives has been profoundly shaped by the experience of being different.

Entering the Realm of the Narrated Self: a Brief Biographical Sketch of the Subjects

In chapter five, I outlined some of the key social markers of the ten subjects that I interviewed. However, each subject also has a story to tell about race, identity and adolescence, and their narratives are dominated by particular themes that represent the intersection of the personal with the social. In this section, I briefly describe the central themes in each subject’s story. In addition, based on the subject’s narration of her adolescence, I loosely divide the subjects into the following three categories: 1) those for whom race was ostensibly not a factor in their youthful negotiations with belonging 2) those for whom race was an indirect factor and 3) those for whom race was a direct and in some cases constitutive element in their construction of selfhood.

Group One: The Apparent Absence of Race as a Factor in Adolescence

Aleena (25): Pakistani, Muslim. Self defined as middle class (mother, government clerk; father, manufacturer). Grew up in Ottawa. Key themes: childhood experience of sexual abuse from a family member. Very happy adolescence, mainly white friends, major concern is the cultural restrictions continually placed on her by family/community. During adolescence and early adulthood, she engaged in mainstream adolescent practices without her family's knowledge. No experiences of racialization in childhood or adolescence.

Anita (34): Indian (Gujarati), Hindu Jain. Self defined as professional class, but parental occupations suggest upper middle class (mother, vice president of a marketing company; father, government civil engineer). Grew up in Ottawa. Key themes: adolescence as an unhappy time, lack of belonging based on her family's restrictions, as well as the social hierarchies of her high school. One experience of racism in childhood.

Asha (29): Indian (Punjabi), Hindu. Self defined as middle class (parents retired, used to be in government). Went to school in Ottawa but grew up in Aylmer. Key themes: parents' divorce as an infant, troubled relationship with mother during adolescence, particularly in terms of cultural demands to be a proper Hindu girl, alienation from South Asian community because of the stigma of divorce, mainly white or white ethnic friends during high school, only became part of an Indian crowd at university. Currently lives with father, having been asked to leave by her mother during university for financial reasons. One indirect experience of racism during childhood.

Crystal (28): Indian (North), Hindu, self defined as middle class (mother, administrative officer at national defense; father, revenue Canada, in computers). Grew up in Ottawa. Key themes: lack of South Asian presence in Ottawa, parents not as traditional as other South Asians, very little recollection of the specifics of her adolescence, but describes herself as outside the social mainstream of her high school. Main concern in adulthood is the negotiation of her Indian identity without sacrificing her more westernized sense of self. No experiences of racism in childhood or adolescence.

Group Two: The Presence of Race as an Indirect Factor

Mary (16): Indian (Goan), Christian, self-defined as middle class (mother, homemaker; father, accountant). Grew up in Toronto (Mississauga). Key themes: negotiating her parents' cultural demands with her desire to participate in mainstream adolescent activities, friendship dynamics with mostly white or non South Asian friends. Minority religious status (within the diaspora), has created a certain amount of alienation from Hindu, Muslim or Sikh narratives of South Asianness. Childhood and adolescent experiences of racism are hinted at but left vague, and are minimized as not having affected her in any significant way.

Sarah (17): Indian (North), Hindu/Sikh, self described as middle class, but parental occupations suggest lower middle class or working class (mother recently become a chartered accountant, father is a bus-driver). Grew up in Ottawa. Key themes: Father's alcoholism which affected the family on several levels, fairly happy adolescence with mainly white friends, friendship dynamics were a key issue, particularly her decision at the beginning of high school to break with old friends and become part of "the popular crowd". Very active in school (president of student council etc.). Her reflections on her concerns with popularity are constructed in terms of race and her desire to belong. Family cultural restrictions not much of an issue and as a result she engaged

in mainstream adolescent activities. No direct experiences of racism, but has seen others experience it. This prompted her to become part of an anti-racist project through the Ottawa board of education.

Shazia (18): Pakistani, Muslim, self described as middle class, but parental occupations suggest lower middle class or working class (mother works in retail, father is a driving instructor). Grew up in Ottawa. Key themes: difficult period of adjustment during adolescence when her father who was away for 3-4 years for work, returned home, strong tensions in narrative between trying to be an individual and familial/ community pressures to be a proper Muslim girl. Adolescence was alright, but characterized by conflicts with family over dress, conduct etc. Strong sense of distance from mainstream adolescent activities, identity struggles with friends and her own passiveness or shyness. Gender inequality was a major source of confusion for her. Strong pride in her ethno-religious identity. Post 9/11 awareness of Canadian multiculturalism and tolerance as being inconsistent, and feeling of resentment towards the treatment of minorities, particularly Muslims. No experiences of direct racism in childhood or adolescence, but a certain sense of difference, as well as having seen others experience racism. The latter led to her becoming part of the same anti-racist project in which Sarah is involved.

Group Three: Race as a Direct Factor in the Negotiation of Adolescent Belonging

Anjana (30): Indian (North), Hindu, self defined as middle to upper middle class (mother, physio-therapist; father, engineer). Grew up in Ottawa. Key Themes: although never having experienced direct/overt racism, race is the dominant theme in her story, strong sense of exclusion in childhood and particularly adolescence that has stayed with her into adulthood. Detailed memories of her sense of not belonging. Tensions between her resentment towards white Canadian society and her shame at being Indian. Parental cultural restrictions on her further exacerbated her sense of difference. Adolescence was a very negative period in her life and according to her has had a profound impact on her adult self.

Ritu (24): Indian (South), Hindu. Lower middle class. Grew up in Toronto (Mississauga). Key themes: direct experiences of racism in adolescence which have led to a strong bitterness and resentment towards Canadian society, as well as a fear of white Canadians on some level. Detailed memories of these experiences. Very difficult time negotiating parental cultural restrictions during adolescence and is still pressured to engage in standard cultural practices (i.e. no dating, arranged marriages etc.); very strong minority and South Asian presence at her high school, which she feels is the cause of the racism that she experienced. Other minorities (including South Asian), comprise her main set of friends in both high school and in adulthood. Certain amount of alienation from the South Asian identity because of internal regional/ethnic differences (she is South Indian and Malayalee) and the dominant diaspora narratives that privilege North Indian and Punjabi identities.

Rose (33): Indian (South), Christian. Self described as middle class, but parental occupations suggest lower middle class or working class (she is vague but describes them as being in labor). Grew up in Toronto (Brampton). Key themes: direct experiences of racism (although when asked she said that she did not really experience racism), which led to strong feelings of shame and internalized racism about South Asians. The advent of her mother's mental illness in adolescence was a very difficult time; had mainly white friends during adolescence, and did not discuss her racial ethnic background at all with them, and actually tried to hide it. Brampton has a large South Asian population and she feels that this is one of the main reasons why there was a lot of

intolerance. Not a great deal of pressure on her in terms of family cultural demands. Memories of adolescence are vague and not detailed. She recognizes a major shift in Canadian attitudes towards South Asians and this has resulted in her feeling more ethno-racial pride. This was also helped by her encounters in university with a South Asian community, although there is still a certain amount of alienation from the dominant diaspora narratives because she is both South Indian and Christian.

The above groupings are meant to indicate subjects' own versions of the role that race played in their experiences of growing up. It must be noted that my own interpretations are somewhat different.¹ Although I use these groupings as an indication of the subtleties of difference-making, it is my contention throughout this chapter that, to varying degrees, difference is a part of all ten subjects' experiences of adolescence, regardless of whether they themselves are aware of it or choose to admit to its presence.

The Role of Discourse in Subjects' Narratives of Self

In chapter three, I discussed the importance of discourse in the construction of selfhood, through what post-structuralist scholars call the process of subjectification. People's identities are constructed and represented through discourses (a collection of language and language-like symbols), that sustain and are sustained by relations of power operating in a given social, historical and cultural context. Second generation South Asian girls and women negotiate their identities through a myriad of complementary, competing and mutually incompatible discourses that shape their social contexts in ways that are often outside their control. However, if discourses produce certain types of subject positions, people do resist, respond to and (occasionally) re-shape these

¹ As I discussed at length in chapter five, this is part of the messy process of fieldwork interpretation, particularly in cases where the researcher's analysis of a subject's experiences differs significantly from the subject's own understandings. However, I want to emphasize again that my analysis is offered *alongside* subjects' own accounts. This is one of the reasons why I have included such lengthy excerpts from the interviews. By offering subjects a larger than usual space for telling their stories, I seek in some way to undermine the imbalance of power that is inherent to the fieldwork process.

discourses, and one of the ways in which this happens is through the narrative or autobiographical realm. While individuals are still subject to the constraints of discourse, there is a strong creative element to what McAdams calls the 'storying' of self in which people engage (1993). This creativity is strongly demonstrated in the diversity of accounts that exist within the subject position of "South Asian girl". The subjects that I interviewed shared many commonalities in terms of the discourses positioning them, but their responses varied a great deal with regard to the choices that they made within the structures that bound them.²

The following section examines the interplay between the discursive practices positioning subjects, and the ways in which subjects respond. I begin by identifying the broader discourses around nation, race and belonging that were part of subjects' narratives. These discourses emanate from mainstream Canadian cultural understandings of South Asianness, through state policies, media and everyday encounters with the Other. I also examine how context is articulated by subjects through what Gubrium and Holstein (1998) refer to as topicality or local reference in people's narratives. Subjects were well aware of the effects of economic, social and political changes on their own lives. Their stories, although necessarily parochial on some level, had a larger social dimension. This dimension ranged from pointing out the recent mainstream interest in South Asian culture to mentioning the impact of 9/11 on visible minorities. The presence of a broader social context in people's accounts offers a compelling argument for

² This is one important reason to study individuals in social contexts. Knowles, in her own research, found that "the ways in which individuals negotiate social processes shaping and racializing their lives produces some important differences and unevenness in the same categories of 'blackness' or 'British-Jamaicanness'" (1999: 125).

studying individuals through a sociological lens since, as Bruner points out, it offers insights into how ordinary people experience “big events” in history (1990).

Topicality and local reference also position the researcher as an insider to certain conventional understandings of culture and society. Such was the case when subjects discussed being South Asian. As an insider researcher, I found it interesting to see how subjects articulated certain cultural discourses through what McCoy (1995) calls a known-in-common scheme, where they assumed that I shared the same knowledge and understanding of South Asianness in a diaspora context. This was especially the case when they drew upon internal narratives of difference to frame the tensions within the diaspora over country, region, religion, class and caste.

Finally, I discuss both the dominant and shadow discourses of adolescence that subjects were either currently negotiating or had negotiated during their youth. Subjects’ familiarity with hegemonic narratives of adolescent *becoming/belonging* highlights Steedman’s point about the borderland lives of people for whom the dominant cultural devices do not work (1995). Both the girls and women had an uneasy relationship with the discourses of western adolescence. They displayed an intimate knowledge of youthful categories of difference, naturalized hierarchies, contradictory messages of fun, danger, sexuality, freedom etc. Some of the subjects attempted to position themselves within these discursive spaces, while others accepted that they were excluded; but most of the subjects showed a certain awareness that their projects of belonging were constantly being compromised by the racialized nature of their identities. Part of this awareness stemmed from the tensions between these dominant discourses and the marginalized or shadow discourses that I discussed in chapter three. Subjects’ accounts of adolescence

included constructions of both eroticized and undesirable Others; they also struggled with familial and community discourses on South Asian girlhood that they perceived as obstacles in their projects of *belonging/becoming*.

1. *'My Home and Native Land': 'Canadianness' in Girls' and Women's Narratives*

All the subjects identified several discursive practices used to construct certain groups and individuals as outside the imagined community of the Canadian nation. These cultural narratives were constraining forces for some subjects who were aware of their racializing nature, and either struggled against being positioned within these discourses or voiced resentment at their positioning. However, for others, these discourses represented resources; they used them casually, perhaps without recognizing their location in certain economic, social and political practices of exclusion:

Aleena (25): I don't consider myself Pakistani. I consider myself Canadian. (Have you ever been asked where you're from?). yeah, yeah. A lot of people. Like on the weekend I got my hair cut and the girl's like "Oh so where are you from?" and I said, I swear, my first answer was "I was born in Ottawa, so I've lived in Ottawa my whole life", and she said "oh no, I meant your nationality", and I said "oh my parents are from Pakistan", and I always say my parents are from Pakistan, I don't ever say I'm Pakistani. Which is true, they are, and I'm actually from Canada. So you know what I mean? (Does the question bother you?). Um, it makes me laugh. Because I'm like, what bothers me is, no it doesn't really bug me because when I say I'm Canadian, and people are like "no no no, what are you like really?" and I'm like, "oh you want to know where my parents came from then, because I'm Canadian". And even my parents are Canadian now, so you know what I mean? But um, no it doesn't bug me. I think people just want to know basically like, well I don't really know what they want to know by asking that. Like who cares where you came from? Like really. Who really cares?

Asha (29): I actually kind of think that when you live in a country or wherever you live, you should learn about the culture, adapt to it, and sticking hundred percent to your own roots and your own culture is not necessarily a good thing? In the sense that you don't open your mind, you don't allow yourself to integrate. For example, when I go to Toronto, um, there's a very strong Indian population in Toronto, and in Brampton, you can actually, I've met people who have emigrated from India, who work at an Indian store, so they can speak in Hindi because all their customers are Indian, they socialize in Hindi, and they speak Hindi at home, so they've never learnt a word of English, and they don't do anything outside of their Indian community because they have that comfort level

I guess. And I understand that socially you do tend to just do things that you're comfortable with, but I just think that you should also, if you're going to move to a country, if you've made the decision to emigrate, you also have to understand that with that comes change. And you have to adapt, because it changes your values and it changes who you are.

Mary (16): I don't notice these things much to tell you the truth. I don't think they matter that much anymore. Like Canada is a multicultural country right? And everyone is an immigrant here, except maybe the Indians, I mean like the natives.

The above quotes offer a number of competing stories about race, nation and South Asianness in the Canadian context. Aleena's account is a standard part of Othering discourses in western nations. Through the question "where are you from?" or "what is your nationality?" the speaker implicitly positions the hearer as not belonging. Aleena tries to deny this, but there is clearly tension in her account. She would like to believe that this is simply a well-meaning request for information, that because she feels totally Canadian she is accepted as such. But she is also aware that although she does not care about this issue, obviously others do. However, Mary and Asha's accounts seem to contradict this seeing of difference; they draw upon a narrative of Canada as a multicultural country, where difference is not noticed anymore and everyone is an immigrant except for the native population. In this scenario, it is immigrants who need to learn to adapt and adjust, and those who do not (like the South Asians in Brampton), are not really trying to be part of the 'Canadian family'.

Alternatively, Crystal and Anjana, in the following quotes, choose to recognize that 'Canadians' do view certain groups as outsiders, but they consciously distance themselves from these outsiders, through the use of racialized phrases such as "backward", and "off the boat", and also through generation, by constructing an *immigrant* subject as the only likely victim of racism (because of his/her obvious

difference in speech, accent, clothes etc.). To this end, Crystal draws on a neo-conservative discourse of employment equity programs, where to be a visible minority is actually to be privileged in this society. The distancing taking place in both these accounts points to subjects' own awareness of their location in a category (i.e. second generation South Asians), that is, following Abrams, "a new configuration" of social action and historical experience (1982: 255). As I pointed out in chapter four, one of the pivotal social relations defining these particular subjects is generation. South Asian immigrants' developmental experiences of *becoming* are situated in a radically different racial/ethnic context from subjects who grow up in contexts of difference. Furthermore, second generation subjects are aware of their liminality, that is, the tensions around being part of an immigrant family/community, without being immigrants themselves:

Anjana (30): ...some of these people were more backwards than my parents were! I mean I went to Hindi school growing up...a lot of the teachers and the aunts were like really, like you know like off the boat, like I'm not saying if you wore a sari you were off the boat, but their English wasn't that great and they just, they were from a different era.

Crystal (28): (Okay. So did you experience racism?) No... I think a part of that is because I'm female...and I think the other thing is that I don't have the accent, I know nothing about the religion (laughs), I'm totally not your typical Indian person, like one that would be, 'cause I mean when you don't know the religion, when you don't know the language, when you don't have the accent, what's left except for the skin color really (okay, but the skin color is what...) yeah, yeah, the skin color could but it actually hasn't done anything, actually I think it's worked more to my advantage (laughs). (What do you mean?) oh just in terms of scholarships and stuff, because they're always trying to promote like visible minorities and women in engineering so, in terms of that aspect and probably even in terms of jobs, cause I mean when you go for an interview, and people have got like a choice of like three females, they're obviously gonna wanna try and boost their minority percentage, right? So it's probably worked out better for me.

What is also intriguing about all the above stories is the colonial sub-text inherited by subjects. Here subjects are unconsciously drawing on both the Canadian imaginary, as well as a larger history of European colonialism, and perhaps more specifically at times, British imperial rule in India. For example, Mary's clarification of Indian and Native

brings to mind one of the more obvious moments of mis-naming in the history of colonialism. Similarly, the rhetoric that is part of Asha's criticism about immigrants who do not integrate reconstructs relations between natives and outsiders through the myth of voluntary belonging. It denies both the potential reasons for this type of ethnic ghetto, such as racializing practices in housing, lack of security or safety for South Asian immigrants during the eighties, as well as the history of British presence in countries such as India, where the colonizers made absolutely no effort to "integrate", and in fact created a miniature version of "home" through geographical and social segregation.

Finally, the backwardness/lack of English of Anjana's immigrant 'aunties' mirrors the backwardness/lack of English of 'ignorant Indians' under British rule. It is also one of the ways that colonized Indians maintained (and continue to maintain) class and caste distinctions amongst themselves. Anjana and her family are still located in this colonial narrative, where the most cultured and sophisticated Indians are those who speak English with a certain 'educated' accent and are worldly (i.e. westernized). Anjana herself recognizes this. Even as she uses the discourse of the colonizer, she is aware of its racist history:

Anjana (3): If you see my Father at an Indian party when there are no Sindhis around, say he's w/ Punjabis or Gujaratis, or other people, and they speak in Hindi, he will speak back to them in English. A Punjabi greets him and he'll speak to him in Hindi, my father will not talk back, he will only speak to you in Hindi if you're an older woman, like, a Mother, a Daadi or a Naani, and like you don't speak English. Otherwise if you're a man or you're a woman he'll speak right back to you in English so, even though he's talking to one of his own people... for an Indian the status symbol, at least for their generation, was to be as British as the British. It was that love/hate relationship, you hated them for conquering you, but on the other hand they were the white masters who did it, so speaking their language and speaking it better than they spoke it, was the ultimate for an Indian. Times have changed, but I'm saying, back in the fifties and sixties, when they were growing up, that was the thing to do.

While the above subjects found various ways of denying their difference or distinguishing themselves from those who would be constructed outside the space of the Canadian nation, others were more critical of the illusions of sameness that simply serve to disguise how certain groups are positioned differently in relation to 'Canadianness'. Their narratives must be read against the previously mentioned stories, whose content is driven by the hegemonic nature of race discourses in Canadian society. The stories of Asha, Crystal, Anjana, Mary and Aleena are filtered through the lens of what Gubrium and Holstein describe as narrative rights and control (1998: 179): these subjects offer acceptable immigration/minority stories that mesh with dominant discourses of race and nation. In sharp contrast, the stories of Shazia and Sarah cannot be absorbed into the central story of belonging; following Steedman, they are both its disruption and its essential counterpart (1995: 10-20):

Shazia (18): I feel that people need to expand their horizons and educate themselves before they make judgments...like the comments are always like "oh well, South Asian people always eat this kind of food", or South Asian people do this or whatever. Like that character on The Simpsons, Appu, like all South Asians own convenience stores, South Asian people are always taxi-drivers, things like that. Yeah.

Sarah (17): ...though Canada claims to be so multicultural and you know I still think that there is still that part of the fact that there are differences... by the way you look, like if you're Indian or if you're brown-skinned or black and people notice it, but I guess, like in the workforce, I'm sure there's still discrimination, you know with the government, they're trying to increase the number of immigrants, like the number of colored-skinned people in their workforce, and just how like, we have a friend of my mum's who works in the government and he told us how like they were taking their group shot of their department, and they put him right in the center, just kind of showing like "look, we have a brown person, we have a non-racialized white in our group"... I think it's still, there's still the whole stereotypes of Indian people and there's still the stereotypes of Asians and Chinese that are forever gonna be there...but I think living in Canada you also experience different cultures and religions and stuff... Canada isn't just a country for white people, it's a country for all... it's always something me and Anjali would talk about, like what does it mean to be Canadian, like does it mean that you're just a racialized white, well I don't think so. And even now, from the beginning of time, like from World War I and World War II, and the different ethnic backgrounds that participated in the war and it wasn't just white men, and we're not just a white man's land.

Unlike the earlier quotes, the above subjects tell a radically different story of the Canadian nation. Both these subjects engage in what I described in chapter three as a 'voice-over'; that is, the explicit interrogation and re-visioning of dominant discourses by minority subjects. In the above accounts, both Sarah and Shazia *use* the discourse of racialization to convey 'subversive' information.³ They actually draw upon various tropes of race in order to talk about racism. Shazia raises the stereotypes of South Asians with me in order to criticize White Canadians who stereotype South Asians. Sarah more directly challenges the discourse of multiculturalism, by mocking the tokenism of whiteness. She also challenges the assumption that Canada is a white nation through a deconstruction of dominant historical discourses. Between the lines of her discussion, we can read the shadow presence of national events such as Remembrance Day celebrations for fallen Canadian soldiers. She implicitly re-inserts difference into this white-washed history: the history of Others who fought and died alongside these soldiers that is not generally recognized in mainstream narratives. These counter-narratives affirm Smith's point that cultural ideologies always contain spaces of paradox and contradiction; according to her, "while they threaten hegemony, they remain vulnerable to leakages, to fractures along fault lines" (1987: 51).

Below is another story from the margins that challenges the official story of Canadian multiculturalism. Ritu's 'voice-over' is the harshest condemnation of the illusion of tolerance. She contrasts the direct racism of the U.S. with Canada's 'smiling racism' and is unable to 'buy into' the happy family story. As a result, she narrates a

³ Several scholars have discussed the diverse ways in which marginalized groups and individuals use language to convey subversive information. For example, Etter Lewis (1991) describes black women's use of the vernacular when talking about experiences of racism. Similarly, Fischer suggests that ethnic fiction as well as biography draws upon humor, irony, inter-textuality and a number of other literary tools to express dislocation and displacement (See Salazar, 1991; Rosaldo, 1993; Etter Lewis, 1991; Fischer, 1986).

story of Canada and 'Canadians' that speaks to a profound bitterness and lack of trust, dictated in large part, by her personal experiences of racism:

Ritu (24): I think Canada is one of the most racist countries in the world, I think that Canadians have what I would call hidden racism, where most Canadians, even minority Canadians who have grown up here seem to think that there's absolutely no racism here and how are you ever going to solve the problem of racism unless you recognize that it exists. I mean there's this whole racial profiling in the police dept., I mean what idiot thinks that there's no such thing as racial profiling? Only Canadians. I don't like Canadians very much. I prefer the kind of racism they have in the United States, where it's open, it's upfront, "I know I'm racist, I know you're racist, I know you really hate me", it's like you're living in a lie in Canada. I mean I've just gone through one of the worst processes, with the whole job hunt, of course no Canadians will acknowledge "Oh no it's just a job hunt" like the way the system works, for second year law students trying to get internships, you send out your resume, they judge you on your resume and your marks, which is awesome, and all these minority students got what are called On-Campus Interviews, twenty minute interviews with different law firms. So minority students were getting 10 OCIs, 15 OCIs, their white friends with lesser marks, lesser resumes, did not have as many OCIs. But after the OCI process, you get called into the firm for a big interview, and minority students, from 15 OCIs to 1 real interview. 'cause once they see us and talk to us, its like "oh well, she's a short little dark girl", we prefer the tall white guy, right? It was shocking how minority students were just shafted in the process (So the white students ended up getting...) they all got jobs, and um, brilliant brilliant minority students, great on paper, and great in interviews, were just not white enough... So yeah I think Canada's one of the most racist countries in the world, smile at your face, stab you in the back. That's Canada, and Canadian people.

Ritu's anger in the above excerpt is raw; it jumps off the page at the reader. It also offers a counterpoint to Crystal's idealized account of employment equity practices (p. 293). For Crystal, the government policy of employment equity is meaningful: its discursive weight equals its material weight, and the social practices that must necessarily accompany it. Conversely, Ritu is deeply cynical about the discourse of equity as it plays out in practice. She believes that, at least in her field, the lip-service paid to equity does not translate into actual benefits for minority candidates on the job market. Furthermore, even when minorities do make it 'in', she argues that they are still excluded in ways that are not even obvious to those occupying economic and social privilege:

Ritu (24): Law is one of the worst, it's actually, they say that the legal profession is twenty ages behind every other profession in terms of racial equality. Because they really do prefer the big white guys, it's an old boys' club. Lawyers are real bastards, real bastards. Even the first year of law school, I hated it.... most of them are real bastards. And they don't know they're bastards because they're Canadian and they're all boys, so they don't understand that they're racist. (Do you still encounter racism now?) oh yeah, but direct? No, because I'd have to think about it, so no I guess not. I guess it's more the way they look at you, and the way they don't include you in their little fun and games. Like if you're in a firm, they'll ask all the white guys, if you're articling or summering there, to go out for drinks. But they'll exclude not just the women, but also the minorities. But I guess it's not, you can't prove it, it's not direct, no one's calling you Paki, because these are law students, so they know that they can get into trouble (laughs). (So it's subtle) it's absolutely subtle. And the problem is that they themselves don't realize it. That's the thing.

There is a strong argument to be made for the connection between individual experiences of racialization and a subject's willingness to speak directly to the issue of racism. Sarah and Shazia, while not experiencing direct racism, have seen others go through it and this coupled with their own subtle negotiations with belonging has led to them narrating Canadian multiculturalism as perhaps having a long way to go before difference is erased. Ritu is the only subject to have experienced quite severe racism growing up, and I read her 'voice-over' as a defense against the obliteration of selfhood that would otherwise occur if she internalized the Othering of those experiences. The Canada in which *she* has grown up has been brutally racist; it has attempted to speak her into existence not simply as an Other, but as an object of degradation.⁴ The result of this is not simply that she hates Canada and 'Canadians', but that she *needs* to hate them, needs to 'voice-over' their story, in order to speak them out of her narrative of self. 'They' cannot have power over her, the power of (mis)naming, otherwise any sense of positive self would disappear. As I will discuss further on this chapter, if we contrast

⁴ Actually, there is a marked contradiction between her characterization of the polite racism of 'Canadians' and the overt racist incidents that she describes from her adolescence. I will be discussing the details of these incidents later on in the chapter but they consist of racial epithets, refusals by peers to sit next to her because she "smelled bad" (of curry), and even being spit on by skinhead youth at her school.

Ritu's response with Anjana's, we can see the potential for this erasure to occur. Anjana, while not experiencing direct racism, has been Othered in various ways growing up, and her story of self has been so indelibly marked by difference that her narrative has elements of both deep resentment and internalized racism.

Conversely, if we return to the stories of Crystal, Aleena, Asha, and Mary, we notice that the first three have never experienced direct or indirect racism, and ostensibly do not feel the presence of racializing practices in their lives.⁵ Crystal, Asha and Aleena do not need to use the strategy of 'voice-over' because their worlds are *apparently* race-free: by foregrounding their strong Canadian identities, they succeed in back-grounding difference; they do not, however, manage to erase it completely.

2. Topicality and Local Referencing in Subjects' Accounts

As Franzosi points out, sociologists should be interested in narrative as theory and method for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that it reaffirms the link between the particular and the universal, between the canvas of sweeping historical changes and the minutiae of everyday lives that are affected by these larger changes (1998: 549). This link was present in some subjects' references to 'the big picture': for example, Shazia makes references to her changing sense of belonging as a Muslim, in the climate of fear and suspicion that developed after 9/11. Similarly, Sarah's description of a series of disturbing racist incidents at her school between Jewish and Somali kids suggests that recent trends in immigration have affected who is seen as not being part of the Canadian imaginary.

⁵ According to Mary, she has experienced "some name calling", but she claims that this does not bother her.

Examining the effects of such social, political and economic shifts on individual narratives of *becoming/belonging* was one of the reasons that I chose to interview subjects across the categories of adolescence, young adulthood and adulthood. I wanted to explore how, if at all, changing economic, political and social contexts might affect personal narratives of *becoming* and *belonging*. For example, all three adolescent girls seemed to accept the discourse of Canadian multiculturalism as a given, and as part of what determined their social contexts. Shazia also pointed out that overt racism was something that was perhaps a little taboo for her generation, and although we may take this with a grain of salt, it reflects, at the very least, subjects' own perceptions of social change. As another example, Mary describes a boy liking her and having to tell him that she could not date because of her family. When I asked whether this was a problem for him, she replied that people 'know' enough about South Asian culture not to be surprised by these types of things:

(Was he mad when you first told him?), no not at all, like he didn't understand exactly, but I just told him that's my culture, and he sort of got it, because like everyone knows about like how Indian culture is more strict about things like that (you think people know?) oh yeah, like you see that on the news all the time, like Muslim girls have to cover themselves, and stuff. I mean obviously I don't have to cover myself because we're not Muslim, but there's some similar things. Like I wouldn't say we go to the extreme like other Indians do. But yeah, there's rules, right? So whatever.

Similarly, Ritu, Anjana and Rose all pointed to the changing perceptions of South Asian culture in Canadian society, which they saw as a noticeable shift from fear, intolerance and ignorance to the idea that South Asian culture as almost being fashionable or trendy. Both Ritu and Anjana suggested that girls growing up either shortly after them or now would have a very different experience in terms of belonging:

Anjana (30): I didn't see any outright racism, although I knew it existed amongst South Asians. Um, but yeah I think it did affect me because I think that we were not properly represented in the media, or in any form in terms of high level ranking positions in this

country or in the west I should say. Whereas you still did see Orientals who were represented in the media, whether it was stereotypical or not, they were still represented, as well as blacks, but then again, blacks have a different history because they've been here so they were fighting a different battle from us. I think we were not necessarily fighting racism because on a per capita basis South Asians do probably in the top 2% of this country, compared to any other ethnic minority. But it was a different racism we were fighting, it was a racism of recognition... I think what I see, that the Indian girls growing up here, it's now cool to, you know, I see I see it's a lot cooler to be Indian 'cause I think there's a lot more ethnicity and a lot more ethnic people coming in and a lot more immigrants coming in from poor countries who don't know any better how to assimilate quickly, therefore they show their ethnic background, and so I think Indians are feeling a lot more comfortable in showing their ethnic diversity as well.

Ritu (24): now, it's changed, and my cousins now, my seventeen year old cousins, who've gone through the same system, they don't think there's any racism in Canada, Canadians are so nice, and we should all get along, totally different attitude, and it's exactly seven years between my sister, me and Mena, my little cousin. So it's so weird to see how things have changed (Was it all the same school?). Chechi went to the same school, Mena went to another school which is in the area so (Did your sister have the same types of experiences as you? Because yours were really bad) No, I don't think there were enough brown people in the school at the time. I mean I'm sure she has stories, but mine were bad ... that's what happened with the younger generation now, where it's cool to listen to Punjabi Bhangra music, and oh okay, I just went to my Osgoode formal, and I wore a Salwar suit, and yeah I know I kind of stood out, but then some guys were wearing kilts, so people were like "Oh that's a nice outfit", so it's different.

Rose (33): I guess when I was younger, I felt like maybe I had to hide that part of myself, not stress it, you know, I just kept it hidden, and I guess I felt a little, embarrassed you could say? (pause) It wasn't cool to be Indian, like I find now it's so different, like people really get into it, and they're interested in different cultures, and Indian food and stuff, they go to Indian restaurants, like Canadians go now, not just other Indians I find now that even on TV and stuff, before if there was an Indian, he would be, I don't know, like it was a stereotype or something, like the accent or whatever. But now I find it's not like that, like you see Indians on TV and represented normally, like they don't have accents and they're not, they're more just like other people. (Okay, anything else?) Just I guess that there's more acceptance now, I find people are very interested in finding out about my culture, and they ask me questions. Like at my wedding, I had told the DJ not to play any Indian music, right, but then he did anyway, like he played Bhangra, and you should've seen my white friends! They were so into it, and dancing and they were asking me questions about it, whether I knew the music and everything!

All three subjects point to significant changes in Canadian society, in terms of how South Asians are perceived. This returns us to Abrams' generational distinction: it may be the case that the offspring of recent South Asian immigrants experience their

adolescence quite differently because of the changing discourses around South Asianness. Do they then constitute a separate generation? According to Ritu, they do: she points out that the generation previous to hers (her sister's) had it easier because there were hardly any South Asians around and the generation right after her (her little cousin's) was accepted, whereas she was from a period in-between where the South Asian population had grown, but this was seen as threatening to the white population. In Ritu's narrative, we can actually identify three sociologically significant generations, within the category of "second generation South Asian girl", or at the very least, what Abrams describes as "consequential differentiations *within* generations" (1982: 262).

It is interesting to see how people live the changes that have been documented by researchers of South Asian diasporic history. The above accounts demonstrate a strong awareness on the part of the subjects, of the perceptual shifts in dominant culture, where 'Canadians' now eat in Indian restaurants, listen to some of the music and have an awareness of some of the rituals of South Asian culture. It is also worth noting that different subjects narrate these changes differently: Ritu is resentful and cynical about this sudden acceptance; Anjana is pleased but realizes that it cannot really change her own history of exclusion and sense of inferiority; it seems to have had the biggest impact on Rose, who now feels able to embrace her culture and feel proud of being South Asian, because the dominant culture no longer stigmatizes it.

3. Intra-Ethnic Differences: Deconstructing the Category of South Asian

One key observation I made during the interviews was that the category “South Asian” was not particularly meaningful to most of the subjects. Apart from Shazia, none of the subjects used this term, choosing instead to refer to their ethno-racial backgrounds in terms of country, region and/or religion. This suggests that the labeling of certain groups as “South Asian” has occurred through dominant discourses of difference, and has been taken up by the literature on South Asians heuristically in order for researchers to be able to speak to the similarities of experience across national, regional and religious differences. However, it is clear that despite the homogenizing gaze of dominant Canadian culture, internal diasporic differences have not disappeared, and remain a central aspect of both immigrant and second generation identities:

Rose (33): I guess at university, I met a lot more Indians, and like especially North Indians and Punjabis, it's so different if you're from the North, like I find they're so into their culture and they listen to the music and watch the films and everything, so I started feeling maybe it wasn't, I don't know, maybe more proud about it. But I mean I still didn't meet a lot of South Indians, Malayalees, and it's different, you know what I mean? Especially if you're Christian.

Ritu (24): North Indians versus South Indians it's one of the hardest matches... his family's Orthodox Punjabi Brahmin and that means that they are so narrow minded, his mum had to change her name when she got married. Her first name! because it wasn't good enough for the family, so then the girl marries into the boy's family. But we're Nayers, so we're strong women, so it's different, the guys marry into our family. I will not change my name, and I won't change my last name. I want my kids to have ___ as their last name [her last name], instead of his last name (laughs). So it's tough. And I'm not gonna cover my head when I get married. Because Punjabi women always cover their head, even Hindu, it's a Punjabi thing. So I'm not going to do it because it's not a Malayalee thing.

Mary (16): like I can date too, I guess if I wanted to, but like maybe he would have to be Goan. And Catholic. (Are your parents strict about that?). No, I wouldn't say that, they're not like Hindus or I don't know, like Muslims, the way they are with their kids, like “oh my god, you can't even talk to boys or look at them and you have to cover up or whatever”. Well, not Hindu as much, but Muslims are like that, like I know Muslim people and they're so totally like that, you know what I mean? Anyways, and they stick to themselves, but my family's not like that. Like my parents have some white friends and stuff and it's no big deal, it's no big deal at all... Okay, well I'm not saying, like I'm not

being racist or anything, I just find that like Indians always stick to themselves, within their own little groups, right? Like if you're Punjabi, you hang out with other Punjabis, Hindu, other Hindus, Muslims, dah dah dah. (and you don't think Goans are like that?) No, well a bit, like obviously my parents know other Goans and stuff, but I don't know, I'm just saying, like maybe it's different. Like my cousin married this white guy and you would never see that happen with Hindus or Muslim, well like it happens, but you get totally ostracized or something.

Crystal (28): Honestly, because all my friends in universities, they were all like dating, Muslim, Hindu, whatever, but in the end, all the Muslims were like "it'll never work because you're not Muslim", right? So they all broke up and they all married Muslims because that's the way they are, they wanted the religion to stay, right? And it's not recognized if you don't convert, and so that worried me.

There is a noticeable continuity in the above quotes, with regard to the positioning of certain regional, religious or ethnic differences. Punjabis (either Hindu or Sikh), are singled out by Mary, Rose and Ritu, and identified through a series of both negative and positive images: Punjabis are sexist and overly clannish, but they are also much more proudly Indian than other South Asians. Muslims are also constructed through the image of clannishness or exclusivity, but more strongly linked to the issue of gender inequality that is part of both diaspora and dominant Euro/American discourses on Islam.

Similarly, Ritu's account hints at the problematics of belonging within the subcontinent, through regional hierarchies. The dominance of North over South in India re-asserts itself in diasporic spaces, so that subjects such as Ritu, Rose and even Mary feel to some extent that they cannot participate fully in the recent celebration of Indianness that is mainly ascribed to Punjabis and North Indians. This is also complicated by Mary's and Rose's minority religious status. Ironically, although their Christian/Catholic identity gives them more in common with 'Canadians', they are positioned as marginal within the authenticity narrative that Maira (2002) identifies as

being part of *Desi* youth culture.⁶ In this narrative, to be part of the Christian minority means that you are an Other vis à vis the dominant religious identities of the diaspora (Hindu, Muslim and Sikh). These differences are still taken very seriously by immigrant populations and whether or not this is also the case for the second generation, clearly these distinctions are still part of the rule-based world of belonging to their communities:

Mary (16): my mom says that's the way Punjabis are, they're always like that, they just stick together (are you friendly with them?)... I don't want to say it because it sounds bad but, they're just very, like I think maybe they think they're better than other people. (how do you know they think that?) um I don't know obviously, but you can just tell from the way they act, like I know that sounds bad, it's just I find, like they're very, like if you're not Indian and even if you are but you're not Sikh then you just wouldn't fit in because they're so into that whole cultural thing. And like I guess I find it annoying because some of the girls, they think they're so all that (so you don't feel comfortable around them?) I guess not, because I'm Christian right, and I think they look down on anyone who's not Punjabi or Sikh, like they think they're better or something. But that's just the way Punjabis are, right? Like I've talked to other Indians who think exactly the same thing as me, like we notice that they're just like that.

Ritu: Actually that's another thing. Our family friends are all Malayalee Christians. But you can't marry them, right? So, and the Malayalee Hindus, we never got along with them, we go to their functions, but my parents never really liked them.

All the above quotes offer a nice illustration of what race scholars describe as the transnational nature of diasporic identities. The differences of caste, class, religion, region and country do not disappear simply because immigrants are re-positioned as South Asian within Canadian society. For second generation subjects, some of whom have never even been to 'the homeland', these differences are still part of their ethnicized identities, as they draw upon stereotypical notions of Otherness that are internal to the South Asian diaspora.⁷

⁶ Please see chapter four, pp. 201-208, for a more detailed discussion.

⁷ The presence of these differences also challenges Abrams's point about the "radical" nature of a sociological generation (1982). Although I find his discussion extremely useful and have used it in the thesis, I do not find him attentive to either the contradictions or continuities within a sociological

4. *Girlhood and Its Others: Discourses of Idealized Adolescence*

According to theorists such as Lesko (2001), Cohen (1999), Best (2000) and Griffin (1993), modern western adolescence has been constructed as a period where subjects are caught in the nether region between childhood and adulthood. I would describe this in-between-ness as a form of suspended subjectivity. There is an intense concern with 'fitting in' to peer culture, whose arbitrary rules for belonging are determined through a complex set of variables that are linked with, but not reducible to, relations of power such as gender, class, sexuality and race. This concern must be tied back to the lack of ontological certainty of the adolescent identity: subjects caught in a seemingly endless state of *becoming* want to *belong* somewhere in order to construct some sort of stable identity space, where they are named within the social gaze as 'someone', at least temporarily.

I argued in chapter three that adolescence, for racialized subjects, may be a period where they are not only struggling with ontological uncertainty, they are also beginning to realize their marginality from the dominant storylines of belonging. If cultural narratives construct youth through metaphors of excitement, fun, sexual awakening, emotional instability, danger, madness etc., how are these narratives lived by racialized subjects? To what extent do dominant discourses on youth structure youthful experiences of difference? Both the girls and women that I interviewed were aware of the mainstream stories of youth. They drew upon them at various times in order to narrate their own experiences, either as similar to the norm, or as completely different. But all the subjects shared a commonality in terms of their "catalogue of images" (McAdams, 1993:

generation. Can a generation not be both "revolutionary" and conservative (in terms of reproducing certain social norms)?

63). Again, these images can be broken down roughly into two main intersecting categories: *becoming* someone and *belonging* somewhere. Subjects' understandings of adolescent selfhood used the developmental model of identity crisis: they talked about this 'life changing' period of immaturity/maturing, sexual awakening, growing up, ups and downs, challenges, 'first' experiences (first kisses, first dates etc.), independence/dependence and 'figuring out who you are'. The events and experiences that characterized adolescence were framed in terms of belonging: intense friendships, fitting in, popularity, high school hierarchies, proms, partying, drinking, dating etc. Regardless of whether subjects actually felt like they could situate themselves in this set of experiences, all of them at various points drew upon this dialectic of *becoming/belonging* to describe adolescence:

Asha (29): school was very cliquey... there was always peer pressure to fit into a certain crowd, whereas I guess you could say I was a bit of a floater? Like I had friends in high school but I associated with two or three different groups, I never really attached myself to any one particular group (Was that by choice?) I guess I just made friends, um, I was never really concerned about fitting in, um, I had some friends that were, I guess you could call the loser's group (laughs), um, and I had my friends and I hung out with them. I also found though that as I went through high school, I grew apart from them because I got more involved with the yearbook and student council activities, which I really liked, I liked that social part of thing... So I had made friends with the student council people, but I also didn't really fit in with them because they were also the rich Jewish kids in school, who all you know, they had all their inside jokes from um, I guess Sunday school and summer camp and all that, so I never quite fit in there. But you know, I would hang out with them and do stuff together, and I guess I just had friends who were part of that sort of I guess middle stream, um, and they were friends like me as well in the sense that we just associated with people and we didn't particularly belong to any particular group. Um, so I didn't feel pressure to fit into one particular group because I didn't feel like I really (long pause), I guess you could say, had a home? With any one particular group?

Crystal 28): Yeah, I didn't date in high school, I wasn't exactly the best, ah, I didn't get along with everyone. I was like the big geek...you know, all those divisions are so not relevant later (in adulthood, you mean?), yeah. I mean they're not there anymore. (Why do you think that is?) I have no idea, it's kind of funny though (laughs), you know, like wow it all just gets wiped clean, as soon as you get to university, well maybe not as soon as, well, yeah, 'cause in university I didn't see any sort of divisions. (Did you see them in childhood?) um (pause) yeah, a little bit. Yeah, yeah. But I think it was more prevalent in middle school and high school. (And you don't know why) yeah, I can't understand why, I really don't know, I figure, that's just the way it is, 'cause it happens everywhere. (yeah,

it's pretty common in high school). *Yeah, I don't know why. I would say like the mainstream were like the ones who had all the parties and they'd be all dating each other, you know, it was like Melrose Place⁸ or something like that (laughs), that's how I saw my school, because it was actually in a very affluent area in Ottawa, so they all like were really wealthy and so (Did you feel out of place because you weren't wealthy?) ah, no. no. That part didn't bother me. It was more like, 'cause they were having all the parties, they were drinking, and whatever, and I wasn't like, well I wasn't invited to any of them, but I wouldn't have been allowed anyway. (Okay so did you feel like a typical teenage or did you just not think about it or...) typical teenager, if you wanna classify me under that (laughs), 'cause I guess like um, 'cause every high school has its divisions and every high school has its nerds, the jocks, the preps, and whatever, so yeah I guess in that sense since everyone's got that division, yeah I fell under the typical geek category (laughs).*

In the above accounts, subjects use idealized notions of adolescence to talk about their experiences of *becoming* and *belonging*. These stories naturalize adolescent hierarchies, so that social categories such as 'geek', 'loser', 'nerd', or 'prep' are taken for granted as part of the experience of growing up and going to high school. Subjects articulated their memories of adolescence through these labels that implicitly positioned certain individuals as socially subordinate. They also assumed that I was fully cognizant of what these labels meant in the larger narrative of western adolescence. For instance, Crystal describes another (South Asian) girl in her grade as someone who belonged more than she did because the girl "tried harder not to be in that category [geek] even though she was like really smart, just sort of she would do more of what They did." Here, she does not specify who They are, and it is almost as if she expects that I will know that she is referencing the mainstream or popular 'clique' (another word in the vocabulary of youth). This may be because my questions intentionally drew on conventional discourses of adolescence: I wanted to see whether subjects would recognize, accept and/or challenge *my* unspoken discourse of 'typical adolescence.' While subjects positioned

⁸ A popular television show in the 1990s. Crystal's referencing is a nice example of what cultural studies theorists identify as the importance of mainstream cultural texts (i.e. music, TV, movies) as being productive elements of people's identity work.

themselves in varying relations to the 'norm' that I evoked, they did not really challenge this norm, and in their own articulations of adolescence, they did not analyze in great detail what criteria exactly determine who belongs to these categories, or even who decides what this criteria will be. Their descriptions spoke to Lesko's question below about whether, and in what ways, the dominant discourses of adolescence make labeling, cruelty and exclusion 'natural':

What are the sources of peer groups and their conflicts, which seem to be central to the successes and failures of secondary schools? Do peer groups and hierarchies become naturalized in the same ways that adolescence is naturalized? When violence (towards others or towards oneself) is threatened or occurs, how do adults respond? Does the discourse of adolescence...contribute to the *chains of reasoning* around secondary school practices related to students' peer hierarchies and conflicts? And do school practices in turn confirm deficient views of youth (2001:173)?

I found it striking that, like other structuring forces, the categories of adolescent belonging and people's location in them appeared 'natural' to the subjects that I interviewed. As Crystal put it, "that's just the way it is, it happens everywhere". In this scenario, being a 'typical teenager' requires negotiating hierarchies that seem to have some kind of universalizing and *a priori* existence. These hierarchies cannot be changed or even contested; they must simply be endured, as a rite of passage, *en route* to adulthood:

Sarah (17): When I was at elementary school, there was a big group of us, we were like fifteen people, guys and girls, and we all did like grades 4, 5 and 6 together, and we were really good friends. And then we went to junior high school and we stayed the same. And then we got into high school and me and my best friend moved away from that group, and made new friends and I guess now when I look back on it I try and understand why I did that. But I think it was maybe the wanting to belong to the popular group and never having ever experienced that, never having been in the popular group, and it was always something that I wanted. And when I had the chance to do that it just really, it seemed like the best thing.

Anjana (30): (Why do you think there's so much social pressure? What makes adolescence different from childhood or adulthood?) Your maturity. Your maturity level. (But you're immature in childhood). Good point. I think there's just this different level of social expectations that are brought upon you and I think that when you're a child, you're not necessarily sexually developed at 6, therefore you're not thinking about things like that, whereas I think once you start to develop and boys tend to bring that out in you because they tend to be a lot more physically active and their mind develops quicker that way than say girls do sexually.

Anita (34): everybody's the same in elementary school still... I don't remember who I played with! (laughs) I mean it was girls, it was guys, it was everybody, we're all kids and playing whatever games we played at recess. I don't even think we really cared who we were playing with, it was just playtime. Whereas, in high school, then everyone's got their area, their place, their belonging, you know, and to some extent the hierarchy in the school was um, if you were one of the in-crowd, if you were one of the guys in the in-crowd, dating one of the girls in the in-crowd, you were like the King and Queen of the school! You ruled the school! Everyone looked up to you and was like "Wow, aren't they cool" in retrospect, they weren't, but I mean, at that point that's what you thought, that's what being a teenager, and being happy and having fun was.

Ritu (24): (As a child did you experience racism? Was it more in adolescence?) As a child, I probably wasn't aware that it was racism, and the kids did not know to be racist either, it was more after the whole, I guess, I don't know, puberty stage? That the white people went into their white group? Yeah, high school's always like that, right? People get into their groups right?

Interestingly, adolescence in the above accounts is juxtaposed with other periods of development, but the question of why these differences are not culturally associated with either childhood or adult power dynamics is not really answered. Sarah, Anita and Anjana take for granted that adolescent hierarchies are somehow different from those that exist in either childhood or adulthood. As they struggle to explain why these two periods do not have the same negotiations with 'fitting in', the storyline of puberty and gender relations enters, flagging what feminist scholars point to as the power of the male gaze to determine who belongs in terms of a gendered aesthetic (See Gilbert and Taylor, 1991; Brown and Gilligan, 1992; Shary, 2002). This narrative of awakening sexuality is part of the narrative of *becoming*: becoming desirable or undesirable, within a racialized, heterosexual male gaze. Some of the subjects who claimed that race/difference was not

part of their experiences growing up still identified images of ideal girlhood in a racialized manner. For example, Anita describes the girls in the popular crowd as “all blond and tall and I suppose you would call them pretty”. Furthermore, for subjects like Anjana, Sarah or Ritu, this racialized aesthetic was quite clearly tied to race:

Sarah (17): and the white guys, like there was this one girl, Lindsey, a white girl, and the guys would go crazy over her and I'd be like "like, look at her, she's nothing that great, she's not that pretty, she's not a very nice person, like why do you like her?" why do all these guys like her. She's white and she's got typical, like she's looks like a typical beautiful white girl.

Ritu (24): Like there was a group in grade twelve, of very pretty white girls, who decided to leave our high school, because at that time, it was getting too brown for them (They said that?) yeah (Who did they say it to?), to my friends, because they tried to run over one of my friends with their car, they were doing that racing thing with their cars? (drag racing), yeah...the girl who said that, she's a model now.

The above accounts suggest that even when they do not realize it consciously, minority girls are accommodating the implicitly racialized nature of beauty into their own understandings of selfhood. Sarah actually comes close to challenging this, but concludes with by saying that the girl is a “typical, beautiful white girl”. Even in hostile accounts such as Ritu’s, beauty is synonymous with whiteness: she does not describe these girls (who are guilty of extreme racism), as ugly – at the very least, to *her* – although they are considered aesthetically desirable to others. She herself believes that they are “very pretty”.

5. *Marginal and Shadow Discourses of South Asian Girlhood*

The hegemonic narratives of normal (white) girlhood are not the only discourses through which South Asian girls are positioned as Other. As I discussed in chapter three, there are shadow discourses embedded in these mainstream accounts that construct Otherness along a continuum that ranges from desirability to disgust. Two of my subjects, Sarah and Ritu, offer examples of the extreme polarities of this continuum. For example, Ritu's earlier comment about puberty (see p. 310), is part of a subtle narrative around racialized heterosexuality and its contradictory discourses of desirability and disgust towards the Other. I suspect that Ritu recognizes the racialized economy of desire that I discussed in chapter three; although she does not explicitly say so, the tensions in her account suggest her awareness of racialized desire as being part of what is operating, both in her adolescent spaces of the past, as well as her contemporary negotiations with the white male gaze:

Ritu (24): but once they hit puberty (you mean you knew the guys who...) yeah, not the ones who spat on me, but the ones who spat on me were friends with these guys, they're all like one big skinhead group. Um, the funny thing actually now, when I see them now, they all like date Indian girls! They changed right? But back then they were gay bashers, they were horrible to everybody.

... after the OCI process, you get called into the firm for a big interview, and minority students, from 15 OCIs to 1 real interview. 'cause once they see us and talk to us, it's like "oh well, she's a short little dark girl", we prefer the tall white guy, right?

... the problem is that they themselves [law students] don't realize it. That's the thing (So do you think they're conscious even of it when they make those choices?) No, they're not, they're absolutely not, because, like oh yeah there's a really hot Indian teacher at Osgoode and they're all in love with her, so it's not that they're actually, they don't know they're racist.

In the first quote, Ritu hints at how, at puberty, she was spoken into existence as an object of disgust, by a group of white boys. Although she does not overtly reference sexual desire, she mentions the boys' gay bashing, thus flagging their location in a

discourse of hegemonic masculinity. She also mentions how these boys, as adults, now *date* the despised Other, indicating some kind of fundamental shift in their constructions of Otherness.⁹ The second and third quotes must be read against each other, because they form a sort of unspoken dialogue over the subject positions available to minority women. According to Ritu, potential (white male) employers will meet her and decide that they do not want a “short, little dark girl”. Juxtaposed with this implicit construction of herself as an undesirable subject, is the comment about how white male law students do not think that they are racist, because they have constructed an Indian woman as an object of desire (the law teacher). Between the lines of these two sentences is the unspoken recognition on her part that she has not been constructed as a desirable object.

At the other end of the spectrum is Sarah’s experience of Otherness. Sarah, who is still an adolescent, has been highly successful at negotiating belonging within mainstream peer culture, and there are some hints that a large part of this success has been her ability to occupy the subject position of the eroticized Other. Her initial disbelief that white boys would find her attractive suggests that, like Ritu, she may be aware of what Puar describes as the possibility of playing with difference in order to escape being positioned as undesirable (1995: 27). But unlike Ritu, whose bitterness about her location in this latter discourse is muted and expressed through subtle iterations of Otherness, Sarah is openly uneasy about the tensions involved in being popular and desirable. Is this because in her “bargaining with racism,” (Puar, 1995: 27), she recognizes that she is still being Othered? Does she perhaps feel guilty because she is participating in a racialized,

⁹ Ritu’s description of these boys ties in nicely with Lesko’s point about race, nation and the ‘making’ of adolescent subjects through a narrative of “muscular Christianity”: “young, vigorous, and barbaric” boys from the dominant group who were actively encouraged to have a contempt for all forms of Otherness, including women, minorities and gays (2001: 77). See chapter two, pp. 78-80 for further discussion.

gendered performance that continues to exclude those minority subjects who are not able to occupy the same position that she does? As Twine points out, girls who are chosen in puberty as being acceptable dating partners for white males can continue to occupy a relatively unracialized status within their peer groups (1996: 217). Some of Sarah's points seem to suggest that she recognizes that 'being chosen' has allowed her to belong in ways which others cannot:

Sarah (17): (You mentioned the whole popularity issue. Was that an issue for you in childhood too or just in adolescence?)...*I don't know why it's such a big issue. I think for myself, I think it goes to the fact that I'm like an Indian girl and in my school, there's a very small number of Indian people. It's a very Jewish dominated school, huge Jewish population. I think like when it got to the point like in grade 11, and some guys liked you, you know, and you're like "oh my god, like white guys actually like me? Like what?*

...I once met this white guy and he just went on and on and I'm just like "no, no, I'm Indian", and he's like "really?", and like "okay, but do you have this standard picture of what an Indian person looks like?.

... like I think personally like I feel the difference, but I haven't really experienced people putting me down or anything for the fact that I am Indian, like I haven't experienced that ever. But nonetheless, I can see it, like you can see it, just the way kids will you know, like a boy like Prasanta, say his name funny or the way he speaks with an accent, I see that, and maybe it's not towards me, but it just as well affects me, just because someone else is making fun of him and it doesn't mean he has to be Indian to make fun of him, but either way it's wrong.

The above excerpts indicate that Sarah's ability to belong and avoid being constructed as either an object of disgust (Ritu), or ridicule (the boy Prasanta), has been determined by her gender, her generational status, but perhaps more importantly, by her favorable positioning within a racialized aesthetic. Like the "hot Indian teacher" in Ritu's narrative, Sarah occupies a token space of belonging because she is desirable.

Most of the other subjects occupied a position somewhere between Ritu and Sarah. For instance, while it is similar to Ritu's, Anjana's narrative does not have the same extreme forms of Othering. Anjana describes her adolescent self as "a weird combination, I was one who was probably part of the group, but never ever got to sort of

go out with any of the boys, or be considered, you know, ever equal to them". Although she did not experience direct racism, according to her, she was made to feel that she was a second class citizen because of her racialized status. On the other hand, subjects such as Anita and Crystal were aware that they had not occupied the "pretty girl" subject position in adolescence, but despite hints that this was racialized, their experiences do not suggest any kind of overt construction of the kind that Ritu or Anjana experienced. Instead, they foreground their lack of desirability as an individual failing that was later corrected in university. This interpretation is consistent with the larger theme of individualism running through both their narratives:

Crystal (28): Yeah, I didn't date in high school, I wasn't exactly the best, ah, I didn't get along with everyone. I was like the big geek... terms of like dating and whatever and stuff like that, I don't think I really cared about that. I might've liked a guy and stuff like that, but I'd be like "ah, whatever, he's not interested" (laughs). Actually that reminds me. At one point I did, um, I was going through an old diary recently, and I just happened to read like a section, like how I was really upset that like I liked all these guys all through school, like different years, and like none of them ever noticed me, and I was like it's so unfair blah blah blah. And now it's like a complete reversal of the problem (laughs), now it's like all men are scum (really? Reversal in what sense?) too much ah, (male attention?) yeah, too much of it now. (interesting). But it's kind of funny because when I saw that I was like "oh I guess I shouldn't complain" (laughs).

Anita (34): the girls in the popular crowd they always had some guy on their arm, and you know they were all the cheerleaders, who were dating the guys on the football team ... Did I think that (pause), I don't know if I felt that I wasn't popular because I was brown, I mean I never felt that. Ever. I just thought I was not popular because I wasn't really good looking.

Both Crystal and Anita narrate this exclusion from the norm of dating in adolescence as a consequence of their identities as 'geeks' or 'wallflowers'.¹⁰ Crystal also mentions that there was a late blooming issue for her.¹¹ But it is not really explained why,

¹⁰ Anita: "I was a real wallflower, geek, whatever."

¹¹ Crystal: "Well I think that's one of the reasons why I sort of had the issues with being the black sheep in university, was because it was more of a late blooming thing for me. I should've probably experienced all

for example, there was such a radical reversal for Crystal from high school to university, where she suddenly became an object of desire. The larger narrative offers some suggestive hints: there were very few South Asians at her high school, whereas in university she becomes part of a large mixed crowd of South Asians, and many of the men in this crowd pursued her. This suggests that rather than moving subject positions within a racialized economy of desire, she became part of another discourse of desire, one that was internal to the diaspora.¹²

As I mentioned in chapter five (pp. 279-280), Anita's account denies the existence of race even as it asserts it. Best describes this as the social mechanics through which racial categories become salient to the ways that people make sense of their everyday lives (2003: 898): "Race categories are an emergent feature of ongoing social interaction and talk...in other words, people don't have race in the conventional sense but are actively raced as they are drawn into the complex processes of economic, cultural and political racialization" (2003: 697). Not only does Anita¹³ talk casually about the "Jewish people" at her school, she also raises a racialized discourse of feminine attractiveness, without deconstructing it in the present moment. This suggests that at adolescence Anita internalized a Euro-American discourse of beauty: she excludes herself from the

that during high school (laughs), to be on track. No, it wasn't until I was in university that I was like "wow this whole Indian thing is way too restrictive for me."

¹² Crystal is well aware of the diaspora's narrative of beauty. In this excerpt, she discusses the differences between herself and her sister, who is dating a non-Indian in the following way: "I think the other kind of sticking point was that one, I'm much fairer than my sister and I know that that caused, sort of a bias against her, um 'cause the whole thing that fairer is more beautiful. So I think she kind of suffered through and that's probably why she doesn't like the whole Indian thing. And I felt really bad, because I think I sort of picked up on it as well, because I was sort of the favorite, and so yeah, um, not like my parents, but aunts and the circle basically, um, so that sort of. You could sort of see that".

¹³ Asha was also one the subjects who referred to the Jewish kids at her school without any self consciousness. This struck me as unusual considering that like Anita, Asha claims that race was not a salient factor for her growing up and that she never really noticed that she was Indian (or different). Yet she obviously was cognizant of at least one other ethnic/racial category to which she did not belong.

dominant aesthetic without recognizing the racializing practices implicit in her statements that the most popular girls were blond (and white), and she was not popular simply because she was not good looking (i.e. blond/white).

Nevertheless, there were also subjects who were not positioned in a racialized economy of desire. The narratives of Mary, Asha, and Aleena draw upon the storyline of normal girlhood to talk about the boys who liked them. The main factor for these subjects was not the shadow discourse of despised or desirable difference, but their difficulties negotiating belonging because of familial constructions of proper South Asian girlhood. Although all the subjects had to struggle with familial/community narratives that were to varying degrees in opposition to western codes of female adolescent conduct, Mary, Asha and Aleena had the additional difficulty of being positioned by peer culture as belonging, but unable to belong fully because of the pull of diasporic discourses of difference:

Aleena (25): (So you didn't feel you were different from your peers, your teachers, Canadian society in general). Nothing. Absolutely. The only thing was little things like not being able to sleep over, or the boyfriend thing, a little bit, but like I said because at that point, my friends, none of us had boyfriends. I mean I still had crushes on boys, and I did all the same things with my friends. You know we'd like go to basketball games like everyone else and watch the guys... The things that were different maybe, were like, if a boy wanted to call me, I had to make sure it was at a time when my parents weren't home, that sort of thing... I was with my friends all the time. And I didn't have Muslim friends, I didn't have any kind of Pakistani, I didn't know anyone who was Muslim at all, when I was in high school, they were all white. The whole school population was practically white. Nobody ever ever treated me different, I've never heard a racial slur, nothing, I swear on my entire life.

...me and my dad haven't talked in eight months... (So do you think these problems started in adolescence or childhood more?) Adolescence. It definitely started there. My own problems with my dad started at that point, when I was about sixteen, and um, that's when things started changing, because he started paying attention to me in a negative sense. He was always trying to find something wrong and um, as weird as it sounds, you know what I mean? And that's when it was like "okay what time are you coming home? Okay what are you doing? Duh duh duh. Who are you with? Blah blah blah". All these paranoias, to the point where it just drove me mental because I'm like, okay I was basically very independent before this, and I was fine and I wasn't doing anything, but now that you, like he just started putting all these rules on me, like rule after rule after rule, like you can't do this, you can't do that, and no what are you doing, you have to ask before you do everything.

In the above excerpts, we can read Aleena's adolescence as being at least partially located in the dominant or mainstream notions of girlhood (i.e. intense friendships, 'crushes', sleepovers etc.); what cuts across this 'normality' are the gendered restrictions placed on her by her father and her community. At various points in her account, she voices resentment towards family, friends and other members of her ethno-religious community (Muslim Pakistani), who have worked hard to position her as a proper Pakistani girl, rather than allowing her to be the westernized self that she wants to be. In one story of adolescence, she describes going to the mall with a group of male and female friends, and being seen there by "an auntie", who told her parents that she was talking to a boy. This resulted in a big showdown between her parents, herself and this female community member who, according to Aleena, felt it was her duty to let Aleena's parents know what was going on, and talk to Aleena about the path that she was on and how this would affect her life. The ubiquitous gaze of the community that Handa describes as creating a "hall of lies and shame" for South Asian girls (2003: 107), is a central storyline in Aleena's account: there is a strong sense that in her eyes, were it not for familial/community prohibitions on certain types of 'normal' behavior (i.e. dating, going to the mall, kissing a boy etc.), Aleena's adolescence would have been much like any other girl's.

Like Aleena, Mary and Asha both describe being objects of interest for mainstream boys, but being unable to participate in typical adolescent rituals of dating because their parents were concerned about how they would be perceived within the South Asian community:

Asha (29): my mom had very strict rules at home, when I was growing up, like in high school, like all my other friends could go out, um, and stay out however late they wanted... whereas for me, mom always wanted me home, like her curfew was like 10 o'clock you have to be home... mom was always overprotective, like no dating, I guess the more Indian influences ...I can't say that I actually ever seriously dated anyone in high school. Like a lot of my friends had boyfriends or girlfriends, um, I never went through that phase in high school...mom is overly concerned with maintaining a proper Indian girl's reputation and that means no dating. Because my mom still believes in arranged marriages, um, and that um if you've dated or if the community gets wind of the fact that you've dated or stuff like that, that can ruin your chances along those lines.

Mary (16): This boy liked me... I just remember I felt really flattered...it's kind of, I don't know, maybe a big deal when you're younger or something, and it's the first guy and you feel like "wow I'm not a kid anymore or something". And my friends were all excited and they're like "oh my god what are you going to do if he asks you out?" But then I made the mistake of telling my mom, and I'll never forget this, she freaked, I mean freaked. Like she got really mad and stuff and I don't know, she told my dad, and he was really mad, although he didn't say much to me, he just sort of gave me the silent treatment. ... she was like "you're too young to date, and your father and I don't approve blah blah blah, maybe when you're older, and if you meet someone in our community". See, it's not like my parents wouldn't let me date or something, they would, just not now. Like I'd have to be older, like in university or something and even then, I couldn't, like they'd want to know his family, and like, I couldn't like stay out all night with the guy, because that's just not done in our culture. I mean I know girls who do it, but they don't tell their parents and they just sneak around.... (So there haven't been any other boys?). (pause), no, not really. I mean, like at parties sometimes guys ask me to dance and stuff, and it's fine, cause like, my parents aren't there right? Not that I do anything with them, because I don't, I'm not like that. (Well what about if a boy asked you out?) well, if they say something, like can I call you or whatever, then I would just tell them I'm not allowed to date. Like there was one guy and I told him that, and then we became friends, and we're really good friends now... you know how it is, with Indian parents, like they don't want me dating because of what people might say, right? Because people in the community might talk and then I would get a bad name and then no one would want to marry me, right? Which is so retarded because like I'm sixteen! Like I am not thinking about marriage right now! and like I've tried to tell my mom that, but she's like "oh people remember these things and you're not a young girl any more" ... they just don't understand that we're not living in India, like we're here, right? And it's different here, I mean kids go out to parties and maybe they drink, and maybe they have boyfriends, and for Canadian parents, it's like no big deal...I mean why is it that big a deal to wanna go out on a date? Like why is that so awful?

The struggles of Asha, Aleena and Mary to accommodate both mainstream and familial/community demands on selfhood suggest quite strongly that even when subjects are able to remain relatively unracialized by peers, the presence of marginal discourses of proper (South Asian) girlhood is a constant disruption of their projects of belonging.

Boundary Events in Subjects' Narratives of Self

One of the central concepts that I discussed in chapter three was Twine's notion of the "boundary event" (1996), which she defines as an experience in a subject's adolescent life when she realizes that she is racially different. The idea of "boundary events" works nicely with narrative analysis, because it is similar to what narrative theorists describe as kernel events or turning points in a story that disrupt or alter the storyline in a significant way. Every narrative of self has its central storyline, accompanied by smaller themes, but there are also major events where the storyline is changed, disrupted or at least challenged.

In my interviews, I was looking for subjects' key memories of adolescence in order to understand the relationship between particular memories, and the specific moments where subjects were spoken into difference. Not every meaningful event in subjects' stories meets the definition of Twine's boundary event. For example, Sarah's struggle with family alcoholism or Rose's discovery of her mother's mental illness count as major turning points in a narrative, but these memories are not specifically about becoming different. I have therefore loosely categorized those events that connect to the theme of adolescence and difference-making in the following three ways: 1) events which were directly related to race/difference; that is, where subjects were spoken into existence as Others by the gaze of the social 2) moments, processes or choices which were not directly related to race but held traces of difference in terms of their significance to the overall narrative and 3) non peer-related events that spoke subjects into difference through familial/community discourses of Otherness. In addition, subjects also identified key experiences that took place in childhood, and while Twine might not include these in

her definition, I feel that they merit some attention. I have therefore included them, with the caveat that they do not necessarily fit with the theme of adolescence. They are, however, important to the general concerns of this thesis regarding identity, race and the developmental self.

1. Direct Experiences of Difference-Making

Five subjects described events or experiences that I read as being directly related to difference. I do not mean to imply that all the incidents were necessarily overtly racist, but the subject herself interjected race into the narrative. What is compelling about some of the more ambiguous experiences is how subjects interpreted them as moments of difference-making, in a sense speaking themselves into difference. In the case of overt acts of racism, unless the subject chooses to deny these events, there is no real way to avoid being spoken into difference. Whereas, it is an unusual narrative choice when the experience is more ambiguous. For example, Shazia describes childhood experiences where she became aware that she was different from other children. These moments are not racist *per se*, but they led to her seeing herself as different. Similarly, Anjana's experiences of Othering do not, by her own account, contain direct racism, yet she attributes her second class status amongst peers to the fact that she was South Asian. My point is not to suggest that either Shazia or Anjana are being paranoid (i.e. 'making it up'), but simply to point to the open-endedness of subjects' narrative choices. I also want to pose the question of why certain subjects choose one form of narrative that foregrounds race, while others choose either to background it or to deny its relevance completely in terms of their own lives:

Shazia (18): (And you never experienced overt racism?) no, not overt. (What about subtle racism?) I can't remember specific incidences, but I would, I guess I would feel it sometimes. Sometimes in school maybe like someone gets picked for a play and you're like "oh maybe I wasn't picked for that part because I was brown and that person was white". Stuff like that. Definitely. Even as a child. I guess little things in classroom situations. Yeah, definitely. (Okay. When did you notice or realize you were different?) I always thought that I was different, even as a little kid, because everybody was different, everybody was white and I wasn't so. (and you recognized this?), yeah definitely, because I remember, I was the oldest child and when I was 5 years old, I had problems speaking English, because I always spoke Urdu at home and so I realized that very very early one, like even in Kindergarten I had to learn English myself and it wasn't as bad for my brothers and my sisters because we speak in English to each other and they learned it from me, like when my sister went to school she knew how to speak English and stuff, but that was one thing that she knew that I didn't. so I had problems with grammar and verbal, like talking when I was little and I was also like very shy because of that too. (really?) yeah. I was a very shy kid.

Anjana (30): (Did you experience racism as an adolescent?) I think subtly yes. Definitely. (Subtly meaning...?) Meaning not right out to your face, but I mean it was clear and obvious by the way people treated you in terms of not considering you as a somebody that was potential they could go out with, that you know was considered in my view something that was quite, you know evident. (Okay and how did that make you feel?) Second class. (Did you respond by being angry about it or internalizing the feelings?) Both.... I remember, and this is really really painful for me in the sense that I remember feeling really left out in grade 6. We went to Que. On an exchange program, and everybody, like all the cool kids, and I was, here's the irony, I was part of the cool group but I was one who never had a boyfriend. 'Cause again I was different looking and I just wasn't you know I don't think deemed in that way or looked at in that way by the boys. And I was even told like inadvertently, like I was made fun of a lot in grade 8 by a lot of the boys. Like you know I'd be hanging out w/ the cool girls and you know we'd go to the corner store at lunchtime, even though we were like banned from doing it. And I remember one time walking back and the boys were in front of them, and them sort of hollering out my name and teasing me and stuff you know and it just I knew that I was never gonna be looked at that way and I remember in grade 6, the precedent was set when we went to Que. And we were on this trip and I remember asking a guy, saying 'so, do you want to go out w/ me?' type of thing or 'so should we go out?', and I remember people finding out about it and just laughing their heads off. And so that sunk in my mind forever. Kind of like Anjana is below everybody, she's not our equal that way, she's not, she hasn't, the precedent is what would you ever go out w/ anybody who looked like her.

In the first quote, Shazia 'voices-over' dominant culture's naturalizing of minority behavior (through the mode of personal traits or deficiencies), by directly raising race as an explanation for why she became a certain type of person. Difference in her story is a constitutive factor of selfhood: it made her shy and more socially withdrawn. Her

recognition of this systemic reason for her shyness then allows her a sense of empowerment: rather than a personal failing or inadequacy, her shyness is a result of subtle racializing practices. She can therefore disown this self as being an *inauthentic* product of difference. Unfortunately, this is not the case for Anjana. Her understanding of race as a factor in her process of *becoming* is not enough to overcome completely the power of the discourse that spoke her into difference in childhood and adolescence. Although she talks throughout her narrative with a great deal of honesty and awareness of her own internalized racism, she is not able to 'voice-over' it, to find an alternative self that is not defined by difference.

In the above excerpts, both Shazia and Anjana are describing boundary events in terms of personal experiences that shaped who they became in either positive or negative ways. But I want to go beyond Twine's understanding of boundary events by arguing strongly that such experiences do not need to be "owned" by the subject. What I found remarkable was how some events were only witnessed by subjects, and yet remained significant markers of their personal awareness of being different. For example, Sarah's sense of difference was made stronger by several racist incidents that occurred at her school, when she was in grade 11. The incidents took place between Somali and Jewish students, and according to Sarah, "it really kind of divided our grade a little at that point...I think it brought out something that we had all never faced before, we had never noticed as the difference in our school". Similarly, Shazia remembers that shortly after 9/11, two girls who wore *Hijabs* at her school were told to 'go back where they came from', and although this was not directed at her (because she does not wear traditional

Muslim clothes), the incidents reminded her of her own racialized status in Canadian society:

Shazia (18): I remember after 9/11, girls who wore, who covered their heads, like a lot of parents were saying like "oh, maybe you should uncover for a little while", and just to like go to that level, just to compromise faith because people are un-accepting, I just think it's really really sad. (So how does it make you feel?) it makes me feel like you're really not part of being Canadian if you're different, and discriminated against, it's like, they say, we'll let you in, we're all like a big happy family, but then when something happens, It's like they're still outcasts, and so you're not really really part of the community.... Canadian society always prides itself on being multicultural. That doesn't always mean that it's anti-racist and tolerant. And I think that's something I realized after September 11th, that's when it hit me, that yeah, it's not tolerant, it's not necessarily anti-racist all the time. Like it's multicultural for sure and it's growing, but I don't feel that it has, like you always feel that there are little incidents still, where you think "wow", like I think racist and un-tolerant things do occur, but probably more at a lower level, like undercover. And I guess I would hear about them more, because I'm not white and I know people who go through things. (Do you feel Canadian? Do you identify as a Canadian?) Yeah. Sometimes, I guess. Just living here, growing up here, but I don't know, I think I identify more as a Muslim than anything else. Or I want to identify as a Muslim more than anything else (Okay). And the reason for that may be that after September 11th, there may be have been a backlash that occurred, and you feel, "well, it's Canadians and Canadians" and they see you as Muslims more than anything else. You know you don't feel the same (So before Sept. 11th, you felt more included?) I guess. I guess I thought that it was going towards that goal, or that road, that maybe, because they're always like "oh Multiculturalism is so great", or "we have different populations", you know what I mean? Like going towards that road of understanding and tolerance, but.

For Shazia, these post 9/11 incidents jar painfully with her own set of experiences of Canadian society. At an earlier point in her narrative, when asked about experiencing racism, she says that such things are a little taboo at her school and within her peer group; she asserts that they were all taught in elementary and junior high not to mention people's race ever. The silencing of a discourse around difference did not, however, prevent the issue from rearing its ugly head in the aftermath of a major world political event. Although these experiences of Othering are not Shazia's personally, she lays claim to them because they have affected her quite profoundly: engendering her recognition of the limits of multiculturalism and the possibility of being Othered herself, as well as her embracing of a strong Muslim identity.

It may be the case that secondhand boundary events do not have the same impact as firsthand experiences, where the subject's "ontological security" is directly challenged. However, narratives such as Rose's challenge this interpretation. Most of Rose's memories of adolescence are vague and somewhat generic, but she describes three (non-self directed) incidents of racism that can be linked back to her youthful embarrassment and shame at being South Asian. According to a number of race theorists, there is often a blurring of the I/We distinction in marginalized communities, which subverts the individualism of the western autonomous self.¹⁴ Smith describes this as "the inextricable relationship between an individual's sense of 'self' and the community's stories of selfhood" (1987: 150-151). For subjects such as Rose, their selves are bound up, for better or worse, in the larger histories of exclusion that have spoken South Asianness into existence in relation to the Canadian national imaginary:

Rose (33): that whole thing, like being Indian, I guess like I felt like if you're a minority you have to be careful about the impression you give people, like people will make assumptions about your culture, based on what you do. Do you know what I mean? (you mean if you meet one black person and they're not nice, you assume that they're all that like?) yeah, exactly. (long pause) Like I remember there used to be this old group of Punjabi men, Sikhs, who used to hang out at the mall, and I would be so, like annoyed, like why do they have to just hang out there. Because people, I think people didn't like it, and they even, there was a rule put in place by the mall management, no loitering. It gave a bad impression, I don't know, like they were lazy, or why didn't they hang out at their houses or something? That used to bother me.

...(And experiences of racism?). Not really (long pause), I mean I remember one time, we were going to an Indian function and my mother was wearing a sari and these guys were walking by and they yelled something (what did they yell?) I don't remember. You know, just like stuff about "go home" or whatever. That was upsetting, like it made me feel embarrassed.

...I remember when like sometimes at school, people would make comments about Indians, not to me, but about Indians, in front of me, and when I heard those things, it used to make me feel so awful inside. So awful.

¹⁴ This also recalls my question, in chapter five, about whether it was possible for South Asian girls to negotiate two opposing projects of self: a private self (or 'I') versus a collectivist self (or 'we').

Rose's adolescent feelings of alienation from a South Asian identity came from a finely tuned awareness that 'Canadians' did not accept members of her diaspora community. For racialized subjects, the insignia of difference is worn by their bodies. These bodies, according to Bannerji, become prison zones (1993: 149), and in certain moments, are actually interchangeable within a racializing gaze. Handa offers a nice description of this interchangeability:

There was another South Asian girl in my class. The teacher would always mix us up. I would start off being myself and sometimes in the midst of the class-room discussion, somehow I became Ritu and she me...brown faceless mass only identifiable by brownness. We are all the same, but surely Ritu must be a sister or relative of some sort (1990: 41).

I suspect that Rose is aware of this homogenizing gaze; although she does not come out and say why exactly she was bothered by the old Punjabi men, or why people yelling at her mother embarrassed her, or why she felt "awful inside" when peers made comments about other South Asians, my sense is that she realizes how their positioning as despised Others compromised her adolescent project of belonging in an immediate and embodied way.

Unlike the subtleties of difference making found in Anjana or Shazia's narratives, or Rose's second-hand experiences of racism, Ritu's adolescent experiences of Othering are, as previously mentioned, explicit and unambiguous. It is difficult to interpret them as anything other than racializing moments. Out of all the interviews, they represent the most clear-cut example of ontological turning points in a racialized subject's sense of self. Ritu's experiences must be read through Giddens' argument about the security of selfhood being compromised through experiences of humiliation or shame (1991: 65). Ritu's self has survived these boundary events; her 'voicing-over' of dominant narratives

of race that position her as a despised Other allows her to maintain some sense of self-esteem, but she has still been damaged, and as we will see later on in the chapter, she herself recognizes that. As Knowles (1999) points out, we do not know the full extent of the traumatic effects of racism on people's identities and mental health. In Ritu's own words, the events that spoke her into existence as a despised Other were, in large part, responsible for her constant sense of insecurity in 'Canadian' society, an insecurity fueled by her hatred and fear of white people, and in particular "the big white guy":

Ritu (24): But when I went to high school, it was tangible, the racism, like literally, I was walking down the hallway one day and I was a little geeky girl, so I wasn't bothering anyone, and there was this group of skinheads at their lockers, in my grade, and I was walking by, and the guy saw me, he took a sip of water, waited, waited, and then whoosh, spat it all in my face. I didn't react. Because I had this kind of posse, I guess, of Indian people, minorities, whatever, who I could draw strength from? Strength in numbers, right? A friend of mine, this guy almost bashed this guy's head in over that. It was funny. But yeah, it was really really racist (Did you get called names and stuff?) yeah, once we were in the car, me my mom and my grandmother and a group of drunk white guys pulled up to us at the stoplight and they were like "heh Paki dot! Heh Paki! Can I have your dot?" (laughs), and my grandmother's in the car, right so that was horrible. And at school, sure, um, some people didn't want to sit next to me in class, because I smelled, like curry, they said. It was really bad, every single day we had homeroom, and every day there'd be this one guy named Dan, every single day, "Ooh you stink! Go back to your country! Ooh what's that smell!", every day, and that was really bad for me because I was really shy already so that just made it worse. That was bad .

...Going to India when I was sixteen, that was good, but that was actually, if you wanna hear about racism, that was when I realized how racist it was here....I'd grown up among white people, and sure I had Muslim friends and Sikh friends, and this group of girls I had. And yeah, okay, Paki, I know it's not, okay yeah spit in my face, but it didn't affect me as badly, as when I actually went to Kerala, and I realized where I was from. Because suddenly everybody looks like you. People accept you for what you are, instead of ridiculing you, and making fun of you and putting you down. People are, I'm not saying they're good or anything, but they just automatically accept you?

These two quotes crystallize some of the main turning points in Ritu's identity formation as an Other. I am not entirely convinced of her claim that her adolescent encounters with racism did not have as much impact on her as that summer in India when she 'realized' where she was from, but I take her point that the contrast between white

Canadian peers' unequivocal rejection of her, and the sense of belonging that she felt in India drove home the fact that she would never belong 'here'. What I think she is trying to convey is an interruption of that normalized sense of displacement often experienced by second generation minority subjects, for whom there is no complete 'home' or 'belonging' anywhere. A return to the imagined space of a homeland, which for many second generation subjects is actually another reminder of their liminality, triggers a sudden awareness for her that there is a place where she might be accepted. She need not always be positioned 'outside'. This realization has embittered her greatly; what I read between the lines of her story is a sense of anger, confusion and regret: this did not have to be her life; had her parents not chosen emigration as an option, she could have stayed in a country where she looked like everyone else, where she was surrounded by family and relatives and where her class/caste status position was secure. Instead she becomes the target of what amounts to both physical and psychological abuse. The story of race that she ends up telling did not have to be her story. She raises the spectre of an alternative self, a self that could have been if her family's choices had been different; but it is a self that is no longer possible:

Ritu: (Do you think that the experiences of racism have affected you or your identity in a significant way?) *yup. For sure... Even the first year of law school, I hated it. Actually that was one of the worst times, because I sat at one side of the class, where all the white kids were sitting and I didn't recognize that, that that was what was making me miserable, and the second term I switched to the other side, and you had minority girls and minority guys, and then it was all friends. And I'm having a great time now, because most of my law school friends are the minority students, and some of the nice white people.*

(...Okay, so experiences of racism affected your identity, but it doesn't seem to have affected your self-esteem?). *I don't know. Actually, it's a good question because my friends have been trying to help me and people who know me, we're trying to figure out, why I don't do as well in interviews as I should do. Because I'm okay at talking, when I have something to talk about so, I don't think my personality is deficient in some way. But we figured out that I have an inferiority complex... (So you feel marginalized) yeah, and I need to get over it, feeling like I'm marginalized. Like you know that show The*

Apprentice, I don't know if you've watched it (No). Okay, well she has minority woman syndrome, which is, I have it too (laughs). (what is it?) Um, chip on the shoulder, where either they fight fight fight everyone even though there's no point fighting because they've been put down their entire life. So fight fight fight, and they come off as real bitches. Or they do what I do, where I'm bitter, so bitter about Canadians, that I hate them all. Even though I don't hate them. So I do have that self-esteem problem, big time. if I didn't, then I'd be able to shine in interviews, and schmooze, and I wouldn't feel intimidated because oh sorry, I don't cottage the way that they do, I mean we don't have a cottage. Until Mike came into our family, I never went to a cottage.

The above excerpts return us to Knowles' question (1999) about the ways in which lives are raced through spatial practices. Ritu's experiences of racism have marked her so profoundly that she cannot even feel safe when she is in close proximity to large numbers of white people. Unlike subjects such as Asha, Anita or Aleena (who exist fairly un-self consciously in 'white spaces'), Ritu is only comfortable when she is surrounded by Otherness, when she is not the only one who is different. Her bitterness stems from an awareness of how race has distorted her life. Yet, at some level, she appears to be deeply hurt by what she perceives as the dominant culture's rejection of her as an acceptable or appropriate national subject. As she herself says, she hates them all, even though she doesn't hate them. This blatantly contradictory statement makes sense in the context of Ritu's experiences. Unlike the other subjects, the racialized turning points in Ritu's adolescent life are akin to what have been called 'hate crimes'. My reading of her story is that her hatred is a struggle against self-erasure. If she had not hated her persecutors, if she does not continue to hate other White Canadians who remind her of them, she might - like Anjana and, to some extent, Rose - end up hating the degraded object of their racism: herself.

2. *Friendship as a site of subtle negotiations of race*

Unlike the above accounts, the absence of direct references to race in the following stories makes it more difficult to determine whether certain key turning points in subjects' narratives actually constitute boundary events, at least in the way that they have been defined by Twine. For one thing, some of these experiences are less event-driven than they are processes of becoming different. For that reason, I have decided to modify Twine's concept or at least add to it, by distinguishing boundary events from boundary *moments*, which might include turning points, longer term processes of difference-making or narrative choices made by the subject herself. The main distinction is to be found in the more open-ended quality of the 'moment' as opposed to the 'event'. A narrative moment may be the subjects' own recognition of something, it may be an external event, or series of events, it may be even something that does not happen, thereby changing the direction of the story (in which case the word 'event' is a misnomer). Apart from Shazia's story, none of the other accounts focuses on one particular event or action taken. Instead, there are sometimes several events, actions or choices, which are strung together to suggest that a major shift in storyline or identification was in the process of taking place.

I am also aware, as a researcher, of the dangers of reading race into moments that subjects identified as important, without necessarily describing them as racialized. However, because the nature of these experiences was strongly tied to intra-gender dynamics, I feel it is necessary to question the potential for underlying currents of difference. Even the adult subjects mentioned female friends as important 'actors' in the drama of their teenage years. It is even more significant that the experiences in this

category were all related to friendship struggles for the adolescent girls that I interviewed. Although Shazia, Mary and Sarah had different experiences, friendship was clearly a central storyline in all three narratives of selfhood, flagging what Hey describes as girls' intense pre-occupations with the "micro politics" of friendship. According to Hey: "What appears to be at stake in these detailed (and apparently trivial) social dramas of intimacy are deeper meanings about belonging and striving for power" (1997: 1-21; 62).

I should point out that I do not have a fully developed conceptual framework for analyzing the presence of difference in these friendship encounters. As I pointed out in chapters one and three, the majority of research on girls' interactions with one another, including work such as Hey's, does not properly explore the potential complications of race or ethnicity. Even Proweller's research, although important and insightful, does not explore some of the nuances of girls' racialized power struggles.¹⁵ One reason may be that girls themselves are reticent about admitting the possibility that difference is a factor in their interactions with intimate peers. If adolescents are intensely concerned with 'fitting in', this concern is magnified for girls by the importance that they place on same-sex friendships. According to researchers, girls develop very intense friendships in adolescence and often view these peers as being as, if not more, supportive than either family or romantic relationships. However, scholars such as Brown and Gilligan (1992), Hey (1997), and Griffiths (1995) have also pointed to the existence of hierarchies within girls' friendship groups, and the accompanying denial of these hierarchies by girls themselves. If loyalty, support and unconditional acceptance are part of the narrative of female adolescent friendships and this is coupled with gendered demands to be 'nice', 'sweet' and accommodating of others, then perhaps girls lack the discursive tools to

¹⁵ Please see chapter one, pp. 30-37 for a more detailed discussion.

speaking about the presence of difference among friends, particularly in contexts where to suggest this is tantamount to accusing friends of being insensitive, ethnocentric or possibly even racist.

For example, Mary's storyline of friendship contains a number of contradictory elements that lead me to believe that she recognizes the presence of difference in this context but is unwilling to address it directly. When asked about issues with friends, she describes a crisis that developed at some point in the recent past, where she was temporarily cold-shouldered by her friends because of another girl's trouble-making.¹⁶ The problem is eventually worked out and, according to her, "made our friendships stronger." However, this platitude strikes a somewhat artificial note, as if Mary knows on some level that she is choosing to ignore certain troubling dynamics within her friendship group that position her as being subordinate to the others:

We were all this big group of girls, maybe five girls, really really tight, you know? Everyone in school knew we were friends and stuff, like we were always together. (Okay). But then, there was this girl, she'd just joined our school and she started trying to hang out with Paula, that's my best friend, and fine okay, like I didn't care because Paula and me were really tight, right... but then she starts bad-mouthing me, and she's like telling Paula not to hang out with me and stuff like that... I kind of noticed Paula was, I don't know, she didn't seem, like when I'd call her she was all "I'm really busy right now" stuff like that, and it really hurt my, it really bothered me, because my friends are pretty important to me, right?... I mean I had other friends, but we're all a big group right, and sometimes it's hard because if one person, like if one person, I don't know, it's just that Paula was kind of like the leader of our group, not that, I mean, like we don't have a leader because everyone's equal, just that she was everybody's friend and we all kind of became friends through her or something. And then she didn't want to hang out with me so much, not, I mean she never came out and said that, but like, I just got a sense and then some of the other girls, they were sort of, they started keeping their distance or whatever. Like I'd go and sit with them at lunch, like I always did, and they'd kind of look at each other...so that was going on for awhile, like maybe a month or something. (So what did you do?) I don't know (long pause) sometimes I'd just go and eat lunch by myself and stuff. That was a bad time for me, I guess you could say. I mean I'm not saying I'm scarred for life or something! (laughs), just that you were asking what I remember so.

¹⁶ This bears out Hey's point about girls' power struggles revolving around "shifting allegiance plots" (1997: 106-107).

I would suggest that the above experience qualifies as a boundary moment for a number of reasons. For one thing, although the other girl ‘drops’ this group and Mary eventually becomes friends with them again, and claims that she is not troubled by what happened, there are still traces of doubt in her story that cannot completely be erased. This doubt indicates the tensions in girls’ friendships, between acknowledging that something has transpired in order to deal with it, and the potential damage that this acknowledgement might do to the friendship; what one subject in Brown and Gilligan’s research describes as “Nobody’s mean from where I stand but there are people with hurt feelings” (1992: 201). Mary’s experiences with the ‘friendship wars’ of adolescence lead her to claim that she realizes now who her friends were and who would stand up for her. But when asked whether she really thinks that they stood up for her, she is confused and uncertain, and reluctantly expresses a resentment that she has not allowed herself to feel at other points in the narrative:

(So you’re still friends with that group?) Oh yeah, I think that made our friendships stronger, you know? Like you go through that and then you know who your friends are and who will stand up for you (do you think they stood up for you?) um (long pause), I guess not exactly(pause), but they were totally brainwashed by that girl, so you can’t blame them, stuff like that happens right? I mean that’s part of growing up and like figuring out who your real friends are and who you can trust. Like, that’s part of maturing, right? So it’s totally fine now (it doesn’t bother you when you look back on it?) Not at all, I mean I hardly ever think about it, you know? I mean, yeah sure, if I think about it, then yeah it would bother me, but (What specifically bothers you about it?). um, (long pause) I don’t know, (pause) well, like, why would my friends, I don’t know, why would they just believe that girl? Especially Paula, because we were like best friends and everything, so I don’t get it. I would never do that to them. But I’m not resentful or anything, at all. like I guess people make mistakes. I just try not to think about that stuff.

Although this event can be interpreted simply as a gendered friendship struggle, there are elements that suggest that it is part of a larger process of boundary-making. For instance, part of the narrative involves the girl telling Paula (Mary’s ‘best’ friend), that Mary wants to ‘lead’ the group, and thinks that she is smarter than her friends. The latter

statement draws on Mary's scholastic performance, which Mary herself links to her cultural background;¹⁷ Mary is clearly uncomfortable with this idea, arguing that she is not someone who goes around saying "look at me, I'm so smart". I read this as both a racialized and gendered performance of Otherness: the subject is afraid that she will be punished socially because of her success (the uppity negro syndrome); this is also a tension for girls who, according to Griffiths (1995), Hey (1997), Apter (1998) and others, are constantly afraid of showing confidence in the presence of other girls, because this can be read as conceit or arrogance.¹⁸

Mary does not want to address the underlying tensions of dominance, competition and envy in her circle, nor does she want to deal with the fact that her best friend clearly does not want to be challenged as being the 'leader' of the group. Again, this bears out research claims that the common sources of girls' conflicts in friendship are jealousy, 'bossiness' and various battles over status (see Griffiths, 1995: 74). Arguments ensue when other girls in the group try to challenge Paula, but Mary herself is never part of these dynamics, because in her own words, "I don't fight with my friends, I'm pretty easygoing that way". But there are underlying motifs of difference in this friendship thread that perhaps, following Davies, Mary cannot fully acknowledge without speaking

¹⁷ Mary: (So do you think there are stereotypes of South Asian girls?). *oh yeah, for sure, like know your culture, be good in school, don't make trouble...I guess because like I do well in school, like I'm not a super brain or something, but like yeah, I guess I get good grades and stuff. I mean I have to because of my parents, right? Like they're always on about that stuff with me and my sister. I mean my sister's like in grade six, and they're always with the whole thing like 'study study study', I mean she's !!! But that's them, that's just the way they are so*". The concern with scholastic performance seems to be a standard part of South Asian familial/community demands (Crystal, Anita, Ritu, Rose, and Asha all brought it up).

¹⁸ See, for example, Griffiths' interviews with girls, and their competitiveness over school, even within friendship circles: one example is when her subjects talk about 'thinking someone is "better than us" because she's 'brainy' (1995: 38-74).

herself into existence as an Other. Despite her 'easygoingness', her narrative choices still hint at the larger importance of these supposedly trivial negotiations with friends:

(do you think it had something to do with being different?). *no not really. I don't know, you mean with Melissa? (yeah) No, because we're a really mixed school so (Well did she ever say or do anything that maybe made you wonder?) nothing really big (long pause), maybe just like a couple of comments (like what?) I don't know (long pause) like one day we were talking about the Xmas holidays and she was like, I'll never forget this, she was like, she made a comment "oh you celebrate Xmas?", like just the way she said it, You, like it was weird or something but like only for me. And I was like "yeah, my family's Catholic", and she was like "I thought you were Indian" and I'm like "yeah, I am but I'm Catholic", and then she's like, she made some comment and everyone laughed, and I was like, I don't know. Anyway, she dropped it, but I don't know, like it kind of bothered me, because my friends laughed, and Paula especially, and I felt like, I don't know.*

(Do you think your friends' behavior had anything to do with your being South Asian?). *No. Not at all. Not at all. Obviously, I guess there's a difference between me and my friends, like I'm Indian, but no they're not like that (So they've never said anything?) oh like maybe they'll like crack jokes sometimes or whatever but they do that about everybody (Does that bother you?). No, not really. (pause) I don't know, well maybe, a little. I don't know why. It shouldn't really, I mean, like people make jokes about everyone, right? Like if you're Chinese or Jewish or like even French Canadian right? It's not personal or anything, like it's not a racist thing. Like my friends would never use, they would never say like a bad word or something, like you know, something. I mean that is just not acceptable anymore in Canadian culture, you know what I mean? (So you don't feel like what happened with your friends had anything to do with your being different). (long pause) I don't know, like I can't say for sure, no. Because sometimes when I think about what happened, I think like "would that whole thing have happened let's say between Tracy and I don't know, like Jen" who's another one of the girls in the group, because Tracy's and Jen's Moms know each other and stuff, like they go to the gym together. I don't know. And like maybe if there was a fight between them, then their mothers would get involved and sort it out. But my mom doesn't, she isn't, like she doesn't know my friends' moms or anything so. But I mean that's not, I guess that doesn't have to do with being Indian, I don't know, do you, do you know what I mean? (I think so), I can't really explain what I mean. Anyway, it was a long time ago, so like I don't care, I mean everything's fine now with my friends. We're really really close.*

According to Hey, "the seductions of cultural hegemony are shaped by girls' co-investments in intimacy and difference...how desires are worked through the pleasures of belonging...how fears were instituted through not belonging as well as girls' different abilities' to police or be policed by 'normality'" (1997: 26). In the above accounts, Mary is struggling with the structuring power of a discourse on girls' friendship that denies the

existence of hierarchy or the possibilities of internal race tensions. Later on in the narrative, she describes her friends as people she will have in her life 'forever', "because that's how close we are", but this idealized narrative does not mesh with the reality, where her friends clearly do engage in a gendered form of banter that is sometimes racialized.¹⁹ She is also aware of the subtleties of belonging in terms of being from an immigrant family. Although she does not have the discursive tools to describe this, we can read the last part of the quote as a diasporic narrative of displacement. Her immigrant mother is not part of the imagined community to which Jen and Tracy's mothers belong, and this in turn positions her as not fully part of this community.

Shazia's narrative of friendship is actually a kind of sequel to Mary's story. It might be read as the next act in the drama of adolescent friendship and difference, where the subject/protagonist refuses to play along any further with certain illusions of sameness. Like Mary, Shazia's friends in high school were mainly white, and she has 'grown apart' from them for reasons that also evoke difference as an underlying theme. For instance, she talks about their immaturity, and how they are only interested in drinking and partying, both of which are prohibited by her culture and religion. She also describes being troubled by the fact that although she spent all her time with these friends in school, on weekends (or during summer vacation), she did not see them much. Part of this she ascribes to her parents' pressures not to go out, not to associate with westerners, and to be friends with others like her (i.e. Muslim). But although she ends up bending to this pressure, the choice is made easier by her white friends' indifference. Here, Shazia is trying to understand the discrepancy between the supposed closeness of her friendships

¹⁹ Remember Gilligan's description of power relations between girls: "What she is trying to understand is the difference between the surface banter of teasing, putting people down that went on among her friends...and being 'really mean' or cruel (Gilligan, 1993: 145-148).

and the reality that she does not belong in the same way. These friendship dynamics are a source of confusion to her and her narrative choice is to accept the Othering of herself by claiming that she has more in common with South Asian friends than she does with her mainstream peer group. This is helped along by a 'showdown' between her and another friend. This fight is definitely a turning point in her narrative of self, but it is also a boundary moment where, unlike Mary, she 'voices-over' the racialized construction of herself as a shy, sweet girl who never says anything:

I used to be very very shy when I was little, but it used to be like, oh I'd have problems, I used to have a group of friends when I was in grade 5 to 8, and it used to be like oh, like one person always had the final say, like we had a group of friends and one person was always like the person that we followed sort of, and I wasn't the type of person who kind of like who liked stuff like that, but anyways I had a friend that I was close with and I sort of had trust issues with her and I remember there was just little things like oh I would say something and she would go tell somebody else and I didn't think that she would, so little things like that, and then we finally we had a big blow-up one day and I totally blew up, like I think I was in grade ten, and ever since then I think I've been sort of more outspoken and speak what's on my mind, like that was a big life changing experience, having trust issues with friends (what made that...) I think it was everything, everything being put together like, all the little things added up... (3-4)... Like I was still very shy and quiet in grade 9, but that was one of the things, when I confronted my friend, I think that totally changed me. (Wow, that one incident) yeah, and one of the things that I said to her was "little Shazia isn't gonna say anything, well she's going to say something now!" you know what I mean. Like I was always the nice, quiet girl, but not anymore.

Unlike Mary, who never confronts either the girl who started the trouble or her friends, Shazia speaks herself into existence in the above moment, as someone who is strong and who will not be pushed around by other people. This action marks a major turning point in her project of selfhood. She now sees herself as someone "who is confident in what she believes in...who won't be swayed". However, underlying this heroic narrative is a sense of loss and disillusionment about friendship that is tied directly to the question of race. Although Shazia herself has made narrative choices, she has made

them in the context of what she perceives to be differences between herself and her friends that, ultimately, cannot be transcended:

I want to meet new people, I want to go beyond, I guess, I'm graduating at the end of this semester and so I just don't feel like, the people I go to high school with now are worth spending time with, 'cause I know that when I'm out of high school, I won't see them anywhere, I don't plan on talking to most of them, there's probably two or three of them that I would keep in contact with for years and years, but that's about it. Like there's two of them, these two girls, they feel the same way as me, they're both white, but they don't drink either and they're fine with it, like the little immature problems, like you have "like Oh, she said this about me, Oh my God, whatever", like things like that I find I'm over, like move on.... my friend always says that you're lucky to leave high school with one good friend, she's always saying that, and it's true. (Really?) I think it's true from my experiences, just in my school. I mean all through high school I've had the same friends who haven't been in my school, like my Muslim friends, Pakistani people (Why is that?). You have more in common, more problems that, the same problems with parents, so you hang out with them more. (You relate more to them?) exactly.

It is fascinating, when contrasting Mary and Shazia's experiences, to note the consequences of being an active agent in one's narrative. Mary's choice not to challenge or 'voice-over' the mainstream story of female friendship reads as a kind of self-effacement, yet it allows her to continue being part of this story, in effect to belong. Shazia has actually chosen to 'voice-over' this story because she has discovered some of its illusions, but there are traces of bitterness in her choice. Her expressions of cynicism do not completely disguise a certain amount of sadness: her recognition of the presence of hierarchy and difference between herself and her white friends has irrevocably closed down this storyline. Shazia, unlike many adolescent girls, has chosen to "speak the unspeakable" (Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 98), and the consequences of this are both freeing and isolating.

Like both Mary and Shazia, Sarah's storyline of friendship is a central part of her discussion of adolescence. She begins and ends her narrative with the importance of

negotiating relationships with other girls.²⁰ But in Sarah's account, race plays a much different part, positioning her at various points as both antagonist and protagonist in the drama of difference. There are several key turning points in her story that are about friendship, among which three stand out as potentially important in terms of the question of race: the first is upon entering high school, when she and her best friend 'drop' their old group to become part of the popular crowd; the second, where her friends betray her trust by coming back to her house drunk after she had specifically requested that they not do so (because of her father's alcoholism), and as a result she is forced to question whether these friendships are worth keeping; and the third, which is not so much an event, as a moment of reflection, where having returned to her old crowd (who have accepted her back), she still sees herself as different from them. She speaks about this, not negatively, but with a humorous impatience that hints at her awareness of a certain silencing that has taken place in terms of her South Asian identity:

Sarah: when I look back on it I try and understand why I did that. But I think it was maybe the wanting to belong to the popular group and never having ever experienced that, never having been in the popular group, and it was always something that I wanted. And when I had the chance to do that it just really, it seemed like the best thing and then after two years of that, I just realized, like this is garbage, like this isn't like positive at all. Then soon after my second year in high school, maybe going into summer of that year, it was just a huge turning point.

One night I remember having friends over and we'd gone to a party, and it was just after, a week after my dad, um we found out about him drinking again, it was just a week after my dad had told me and my best friend got like completely drunk at this party and I was having a sleepover at my house. We were supposed to just have a sleepover but then everybody wanted to go to this guy's party so we went and I told them "just please don't like, please don't get drunk " because I don't want them coming back to my house like that. Like especially at this time in our lives, my parents, it wouldn't be respectful and my best friend came back drunk and my mum totally knew. And it wasn't ever a fight, like the

²⁰ Sarah (17): "it's been a pretty good adolescence...there's always those ups and downs...I guess friends, and changing groups of friends and meeting new people...learning what friendships are good and bad...don't take things for granted, be happier, don't take your life for granted. I don't think I take it for granted necessarily but don't take friendships for granted".

next morning, they were just more wanting to understand and you know "these aren't people to hang around with, like who do you want to be, what do you want to take away from the friendships". and I remember talking to my friends that night and I just totally broke down and I told them everything, about how I felt and I think that was a real stepping stone for me, to let it out, 'cause it had always been hidden. And then it also kind of helped me realize who were my true friends. (What about your best friend?)...no she didn't, that really um, after that night, it changed our whole friendship. It actually ended up like we don't talk anymore, like we're not friends... I think of her and I see the friends that I have made and now I have a better group of friends and they're actually like real love friendships, they're not just like, it's not just a superficial thing, like it's not just about superficial things in the friendship like popularity anymore. Like my best friend from before, I look at her and she hasn't changed much. I'm not saying that I'm better than her but I just think we're on different levels.

I think like around my friends sometimes I have one girl who's majorly fanatic about being a cowgirl and she loves cowgirl accessories and stuff like that, and you know I've always looked at that like "oh that's cute", but how does an Indian girl dress up like a cowgirl type of thing (Oh, she's Indian?)...no no no, she's white right, but she, like you know what I mean, like she's always like cool and "let's go line dancing or something", and I'm just like "when do Indian girls line dance?" (laughs), and not that it's wrong, it's just something that I guess I've always was not something that I don't know that I, I don't know, it's just not something that I feel comfortable doing and that I guess, just differences that I would see, but I don't know, but yeah like there are times when I feel slightly different, like in my whole group of friends, there's me and there's another Indian girl and it's among 10 of us girls and the rest are all white, it's kind of like that, and also with the guys we hang around with, like they're all white guys and you know their idea of a good Friday night is like sitting at home drinking beer, playing the guitar... So it's also just a sense of like what I feel comfortable doing and what I feel comfortable around sometimes and not that I don't feel comfortable around all these white people, but sometimes I will notice that like I'm different, like I look different so maybe you just feel the difference between you and all the white people you're hanging around with sometimes (Do you feel accepted?)...yeah, like I feel accepted and um I like, with my friends, there's no thought in my mind that I'm like not accepted by them, I'm really close to them all and I share everything with them and they're like my sisters, but I know that there's a difference, like racially, outside of some maybe cultural aspects, parents, you know what you can share with, what they can share with their parents like, like Kate's mum will go and buy her like a bottle, a case of 2/4 for a party, whereas I could never ever think of telling my parents that (laughs), you know there is those differences that I know but we accept, but you know what I mean, like that's who I am, that's who my parents are and our cultural difference, but I don't think it's a negative thing, I just think it's something that they know I know.

The significance of the above accounts lies in the fact that Sarah's initial choice to break with her old friends and be part of a popular crowd is indirectly connected to being different: wanting to be popular for her was about overcoming her own sense of being a

racialized subject.²¹ Despite the fact that she has never encountered direct racism, this was still the motivating factor for her. The second moment - although it is directly informed by her dad's alcoholism and has nothing to do with race - is still narratively bound up in her initial choice: it is an indirect consequence of her desire to belong to the mainstream white peer group. The third moment, where she discusses her difference from her friends returns us almost in a loop-like fashion to her initial action, which allowed her, at least temporarily, to speak herself *out* of difference. This initial narrative choice is clearly a boundary *moment* because it is a crucial turning point in her racialized project of belonging that she must later come to grips with, when she returns to her old friends and confronts the inescapability of her difference.

3. *Familial Constructions of Difference*

In the previous two sections, I discussed the boundary events, actions and choices that led to subjects being spoken and/or speaking themselves into difference, in the context of general peer culture and specific friendship circles. However, I found that some of the subjects I interviewed were equally affected by the identities pressed on them by South Asian family/community discourses of girlhood. Again, I want to expand Twine's concept of boundary events to include the moments where girls are constructed as Other through diaspora narratives. Parents, siblings and the community gaze all participate in what I will call boundary *work*:²² the active positioning and

²¹ There are several indications that her racialized status is something that she still struggles with. For example, at some point in adolescence, she anglicized her real name and continues to use this name even in the signing of the consent form for this project.

²² Proweller takes up Barrie Thorne's concept "borderwork", in her analysis of race dynamics between White and minority girls at a private school, to describe how "groups along certain dimensions...can cross borders through social interactions yet still retain a sense of their differences" (1998: 84). She is attempting

“management”²³ of second generation girls as outside the parameters of North American adolescence.

As I pointed out in chapter four, South Asian girls are regularly pressured by family and community to maintain gendered cultural traditions that stand in direct opposition to dominant narratives of girlhood. As symbols of the diaspora’s future, they are the cultural bearers/reproducers who are expected to maintain standards that derive from their parents’ potentially outmoded notions of South Asian girlhood. The museumizing of culture that takes place within immigrant communities creates a paradox where second generation girls must eschew the norms of western adolescence in favor of standards of behavior that may not be at all relevant in their day-to-day worlds. If the gaze of the particular social context in which we find ourselves is, in large part, what shapes us, how can girls be expected to successfully reproduce the experiences of girlhood that are literally from another place and, sometimes, another time:

Aleena (25): I mean you come to this country, it pisses me off, because like you come here and you’re expected to like live as though you’re still in Pakistan, like I’m supposed to cover up and I’m supposed to do certain things and I’m not allowed to do other things, like talk to boys, but I’m allowed to go to a public school. I mean I laugh, because we go to work every day and we’re sitting in an office cubicle with the same people we’re supposed to hide from. It doesn’t make any sense to me. I thought the same thing in high school. I thought it was just dumb.

Mary (16): a couple of years ago, it was bad, like maybe last year, it was a bit rough (what did you fight about?) um, you know, stuff the usual stuff, like Indian parent expectations (laughs), I mean I wanted more freedom, right? And they were all “no way” and “you’re being influenced by Canadian culture” and whatever. Which is so annoying

to stress the fluidity and permeability of categories of difference; my use of boundary work is connected to this issue, but I am more interested here in examining what Proweller has elsewhere characterized as people’s active “patrolling” of these borders.

²³ See Griesemer and Starr’s concept of “boundary objects” (1989: 393): “objects which are plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of several parties employing them to maintain a common identity across sites...the creation and management of boundary objects is a key process in developing and maintaining coherence across intersecting social worlds.”

because like yeah, I live here! Like what do you want me to do? I just find that they don't get it sometimes.

To varying degrees, all the subjects struggled with these types of restrictions during their adolescence. Parental demands, fears and expectations created pressures that complicated their projects of belonging within the mainstream, even for girls whose peer culture was willing to accept them as 'normal'. In fact, for some subjects, it was often parents and community who first reminded them of their difference from peers: Aleena, Anita, Asha and Mary all discussed the difficulties of 'fitting in', when one's behavior is constantly being scrutinized and judged by the family/community. Their negotiations with belonging were often sabotaged by both implicit and explicit suggestions that they were *not* and would never be 'like everyone else', mainly because they were responsible for *reproducing* difference, the kinds of difference that diaspora communities often struggle to hold onto in homogenizing contexts:

Mary (16): good Indian girls don't drink! (So do you think there are stereotypes of South Asian girls?). oh yeah, for sure, like know your culture, be good in school, don't make trouble, don't talk back, like that's one thing, like I love my parents and everything, but sometimes, I don't know, maybe I shouldn't be saying this, but sometimes they get to me, because like they have these ideas, like, about what kind of person I should be, what kind of daughter I should be ...we fight sometimes because she's like "oh you're acting badly", like she and my dad are always telling us, me and my sister, we're not like Canadian girls, we're Goan and that means something different (What does it mean?), I don't know, like you have to know how to cook vindaloo (laughs), I don't know, you have to stay within the community, marriage-wise, go to church regularly, stuff like that.

Anita (34): my main memories of adolescence... Studying or fighting with my parents about socializing (Were your parents strict?) yes very strict. Very strict. Absolutely. Um so um, I had the earliest curfew of all my friends, I had to, they had to know exactly where I was at all moments outside the house, no not outside the house, but outside of school hours...it was sort of a constant battle to try to um, sort of break away from that. Mostly unsuccessful, and um (What about things like dating?) dating was um, no, absolutely not. I mean that was absolutely not a, it wasn't even something you talked about, at home... All my friends were mainly, like every day friends, girls, and dating was like, it wasn't even an issue, it was like no. (so just understood) understood, absolutely understood.

These are examples of what all ten subjects admitted were problematic aspects of growing up as a member of the second generation. At the extreme, immigrant parents are beset by fear, doubt or mistrust. They worry that their children will be irredeemably corrupted by the moral laxity of western youth culture, with its accepted norms of drinking, dating, sexual activity etc. Even in the case of parents who are westernized (i.e. they are not immured in closed immigrant communities, they have white friends etc.), there is still a need to preserve some sense of distinction between what it means to be South Asian and what it means to be white/western.

Furthermore, this distinction is highly gendered: while second generation boys are given much more freedom to experiment with the western model of youth, girls are expected to follow certain codes of conduct that are related to deportment, domestic/cultural knowledge and, above all, sexuality. At a period where subjects' projects of *becoming* are inextricably entwined with physical development, girls also become the focal point of fears about the loss of culture. According to Handa:

The dictates around appropriate femininity are maintained through labeling transgressions as "western" or "white"...challenging parental restrictions makes ...[girls] "white". Crossing the boundaries of appropriate behavior not only signifies a gender transgression but also a cultural one. A real Indian girl would not talk back to her parents and would not want to go out...[a] desire for self-determination puts into question her cultural allegiance (2003: 54)

Writers such as Handa (2003), Qureshi (1992) and others point to parental concerns with girls' virtue in terms of the shame that might be brought down on a family/community. To some extent, this has to do with what Lim describes as the slipping away of patriarchal authority. The excerpts below show the boundary work in which fathers engage, in order to ensure that their daughters remain 'chaste', 'virtuous', and above all, under their control. These stories reference turning points or boundary

events in subjects' projects of becoming, both in childhood and at adolescence, events that are triggered by paternal worries over the blossoming sexuality of daughters. Girls are keenly aware that the transgression of rules at puberty could engender what Smith so movingly describes as the patriarchy's elimination of "her body and name from the world of things as discourse" (1987: 153):²⁴

Shazia (18): my dad wasn't here when I started, he went to Saudi Arabia for 3 or 4 years to work, so we used to see him like every couple of months, he used to come and visit... So I grew up like that for awhile and then he came back when I was in grade 10 and I don't know, I think that was a big big deal in my adolescence, just 'cause it was hard to adjust again when he came back? (in what sense?) just that he was used to having all the say and all the power basically like "I said this so it's like you've gotta do this" and I wasn't used to that for like 4 years so it was really different (1)... Like this one time, when I was in grade 7 he came to pick me up and one of my friend's boyfriends, he was talking to me, and I was new in school then, and um, in junior high, because the people I grew up with in elementary school, all went to another school and met new people there and our group expanded or something. But yeah, I was talking to the guy and my dad freaked out and was like "who is that boy? You don't talk to boys ever again, blah blah blah blah".

Anjana (30): when I was about 7 or 8 I went to day-camp and I remember we were learning like all these little camp songs and stuff, and one of them involved like a verse where like this guy and girl meet and they start kissing and I started singing it at home and I remember my father just like kind of like freaking out that his 8 year old kid was singing this song and yet it was just considered so normal to the rest of the camp and stuff you know I remember at that point just shutting down at anything sexually, not to say that you would wanna discuss it with your father but you know anything to do that came naturally w/ the opposite sex, or sex, was just you know like if I heard, if I, if there was like....if there was anything to do w/ sex around me in the media I wouldn't want to have anything to do w/ my parents around me at that point, if I had to read, I remember in grade 10 we were doing, I wasn't doing very well in grade 10 English, was it grade 10 or grade 11? And my English teacher, we were doing a semester on romance literature, from the romance era and I remember, she saying to my father like you know 'she's not grasping the romance literature very well' and remember my father not even being able

²⁴ It should be mentioned that the patriarchal control displayed by South Asian fathers may appear extreme from a mainstream point of view. But it does not, in essence, differ greatly from the discourses of western girlhood that reference the same worries over the developing sexuality of daughters and the dangers that this pre-supposes, both within and outside the family. Writers such as Mann (1996), Paredes (1989) and Sharpe (1994) document mainstream father/daughter tensions that arise from the fear of shame that daughters may bring down on the family through their sexual (mis)conduct. There is also a prodigious psychoanalytic literature on Freudian notions of incest and the Electra complex, where the daughter's sexual identity at puberty becomes a threat to the maintenance of 'normal' family relations (see Spiller, 1989; Boose, 1989).

to tell me that because it had something to do with the word romance which to an Indian is something that is so almost an Indian is made to feel ashamed of publicly...And so I shut down emotionally from that aspect, from the age of 8 onwards, um, with respect to that, and so I think it changed my relationship to my parents.

Aleena (25): I remember at one point, my grandparents had a pool so all of us learned how to swim when we were one month old, and we were all in the pool, like my cousins...And I remember my dad decided that we weren't allowed to swim with my boy cousins, who were all younger than me, but he put the rule on, and everyone was pissed off, but nobody could say anything because my dad was like "no. they're not gonna swim with, like the girls are not gonna swim with the guys"... I mean we just had fun, it was, it wasn't there was nothing going on, you know what I mean? So, that was weird, like those kinds of restrictions started coming up. (Why? Why do you think at adolescence?). I don't know. Because we never thought anything, we never did anything, I mean I don't know what would make him decide to do that. I guess he figured "okay they're getting older and they're gonna start thinking things, and water, you're half naked, you're" I don't know. I don't know why he started.

What I found particularly striking was the boundary work of South Asian mothers in terms of policing daughters and demanding that they be 'good Indian girls'. There have been a number of thoughtful accounts within the general race/ethnicity literature on mother/daughter relations but, surprisingly, feminist research that is specifically on South Asian women has been noticeably silent on relations of power within the family/community among adult women (mothers, aunts, grandmothers, mothers-in-law) and girls. This is despite the fact that mothers are often even more vigilant than fathers about the reproduction of gendered norms within the culture:

Shazia (18): that was another thing with my mom that we always fought over. Like the fights we had in adolescence were like "oh why can't I wear that?" and she was always like "no, no, no" like she'd think it was too tight or too short or like, things like that. Like shopping would be a nightmare, I'd come home crying. Every time... Well that was another part of adolescence, I remember as I was getting older, I had problems with my Mom, she was like, I mean I had a best friend, Megan, and my Mom's like, "when Megan starts dating you can't be friends with her anymore", and I was like "what? Well who else am I supposed to be friends with? I mean everybody has a boyfriend!", "well you can't have a boyfriend, you're only I'm sixteen years old" and like what am I supposed to say?

Mary (16): like a few months ago, there was like a party for one of my friends, and like my mom gave me the third degree about it? It was so ridiculous, because she like knows my friend and everything, but anyways, and then like I was leaving the house and she saw

what I was wearing and she was like "oh my god, you're wearing that, how did I raise you to be like that" blah blah blah, (what were you wearing?) nothing bad (laughs) like honestly, it was so insane! I mean it was nothing compared to what some of the girls at school wear to parties, but my mom was like shocked, and everything (so what did you do?) I changed, I mean I know that sounds lame but I really wanted to go to the party, and I just didn't want to deal with my mom you know, so I just figured it was easier to just change into something else (was it okay then?) yeah, I guess, like she still didn't like what I was wearing, and she was like "don't let your dad see you in that", which is dumb because he wouldn't say anything anyway, even if he didn't like it, he never does, but whatever.

Although both Shazia and Mary's fathers are silent arbiters in these situations, and clearly their mothers are acting on behalf of both parents, it is still worth exploring further how South Asian women become enrolled in the maintenance of gendered hierarchies that allow them to exercise power, albeit limited, *over* other women (i.e. daughters, sisters, friends etc.). A great deal has been written already about the ethnic father/husband as brutal patriarch. Even in some of the literature on second generation South Asian girls, fathers are constructed as villains; and while some of my subjects' stories do bear out this experience, it is neither uniform nor simple in terms of internal family dynamics. For instance, if we return to Aleena's earlier story of the 'auntie' who called her parents and then sat down and talked with her (p. 318), we can see that this account resonates with other second generation stories of the feminized nature of the South Asian community's watchful gaze:

As I was reaching for a second dip of imli chutney, a group of aunties encircled me. "Doesn't she look lovely?"..."So when is your turn coming?"..."Come on, it's time a girl of your age got married"..."it's such a shame, a lovely girl like you going to waste"..."I smiled apologetically..."I caught the gaze of a woman dressed in a blue silk sari who stared at me disapprovingly...blue sari auntie looked at me as if she knew all my secrets...and no matter how hard I tried fit the image of goodness..."I feared the external discovery of who I really was (Handa, 2003: 108-109).

Furthermore, some subjects pointed out that at times their fathers were actually more lenient or supportive of girls than the women in the family or community:

Asha: (what about your dad?) *his outlook on boys? Um, dad's a little more open to it, um, but at the same time, I mean he was not involved in my day to day upbringing, so it was a little bit of an adjustment factor for him. But I found with dad, as long as he meets my friends it's okay. And so he'd always meet my friends. If I told him I was going out with the guys, not a problem. You know my dad just wants me to be happy, and he trusts my judgment...my dad doesn't believe in arranged marriages, because I don't think he can handle the responsibility of if he were to introduce me to someone that, if things didn't work out, he would consider himself partly responsible for it, and I don't think he wants that guilt. So for my dad it's always been, "find your own person and be happy".*

Sarah: *I know when my sister was born, my mum was kind of hoping for a son, just for the fact that my dad would have a boy in the family and the family would be happy as well that there was a son, but she always says that my dad was the most ecstatic father to have 2 daughters, and you know he's always looked at me and my sister as, like my mum always says "these are my 2 sons, you know like anything that a son could do, these girls could do better", and um, it's never ever been like, my grandparents or anything, like I never felt any different than like them having grandchildren. But I know one of my cousins, like my mum's sister, she has 2 sons, and my mum has 2 daughters, and my aunt's husband, my uncle, his mother, made a comment that like you know boys can stand up and pee and they're like, she's basically like a woman's worst enemy in a way, like she thinks in her mind that boy's are better than girls and when I was born, and then after my cousin was born, she was never too thrilled that I was a girl, and then when he was born, you know she made a whole hoopla and they were all excited type of thing. I guess I've never really cared because I think if, she's not the kind of person that I would even care to be, to talk to so why should it bother me?... like if my dad's land is to be inherited, it would be between my sister and I, both of us, you know like even if there was a son, my dad's always said that "there's no way that he would get any more than you two would get", so things like that which my parents have always made it clear that there isn't a difference between us.*

Crystal: *the weird part is one day I came home drunk and my dad was awake, and he knew (laughs), he knew right because he's obviously been drunk, and he sat me down and he's like "you know, I understand, you're in university, I was young once too and I went out with my friends and we'd drink and you know we didn't know what our limit was" and he's like "so I understand if like you know that happens to you. But not all the time" (laughs). I was like "okay", and then that was it, it was like "wow" (So what was the difference between what your dad would say, and like your mum?) My mum would get really emotional and worked up over it and you know "how can an Indian girl act like that?" (laughs). I don't know, it was really weird because I would always think that my mum was the more open-minded westernized type, but it's almost like my dad was, but then it wasn't. It was weird.*

Smith describes the role of women in the maintenance of gender oppressions within the family as "the power of the patriarchy to command through mothers the silence of daughters, to name and unname them, and thereby to control their meaning in discourse itself" (1987: 156). It is striking that although most of the subjects talked about

the sexism of South Asian men and how girls were always expected to uphold certain standards of behavior (while boys were allowed to do anything that they wanted), many of them singled out mothers as being a central part of maintaining patriarchal dynamics:

Anjana: It's a man's world, especially an Indian man. I mean, he's used to having his Indian mother cook and clean for him.

Ritu: North Indian boys are always Mama's boys, and a friend of mine who's Muslim was dating a North Indian guy for five years, no six years, and finally they broke up, because she realized that Pat's gonna do what his mum tells him to do in the end, and he's not marrying a Muslim girl (laughs).

Crystal: the guys can basically go out and do what they want and come home when they want and date...but if the girl did it they'd be like "what are you?"

Mary: Goan boys, I think they're very spoiled by their mothers...like they're...worshipped or something because they're boys...the mothers...don't stand up for girls like they do for their sons.

Shazia: the moms spoil the guys more...I think there's a double standard, like even having a brother...like my mom spoils him.

The bulk of literature on South Asian women has been on immigrant women's experiences with both societal racism and sexism within the family. Notwithstanding the contributions of this research, I want to reinforce that it is a remarkable oversight not to take the intersection of age and generation into account, in order to understand the complex relations within the family/community, where sometimes power over one's daughters, nieces etc. is exercised more formally by women than it is by men.

Strategies of Accommodation, Denial and Resistance

In chapter three, I identified three types of strategies that minority girls use to deal with being racialized in adolescence. For South Asian girls trying to negotiate discourses of Otherness, these strategies represent attempts on their part to resist, accommodate or deny the positioning of themselves outside the norms of white western girlhood. I defined strategies of accommodation as those that minority girls use in order to belong, either through a method of racelessness or by occupying a position of strategic Otherness. Rather than openly questioning or challenging dominant discourses or social practices that exclude them, they seek to accommodate to these discourses in ways that allow them to maintain some sense of belonging within peer culture. Strategies of denial represent girls' attempts to ignore, avoid or deny their racial/ethnic background. They pursue belonging in the peer group by participating in the discourses of Otherness generated by dominant culture, and by occupying a space of token belonging (i.e. "you're different, you're not like Them"). Strategies of resistance, unlike either accommodation or denial, represent girls' acceptance of their racialized/ethnicized identity as something to be proud of. They are often openly hostile towards western narratives of belonging, and talk back to, or 'voice-over', these narratives. Sometimes, even when they are outwardly accommodating, they still hold on to cultural symbols in order to prevent complete assimilation.

1. Strategies of Accommodation

The subjects that I interviewed drew upon certain strategies identified by researchers such as Proweller and Puar.²⁵ For example, Rose worked at occupying a raceless identity by never discussing her South Asian background with peers or even with close friends. She admits that this is because she was ashamed of it and chose to hide this aspect of herself “because it wasn’t cool to be Indian at that time”. Similarly, both Sarah and Asha were accused by other South Asians as being “whitewashed” (Asha) or “so white” (Sarah). In Sarah’s case, this was said in response to girls’ finding out that her parents knew that she dated, but her previous discussion of her (mainly white) friends (p. 340), her anglicized name, as well as her brief fling with popularity may all be part of a larger strategy of what Proweller describes as ‘acting white’ or *wannabe-ism* (1998). Sarah clearly tried to be part of a mainstream narrative of popularity despite recognizing that many of her social interactions were false or superficial. She herself describes her friendships as competitive and selfish. As she points out: “There’s always like a kind of competition, like who’s the best out of the group, who has the best boyfriend, who’s the best looking girl, who’s doing the best at this or that at school. It was never just about...actually being there for each other”. Furthermore, Sarah’s point below (which I previously discussed), about the white girls who were considered pretty and then her own surprise and elation at becoming an object of attraction suggests that her positioning as a desirable girl within the male gaze may have occurred through what Puar calls a form of strategic Otherness (1995: 27). She does not discuss the specifics of her interactions or strategies, nor does she acknowledge that this is what happened, but I read her belonging

²⁵ Please see chapter three, pp. 133-137, for further discussion.

through the comments of other subjects on South Asian girls who do work out issues of belonging in this fashion:

Sarah (17): you're like "oh my god, like white guys actually like me? Like what?" and then like having like there's always, it was just that there was always that thing that I felt that I'm an Indian girl and like I'd look at other girls, like I'm an Indian girl, they're white guys, and the white guys, like there was this one girl, Lindsey, a white girl, and the guys would go crazy over her and I'd be like "like, look at her, she's nothing that great, she's not that pretty, she's not a very nice person, like why do you like her?" why do all these guys like. She's white and she's got typical, like she's looks like a typical beautiful white girl. I think that that was always something that was like you know I thought about. And I always wanted, I think there was something that I was always like I never wanted to think about it, I didn't wanna think about it that way but it was at the back of my mind. Maybe it was just like being popular that I was able to overcome that. And it actually doesn't matter if I was Indian or not, like I could still be popular, guys will still like me, it doesn't matter. It's all about popularity and having status .

Crystal (28): one girl was in my grade, but we didn't really get along, but she wasn't in that category, I think she tried harder not to be in that category even though she was like really smart, just sort she would do more of what They would do .

Anjana (30): I think I could've gone 2 ways at 12, 'cause I was starting to mature and go through puberty, I could've gone the route of , probably I could've had the attention of boys, but I chose the other route, because I think such pressures were enforced on me because I was the oldest girl... I could've gone 1 of 2 ways, I could've become promiscuous and gained attention from boys. Instead I was so holed up, that I you know I didn't allow myself 'cause I you know your parents want to protect you but at the same time, it can do a lot of detriment to your psyche I think recently in the last 10 years or last 10 or 12 years, Indian women are considered a lot more exotic here and they have a lot more pull, they have a lot more weight, they have a lot more allure to the western mind... (Than they did when we were growing up?) I'm not saying that you and I don't, I'm saying you and I are in a generation now where in the last 10 years or last 15 years, all of a sudden the paradigm has shifted and now we are considered to be not necessarily their equal, but somebody that a white man or a westerner would look at and go, 'yeah I would like to date that woman', because somehow now it's almost trendy to have somebody who's you know not only Canadian and born here, but has an ethnic background.

In the above excerpts, there are only the vaguest hints about strategically Othering (exoticizing) oneself for a racializing male gaze. Subjects do not come out and say that this is what they did (Sarah), or that they could have but chose not to because of parental restrictions (Crystal, Anjana). Sarah herself says that 'it' was something she didn't want to think about, although it was there in the back of her mind, but she does not say what

exactly 'it' was. Given that this is said in the context of other statements that reference both heterosexual desire and race, we can guess that perhaps she is referring to a resentment that she needed to be more exceptionally attractive than the average white girl in order to be considered desirable. Furthermore, whether or not she actively worked at eroticizing herself, this desire is still, in her mind, located in some kind of racialized power dynamic that exists between herself as a minority girl, and white boys. All of these vague hints lead me to suspect that Sarah may have occupied the subject position that both Crystal and Anjana reference in their discussions.

Anjana's account is thought provoking because of the narrative slippages in her storyline. She talks about the possibility of 'taking the route' of being attractive to boys (the route of the eroticized Other?), but choosing not to take this route because of familial pressures. However, this does not mesh with her other memories of adolescence, which seem to be very much about trying to be desirable (wearing make-up etc to look prettier and attract male attention).

Anjana (30): I felt very ugly, I felt like God had cursed me we weren't allowed to wear makeup at all, and I was dying to wear makeup because I thought that would transform me into someone you know more attractive, someone who was a lot more attractive and so I would you know rebelliously, I remember, I think in grade 6 or 7 I used to wear makeup you know behind my Mum's back and she would always see it and stuff and then in grade 8 I was actually, she forbade me to wear makeup so I wore no makeup that whole year, like waiting to grow up so I could wear makeup ... I just remember feeling so jealous, thinking 'if only I could wear makeup or I could wear eye-shadow and I could do my hair like that, I would be so much prettier'. And I remember just feeling so jealous and so bitter that you know here I was like I can't do anything to you know help my image along. So when grade 9 came, I just went nuts, I remember, I just wore so much makeup, I looked like a slut, I'm sure. I was just, I didn't dress like a slut, but I wore makeup like a slut .

Anjana's account is confusing: she obviously did try to belong to the dominant aesthetic, and she is also aware that there is 'a route' (strategic Othering), because she discusses the discourse around exotic Others. However, she also contradicts herself by

suggesting that this subject positioning was not available to her during the period when she grew up. This statement is validated to some extent by Sarah's experience which is taking place in a different 'era'. However, it can be challenged, as well, by Crystal's narrative. Crystal is only two years younger than Anjana, but according to her there was at least one South Asian girl who managed to belong. Nevertheless, Crystal's account of the girl who hid her smartness and did more of what They did, is equally vague. What did They do? How did this girl manage to fit in better than Crystal? Crystal does not get into detail about this form of belonging, perhaps because she is reluctant to admit that she was unsuccessful at occupying the subject position of exotic Other:

Crystal (28): in grade one and grade two I was like, those were like probably the only years I was like Miss popularity (grade one and two), yeah (laughs), I remember that. Um, and then I moved to I had to switch schools and then after that I was like this nerd, geek, whatever you wanna call it, and um, yeah, like, few friends (long pause). I don't remember much about that really, not too much. And then middle school, same sort of thing like, like very few friends, um, like I think a lot people were like dating guys and they had lots of guy friends, but I was like, you know off on my own sort of thing... in terms of like dating and whatever and stuff like that, I don't think I really cared about that. I might've liked a guy and stuff like that, but I'd be like "ah, whatever, he's not interested".

What is striking about both Anjana and Crystal's accounts is that subjects' narratives actually contain traces of *failed* or deferred strategies of accommodation. In Crystal's case, she becomes a desirable subject in university. However, for Anjana, although she too has managed successfully to occupy an eroticized subject position in adulthood,²⁶ she is obviously still affected by her failure in adolescence to achieve this.

²⁶ Anjana (30): (Yeah. Do you get asked a lot where are you from?) Yeah. I get a lot of 'are you mixed?' (Does it bother you?) ... *it's kind of, it's flattering to a certain degree in my personal life, when I'm dealing with a man, but it's not, on a superficial professional level or anything to do with like you know some random person wanting to know off the street or whatever.*

2. Strategies of Denial

In chapter three, I defined strategies of denial as self-inflicted forms of effacement. They are discursive threads that indicate either a momentary or prolonged erasure of the self-as-subject, through the acceptance of dominant discourses that construct the racialized self as an object. Here the eye of the social has taken over the 'I' of the self, so that subjects speak about themselves, their families/communities and their experiences in ways that are either stereotypical or obviously demeaning. During the interviews, I found that most of the subjects, with the possible exception of Ritu, engaged in some form of denial with regards to their racialized status. One of the more obvious examples is Rose's shame about being Indian during adolescence, where she strategically whitens herself by constructing an impenetrable silence around her race/ethnicity within peer culture. She simply does not discuss it with friends and hopes that they will not notice that she is different. This must be read as both a strategy of accommodation and denial, because Rose actually blames South Asians for being different: the account given in the section on boundary events (pp. 325-326), indicates that during her teenage years she wished that the community could just be 'like everyone else'. Rose is one of the obvious examples of how a self can be taken over by the eye of the social gaze. Even now, as an adult, Rose's growing acceptance and pride in being Indian is a direct result of the changed relationship between mainstream culture and South Asianness. Rose perceives that it is now acceptable - even fashionable - to be Indian and, thus, feels better about displaying that part of herself. But this suggests that the erasure of her self at adolescence has been more permanent since, as an adult woman, she continues to define her South Asianness in terms of the status that it occupies in the social.

Other obvious examples of denial can be found in the accounts of Crystal and Asha. Crystal normalizes her geek status in adolescence and refuses the possibility that race may have played a part; Asha also denies the importance of race in adolescence and has a narrative thread running through her story where white people are painted in either neutral or flattering terms. Further, she suggests that her difficulties with belonging have been mainly because of the South Asian community, which has not properly assimilated in the way that it should:

Asha (29): growing up and going to high school, being an adolescent, um, I honestly can't say that I had any Indian friends. When I was younger, I never even realized that I was Indian ... When I was a little bit younger, I had gone to, my mom put me in Hindi school, and I didn't get along with the other kids in Hindi school, so she pulled me out of Hindi school (why?) um, because I was the different kid, in the sense that my parents were separated, um, and in the Indian community that wasn't necessarily accepted, so I did have friends in Hindi school who stopped being my friend because their parents were concerned that I would be a bad influence on them ..., I went to Ottawa U, and ah, I studied science, and studying science at Ottawa U, you suddenly, I was introduced to a strong, I guess Indian influence, and I have to say that's probably when I started to have my um um, I guess my struggles finding a balance between being Indian, not being Indian, because I did feel pressures from the few Indian friends that I had made to sort of either be completely Indian or go the other way (What's the other way?) um, I guess normal, what was normal for me until then. I had two very good friends who I went to Ottawa U with, um, my best friend was Polish and she went there with me, and she ended up feeling left out of my whole sort of new-found Indian friends, 'cause I started listening to Indian music, going to Indian parties, and stuff like that and ah, so I did find myself going through a few moments of, well I don't necessarily agree with the Indian philosophies all the time ... I was never called names due to my skin color. Or anything like that. It was because we didn't speak French. Or our house would get egged all the time because we were the only English family in the neighborhood .

In Asha's story, there is a strong denial that her racial identity ever interfered with her ability to belong, except to the extent that her mother was really strict with her. As I mentioned earlier, she is one of the subjects who articulated a narrative of *becoming/belonging* that was compromised by her own family/community rather than mainstream peer culture. Yet, she also describes not being able to explain to her friends about curfews and other restrictions because, "I don't want to say embarrassed but (long

pause), I feel like I just didn't talk about it? I just didn't feel that comfortable talking about it (Why?) um, (long pause), I guess because I didn't feel like they would understand. I mean none of them had that sort of concerns". She never explains this embarrassment in terms of her difference, but there are hints of it, particularly when she talks about having certain things in common with Indian friends that she does not share with white friends. But she does not want to say that her reticence with her 'white' friends may be a product of mainstream intolerance or ignorance about South Asian culture. I read this glossing over as a form of denial, since to articulate this would contradict her main storyline: that Canada is multicultural and tolerant, and it is immigrants who do not work hard enough to assimilate. She mentions, at one point, that her house was the only one in the neighborhood that was egged, but she seems confident that this was not racial, but rather linguistic. Once again, by raising the spectre of language, she is positioning herself as being part of the very 'Canadian' narrative of English/French tensions, rather than an outsider whose house might have been egged because of the color of her skin. Handa describes encountering a similar phenomenon with her interviewees: even when they had experienced racism, they often refused to call it racism:

While examining the interviews, rather than focusing on whether the young women's accounts documented an actual decrease in racism, I began to look at how they were naming, and not naming, racism. All of the women seemed to downplay racist events and often produced a preferred reading of cultural miscommunication rather than one of racism and power. Seeing their schools and their larger social context as multicultural seemed to foreclose any possibility that discriminatory acts towards them were actually racist. Many women started with the statement, "no, not really", in response to my question whether they had ever experienced racism, but would then recount various racist incidents. I use the word *incidents* quite purposefully to indicate that these young women defined racism very much in term of events, rather than subtler ongoing or systemic daily practices (Handa, 2003: 93-94).

I found during the interviews that even subjects who were more aware of issues of race and racialization engaged in similar moments of denial that interrupted the coherence of their overall accounts. For instance, despite Shazia's strong Muslim identity, at one point she uses the language of racism to distinguish herself from immigrant South Asians ("I'm not marrying some Paki"). Similarly, although Anjana clearly struggles with internalized racism, she still uses it to talk about South Asianness in ways that are disturbingly self-directed:

About 2 years ago when I had a very bad breakup w/ this westerner and I retreated back to my old 'oh Gee, Indian girls are just so unattractive', you know feeling sorry for myself ... in the last 10 years or last 15 years, all of a sudden the paradigm has shifted and now we are considered to be not necessarily their equal, but somebody that a white man or a westerner would look at and go, 'yeah I would like to date that woman', because somehow now it's almost trendy to have somebody who's you know not only Canadian and born here, but has an ethnic background. (So have you noticed a shift then from the eighties to the nineties in that sense? in terms of going from being Indian in the eighties in a certain way to now being more of a desired product?) Somewhat, but I still am very uh, I still have that hang-up in my head that somehow, um, I'm not good enough for a Westerner? (Do you think Indian girls growing up now have that hang-up?) Less than when you and I were growing up, less so. I mean I think, on one hand, I think you and I were from a generation where it wasn't necessarily cool to be Indian in high school, so therefore you didn't show it, and the last thing you wanted to do was have your mum and dad show up to pick you up after school, to pick you up after school, now would you?

Other examples, include the construction of South Asian communities by Asha, Crystal and Mary, through the stereotype of 'cliques', a stereotype that denies the reality of mainstream exclusionary practices. This is despite the fact that all three of them have mentioned that mainstream adolescence is all about exclusionary practices. Mary's criticism of the Sikh crowd at her school is particularly interesting: she singles them out as problematic, because they think they are cool and look down on other people. This coupled with her own strategies of accommodation suggests that Mary has internalized a

discourse of belonging where minorities should just go along and assimilate, and they certainly should not act as if they are better than other people:

They're so, I don't want to say it because it sounds bad but, they're just very, like I think maybe they think they're better than other people. (how do you know they think that?) um I don't know obviously, but you can just tell from the way they act, like I know that sounds bad, it's just I find, like they're very, like if you're not Indian and even if you are but you're not Sikh then you just wouldn't fit in because they're so into that whole cultural thing. And like I guess I find it annoying because some of the girls, they think they're so all that... Like I've talked to other Indians who think exactly the same thing as me, like we notice that they're just like that (but don't other groups stick together as well?) oh yeah, like some of the Muslim girls they like always hang out together, but it's different (why?) um, I don't know, because I guess like I've talked to those girls and I don't find they're full of themselves or anything, like they're really nice, some of them (but they stick together too), yeah, but like that's more I think because like they all sort of have to look the same, like not, I didn't mean it like that, I just meant like that they all dress in the Hijab and everything and probably they feel more comfortable with each other (But why wouldn't that be the case with this Punjabi group, I mean maybe they feel more comfortable with each other) yeah, no, you're right, like it's hard to explain I guess. I guess, it's just that they're just, like they have major attitude, like they think they're cool or something. I don't know.

Mary seems to be voicing a sense of discomfort with members of this group acting as if they are somehow better than other people. Given the acceptance that most of the subjects had about the hierarchies of adolescence, I found it interesting that the attempt on the part of this Sikh group to position themselves as powerful would be met with such resistance from another minority subject. Perhaps because Mary occupies a more subordinate position in her own social group, she is expressing, in this moment, an unconscious resentment towards fellow minorities who do not have to negotiate belonging in the same manner.²⁷

²⁷ Interestingly, Sarah voices a similar unease about her Indian boyfriend's sense of pride: *Shane was, not that he was a racist guy, he was more aware of his sense of being Indian and he was more not just that he was proud of that, he was also like, he has a lot of Muslim friends and they're very much into the fact that at his school like there was a large population of Indian people and they felt that they dominated the school more than let's say racialized white people did. And so he always felt that he was superior to everything and until I met him I never felt that I was of anything higher or lower, like I had always felt equally with all the other white kids in my school.*

Strategies of denial are an excellent way to track how race embeds itself in the personal history of individuals, in a number of different and sometimes counter-intuitive ways. For instance, Aleena's strategies of denial raise some of the questions of selfhood, mental health and race that Knowles and others explore in their work, with one intriguing difference: race is part of the production of selfhood, but racism is not. According to Aleena, the latter has been a non-issue for her, and even race only matters when her family or community makes it matter. But I would argue that the latter statement is somewhat inconsistent with much of Aleena's account. I read race as a central part of Aleena's story: in the drama of her life, the bad guy is clearly South Asian Muslim culture, and the hero, the Canadian national imaginary. However, this strategy of denial has an unusual source that demands closer attention: Aleena's experience of sexual abuse at the hands of an uncle when she was eight has had a profound impact on her narrative of self. Interestingly, it has also been articulated through a storyline of racial difference. She is angry at her family and community because they let this happen, and then handled it so badly. As a result, South Asian Muslims, both male and female, are demonized. Although there are clearly friends and family members who have supported her, these individuals become the exception to the rule that being South Asian and Muslim is a bad thing, and her only refuge from it has been the white mainstream:

I loved it when I was in high school...I didn't have Muslim friends, I didn't have any kind of Pakistani...The whole school population was practically white. We had like, now the high school is full of like people of different minorities and stuff, but back then, I didn't even know I was a different color up until first year university and that's when people were cliquy and stuff. Stupid me, I decided to fast track out of high school and I left a year earlier than all my friends, and I remember that's when I started meeting Muslim and Indian people and that's when I realized I was actually different ... when I was in high school, with my white friends, nobody judged me...But in university, as soon as I made Pakistani and Indian friends, they were quick to tell me, you know, "oh that's bad. People will talk"... I ended up getting immersed into that whole culture and I lost like a big part, and now that I'm out of university, and I started working, I feel more

comfortable with white people again, because I feel like I can be myself... Like I don't like being around Pakistani people, I like Indian people better because they're more liberal than Muslims. (When you say Indian, what do you mean? Because there are Indian Muslims). I mean Hindu and Sikh. Whereas, with Pakistani people, I could not make friends with them, I could not trust them. I'm sure I would've been a completely different person if I'd been friends with Indian and Pakistani people in high school. That sounds so bad because that's supposed to be my culture, but I feel like that. It sounds like I'm a bad traitor, you probably think that (no not at all), but that's honestly what I think.

Despite the fact that at several points in her larger narrative, she mentions various members of her family as well as friends who are supportive and non-judgmental (her grandfather, aunt, South Asian friend Neela), they are tokenized, and rendered exceptions to the South Asian and/or Muslim Pakistani community. It is white mainstream Canada that Aleena looks to for belonging, and she has found it, ostensibly without any struggle over difference. However, if we return to an earlier discussion (p.291), Aleena's account of being asked, all the time, where she is from creates a certain discrepancy with her strong claims of belonging. What is most compelling about her story from the perspective of difference and the biographical self, is that Aleena's personal trauma has become the catalyst for her story of race: the diasporic context in which she has grown up has offered her an alternative space of national belonging, and she has clearly idealized this space.²⁸

²⁸ The question arises to how her trauma would have played out if she had grown up in Pakistan. First, would there even have been a space to talk about it? After all, she raised it with her mother because she had watched a film in elementary school on sexual abuse. This is part of contemporary North American discussions around "child rights". Would this discussion have even taken place in a Pakistani school? Second, would there have been an accompanying narrative analogous to the Good Guy/Canadian culture, Bad Guy/Pakistani culture? In other words, who would occupy the position of savior within this narrative?

3. *Strategies of Resistance*

While strategies of accommodation and denial are implicated in girls' acceptance and maintenance of hegemonic discourses in their lives, strategies of resistance are active attempts on the part of the subject to challenge power relations. These strategies can be both liberatory as well as ultimately self-defeating; nonetheless, they represent modes of resistance that are informed by subjects' awareness of, and anger towards, the discourses and practices that are continuously attempting to speak them into difference.

Strategies of resistance are not always easily identifiable, particularly in narratives where the dominant themes are of accommodation or denial. For instance, Aleena's story reads as a combination of these two strategies: throughout her story, she presents an idealized version of white Canadian culture that stands in contradistinction to the backwardness and tyranny of South Asian Muslim culture. Considering that this is a dominant theme in her story, it is curious that she is still clinging to her Islamic identity. Despite her antipathy towards Muslims, she still has Muslim friends, goes to Mosque regularly, does not eat pork, does not want alcohol in her house and continues to see herself as a Muslim. While she herself is uncertain about her reasons for clinging to this identity, it is clearly something that she does not want to relinquish completely in favor of an assimilated Canadian identity:

I haven't gone back to Pakistan since I was five. This year I'm going for the first time and I am so adamantly against it, I really don't want to go. I really really don't want to go. Because I told my mum, she goes "just see where you came from", and I didn't come from there, I don't feel any alliance to there, I don't feel anything, nothing, I feel nothing towards Pakistan. I don't feel it shaped me, I have nothing to do with it. That's why I don't like the idea that she's saying "okay you have to go back to your roots or whatever". Those aren't my roots! I feel like I'm Canadian. I feel way closer to um, but then I'd be lying by saying that as well. Like, obviously clearly, I still have some, I have my own cultural things. Like there's certain things that I feel more comfortable with. Like um, I don't know, like, like I wouldn't want alcohol in my house. I mean I might drink

it when I go out, but I don't want that in my house. It's just a personal preference, but obviously that was a religious thing. That was put into me. But I don't believe that alcohol is bad because of what our religion says, it's just when you grow up thinking a certain way for so long, you end up just like, like pork. I would never eat pork. Well, do I really think it's bad? Probably not, but because I've grown up that way, I would probably never eat pork. So things like that. They're in me only because of my culture, because of my religion... (So you don't feel very Muslim. Do you feel South Asian?) okay, maybe I feel more Muslim than I do Pakistani. You know what I mean? Like I think, religiously I'm sort of more in tune than I am culturally. Culturally I just feel like I'm out of it. I feel like I don't agree with a lot of the cultural things, um, but then I don't agree with a lot of the religious things either. I consider myself Muslim, but I consider myself a very liberal Muslim. Because there's just too many things that I disagree with.

It is the contradictions in Aleena's story that represent a certain form of resistance to both her Muslim community, and dominant Canadian culture. While I would not describe these contradictions as 'voice-overs', since they are not active or conscious attempts to challenge dominant narratives of race, they are still a form of resistance that should be recognized as such. It is true that Aleena adamantly denies feeling Pakistani and claims that she is totally 'Canadian', but she also admits that she is voluntarily going to Pakistan and even paying for the trip. She herself does not understand why she is doing this, but her narrative suggests a great deal of ambivalence towards what she has constructed as the mutually exclusive spaces of 'Canadian' and Pakistani. Despite her anger, hostility and open resentment towards the latter, she is unwilling to relinquish this space completely.

Aleena's story is an example of a very subtle form of resistance, perhaps even unrecognizable to the subject herself. More obvious forms may be found in the stories of Shazia and Sarah. The latter's negotiations with belonging tended to be along the lines of accommodation or *wannabe*-ism, but we can see a great deal of resistance in her decision to separate herself from the "popular crowd", as well as her recognition that even her

current friends occupy a space of whiteness that does not fully resonate with who she is. Further, both she and Shazia are part of an anti-racist forum which attempts to address the issue of difference in Canadian schools. Although, like many of the other subjects that I interviewed, Sarah herself has never experienced direct racism, she is still aware that it is an issue. She is also keenly aware of the subtle role that race has played in her own identity struggles. Race is, therefore, a politicized issue for her and she juggles her accommodation to dominant cultural discourses, with a resistance to what she perceives to be the more damaging effects of racism.

Like Sarah, Shazia is part of the anti-racist forum; in her case this seems to be the product of a growing awareness that as a South Asian Muslim in the wake of 9/11, she will never belong fully. Shazia's overt resistance is also accompanied by a strong Muslim identity and a need to point out the limitations of Canadian multicultural discourse. Shazia's narrative interweaves race with the personal or existential: she articulates her development into a person who is strong, outspoken and stands up for what she believes in, through the storyline of difference. She is proud to be different, proud to be Muslim, and this pride allows her to resist the positioning of herself as an outsider to mainstream peer culture. In Shazia's story, it is her white peers who are "immature" and caught up in meaningless adolescent rituals. By articulating race through this storyline, she is, in effect, 'voicing-over' mainstream narratives of normal adolescence. Doing so allows her to turn the table on dominant culture. In a strange twist, she actually uses the western developmental story of 'maturity' to Other her peers. In this version of *belonging/becoming*, racial/ethnic difference is a good thing; it makes her more mature than her white western peers, and therefore superior to them:

The friends at school now, I don't feel that, I feel that I'm at a different level from them now, just 'cause I feel that they're sort of immature, the things that they're interested in, the things that they do, so I really don't, I'm not really close to the friends at school anymore... like they're into like partying and drinking every weekend and everything's always about drinking and stuff like that. I have some friends, who are in school, who are not like that and they're like the minority people who don't go out and like party every weekend anymore and stuff like that so (did you go out and party every weekend?), no, no. Because that's one thing about my religion too, we don't drink alcohol so... I'm Muslim obviously, I don't feel not proud of being different, like I feel like it's sort of an advantage, it's been good, it hasn't been bad at all so I don't know. Just about being the person that I am, I think that has shaped me... (Okay, how would you describe yourself to someone, who you are as a person?) Um, I'm a Pakistani girl, 18, living in Canada, I don't know (laughs). Somebody who is confident in what she believes in, like, who won't be swayed, maybe like stubborn. Has self-control, self-restraint. I was talking to a guy last night and he was like "oh you don't drink alcohol at all?" (mock voice) and I said "no". why, cause I'm Muslim? You'll never ever drink alcohol? Yes. He was like "whoa. That's willpower." I think that would be something. And if I see something that I don't feel is right then I don't have any problems going in and saying things to anybody, like if I feel something is not being done right, or whatever. I feel I can be outspoken.

Unlike the above subjects, whose narratives contained forms of resistance alongside accommodation and denial, Ritu's story is almost completely couched in the language of resistance. As mentioned earlier, Ritu's experiences of racism were traumatizing and had long term consequences in terms of her negotiations with mainstream Canadian culture. My sense is that the only way that she was able to prevent a complete erasure of self, was to be openly defiant and resentful towards the mainstream. I suspect that Ritu's strategies of resistance during adolescence actually saved her *existential* life: she chooses to hang out mainly with other minorities; she does not shy away from identifying both obvious and subtle forms of racism; and she goes further than any of the other subjects in that she fingers people in positions of authority as partially responsible. This ranges from the lawyers and law students in her adult life, to the police and their racial profiling, to the high school teachers who, because they were white, chose to look the other way instead of doing something:

but mine were bad. I mean one of my friends got stabbed, and there was one time this huge fight on the football field between black people and skinheads, yeah (laughs) (Okay! Well what were the teachers or administrators doing about this?) Nothing. I complained once to a French teacher, because the guy sitting next to me was actually the guy who spat on me, so I asked if I could be moved, and she was concerned, so she moved us apart. I mean he was just a pathetic, little scrawny white boy, right, so. I don't know what he's doing now. But I don't know, they didn't do much. They didn't care much, because they were basically white teachers, right.

The above description is not only damning to those who had power and did not use it to protect subjects such as Ritu, it also contains a strong element of contempt for the victimizer': in Ritu's 'voice-over', he becomes "a pathetic little scrawny white boy." Although he and his friends clearly had power over her in that they were able to humiliate her without any real punishment, she does not allow them any status in her story. Ritu's narrative is also very dynamic: at a later point, she 'voices-over' her own racialized assumptions when she re-categorizes the 'pretty white girls' who behaved badly towards her in much more degrading terms:

OAC was good, because all those basically PWTs that said that the school was too brown for them (The what?) Poor White Trash, yeah that's what I call 'em, cause they were, and they insulted us, so why can't I insult them? After they left it was just us left over, and the nicer white people, that was great, in high school, we had a lot of power then in school so it was fun .

Ritu uses discourse to resist her peers' attempt to speak her out of existence as a person. She labels them in terms that are both racialized and classed, in order for them to have no power over her. The overall position that Ritu takes in her story is that of a hostile minority who despises and fears 'Canadian' society and 'Canadians', but essentially feels superior to them. However, if we read Ritu's story through Giddens' point about humiliation and the fragmented self (1991: 65-66), we may find that Ritu's fear and disgust are absolutely necessary; psychically, she could not have survived the racism of her adolescence unless she actively constructed a different storyline. Unlike

some of the other subjects, such as Rose or Anjana, whose adolescent experiences of racialization have created selves who cannot really speak (Rose), or who mainly speak in the language of the oppressor (Anjana), Ritu speaks clearly and loudly, but not without sadness and an awareness that she has to tell the story this way. She has no other choice, if she wants to maintain any kind of coherent selfhood:

I grew up in such a racist environment, so I kind of became racist myself. I don't want to marry a white person, I don't want to marry a non-Hindu, I don't want this I don't want that. I became so narrow....Because we grew up with really racist people, and I don't want to have to deal with the hassle of trying to blend my life with someone who doesn't understand that I am Indian and that's way more important to me than being Canadian ...Okay. Interesting)...it's wrong (Laughs), I think it's wrong, it's really wrong, that I'm so narrow, but (it's obviously a reaction to what happened to you), yeah, it's a reaction. I mean I love my sister's husband's family, they're nice and all, but I could never marry a white guy. (Because of your experiences) yeah... I'm not a Canadian, I'm not Canadian. I love hockey, I can drink beer, whatever, and I love actually the clean cold winters and Xmas and stuff, but I'm an Indian. Because people here will never accept what I am, and they want me to be what they are...they would never accept me, so um. (So let me ask you this. If they did accept you, if they had accepted you, do you think you would feel more Canadian?) Probably. I think so ... I'm bitter, so bitter about Canadians, that I hate them all. Even though I don't hate them

Given the extreme racism that she experienced, I would suggest that it was absolutely necessary for Ritu to construct a counter narrative of resistance that she maintains to this day. Otherwise, she may have succumbed to what Giddens would describe as the “corrosive” sense of shame that a subject carries within after being humiliated by another person (1991: 65-66). Furthermore, as the above excerpt indicates, Ritu is clearly aware of the constructedness of her hatred and is, on some level, unhappy about it.²⁹

The above discussion raises the issue of reflexivity in subjects' account. The various discourses that subjects identify, the experiences of difference-making that they

²⁹ Meaning that she is aware that she hates 'Canadians' because she thinks that they hate her, not because she is so different from them. She highlights her Canadianness (drinking beer, loving hockey and winter), only to herself negate it (“I'm not Canadian”), but she goes out of her way to stress that this is only because Canadians themselves will never accept her.

narrate and the strategies upon which they draw to negotiate adolescence, take place at one level of articulation. Sometimes, as is the case with subjects such as Crystal, there is either an unwillingness to analyze their own storytelling or, as in Aleena's case, a confusion around their motives. But most of the subjects offered a meta-narrative to accompany their main story, through contradictions, editing and commenting on what they had just said. I will now turn my attention to these meta-narratives, since they offer subjects' own insights into their complicated lives.

Metanarratives of Otherness

According to Gubrium and Holstein, subjects tell stories about their lives with the awareness that these stories are imperfect and highly subjective accounts of actual events, experiences and emotions (1998). To this extent, subjects are aware that the living of a life and its narration are not conflatable: all of us have our own interpretations of why, how or what happened at any given moment. This is the result of the limitations of memory, the interventions of the unconscious and perhaps most of all because of the narrative choices that subjects make to tell the story one way rather than another. Although much of this happens organically, the subject is also actively engaged in constructing a certain story for a certain audience.

As mentioned in chapter three, racialized subjects, by virtue of their complicated negotiations with belonging, may be hyper reflexive in their articulations of selfhood. They are constantly confronted with the discrepancy between dominant representations of childhood, adolescence or adulthood that tell them what their lives should be, and their

lived experiences of Otherness. As a result, they are often more aware than “normals” of who they are, who they are not and who they are trying to be. For example, as I mentioned earlier, my subjects were well aware of the dominant narratives of adolescence that construct girlhood through images of fun, beauty, popularity, dating and various forms of experimentation. At the same time, I found that many of the subjects, including those who had never been racialized, were conscious of their distance from these discourses of fun, youth, danger, excitement etc. One noticeable thread running through some of the adult women’s accounts was that of the social “late bloomer”.³⁰ I would characterize this thread as a counter-narrative, produced out of subjects’ awareness of their distance from the mainstream notion of adolescence. Crystal, Rose, Anita, Ritu, and Asha all suggested that the experiences commonly associated with western adolescent rites of passage (rebellion against parents, dating, drinking, sexual activity etc.), were pushed back for them, rendering their early adulthood a sort of adolescence. This is a crucial concern because it flags the constructedness of modern adolescence and suggests that, for ethnicized, racialized minorities, the discourses of adolescence are not meaningful in the same developmental way as they are for mainstream youth. It also raises the possibility that even mainstream subjects may not be living the representations of youth being produced by music, television movies, advertising etc. Yet there is still a desire to associate with these representations. Subjects’ re-narrations of young adulthood as a latent period of adolescence strike me as attempts to lay claim to this set of

³⁰ The storyline of being an early or late bloomer, either physically or socially, is deeply embedded in narratives of adolescence. This flower metaphor also returns us to the notion of suspended subjectivity: in this imagery, the self is either a seed (childhood), or it has ‘blossomed’ into a flower (adulthood). The stage in-between does not appear to have any name in mainstream culture that we would commonly associate with a state of actual being. We can again identify the tensions of trying to characterize either objects or subjects who are in the process of becoming and, yet, are also in some strange kind of stasis.

experiences, to be able to participate in the story of youth, even if they have not followed the 'normal' trajectory. Subjects are aware of this lack of supposed normality, they show the hyper-reflexivity of those, following Steedman, who are aware of the disjuncture between dominant cultural narratives and their borderland existences:

Anita (34): Um, and so we didn't sneak around, we didn't, yeah, um, I don't really remember doing that until actually university. (So in university you started..) yeah oh yeah, dating behind their backs, yeah exactly, exactly... I think all of that real rebellion for me started later, than um adolescence. For me it was sort of more in university, um, and part of that, was um, starting with a clean slate, when you get to university and just deciding, um, to do more, to get involved more. To experience more, experiment more, was kind of for me, in university and beyond, not really in the high school years .

Crystal (28): I think the open-mindedness did not develop during high school for me, or during middle school, it was more in university. Um, 'cause I was probably more Indian in high school and that's probably why I didn't fit in as well ... I don't know. I really don't know. It was kind of like a complete reversal of the whole situation in high school, I mean I went out and I was like partying, probably more so than all the other Indian people, maybe because I'd been like so sheltered in high school (laughs) so it was like once I was in university, it was a complete freedom. Well not really because I was still living at home, but kind of did what I wanted to ... Well I think that's one of the reasons why I sort of had the issues with being the black sheep in university, was because it was more of a late blooming thing for me. I should've probably experienced all that during high school (laughs), to be on track. No, it wasn't until I was in university that I was like "wow this whole Indian thing is way too restrictive for me".

Another way in which the reflexivity of the Othered shows itself is in the monitoring and editing that subjects often engage in with the researcher. I found that subjects were sometimes self conscious or embarrassed about making certain statements to me, the researcher, and actually expressed this through editorial remarks on what they had just said. For example, although Ritu's narrative is one of defiance against white society, the earlier passage (p. 367) shows that she is still deeply ambivalent about her own "racism" towards whites. Her narrative slippages illustrate the tensions between what she feels is her justified anger towards white Canadian racism, and her awareness that not every white person is like that. She is aware that she has let herself get stuck in

this space, but she is uncertain about how to deal with it. This reflexivity is interesting because it shows that despite Ritu's strongly defensive South Asian identity and her contempt for white Canadians, she does not really want to feel this way. There is almost a wistfulness to her tone, as if she knows that her hatred of 'Canadians' and her claims of not wanting to belong to a Canadian imaginary are ultimately dependent on her fears that she will not be wanted. She therefore rejects 'them' before they have the opportunity to reject her.

Aleena's narrative also offers an interesting example of editorializing; here, the editing work occurs through moral statements about both her strong sexuality and her inability to feel good about her cultural identity. In these moments, Aleena tries to justify herself to me, the researcher, because she assumes that I think badly of her. However, these statements also act as a vehicle for her to express her own guilt and shame at her behavior:

I went a little buck wild and ended up being with a lot of guys, very suddenly, I mean I really like sex, that's so bad (laughs). (Why is that bad?) Well to this day, it's like the most important thing to me, like one of my cousins doesn't think it's anything and she's amazed that I think it's the most important thing, I feel like a guy when I say it ... you're gonna think 'ooh what a wacked-out girl'...my first sexual experience, I'd already had a boyfriend for a couple of months, but I never did anything with him (he was Indian?). Yeah, a ll Sikh. Well, that was his brother (oh my goodness). (laughs) If you hear the entire story, it's really bad! Now I think that was really bad of me (laughs) (no, no, I was just surprised that's all). No I was bad ... like my best friend was this girl Lori and Neela, who's still one of my best friends, they didn't judge me, they were like, as long as you know what you're doing, but they never thought, oh my god, what a slut. Like I would say, oh my god, I'm so bad, and they would say "oh who cares, have fun"... it sounds like I'm a bad traitor, you probably think that.

Aleena is expressing anger at the judgments being made about her by various members of her family/ community, but she also seems to be afraid that they are right. Her story has a meta-narrative of race and sexuality accompanying it. Although she

would claim otherwise, many of her confusions around sexuality suggest quite strongly that her early trauma has had a profound impact on her.

Similarly, Mary is aware of my potential judgment of her story. She displays this by qualifying some of her statements and, like Aleena, makes assumptions about what I must be thinking. However, this also allows her to voice her own discomfort over some of her choices:

Like when I was younger, there was this girl in my neighborhood and her parents were part of our church and it was so annoying because it was like, I didn't really like her right? And I had my own gang, but my mum was always like, "invite Meena along" and I'm like "Do I have to?" because none of my friends really liked her (Why not?). You know something, I don't even remember. She was I guess, we found her weird you know? I don't know. (Was she South Asian?), Yeah, she was, but I mean that had nothing to do with it. Absolutely nothing. Like we just didn't like her. I mean I have South Asian friends, from the community so, that's not it at all. I just didn't like her. I'm not saying we ever picked on her or anything, like I said before I wouldn't do that, but maybe we just wouldn't invite her along if we went to the park, or if my mom forced me, then maybe she'd come, but we'd sort of ignore her. I guess that was kind of mean of us. You must think I'm a big hypocrite or something (laughs), after what I told you about what happened to me (not at all, I want you to be honest). Okay, like I guess maybe I feel bad now if I think about that girl, like I wouldn't do that now, because I'm more mature, right? But when you're a kid, you don't really think about those things. You just sort of, I don't know, you're just there I guess, and you don't think much. But I would never do that now.

What is interesting about the above excerpts is that they contradict the overall theme of Mary's story, where race is not really a significant part of her life.³¹ Like Anita's pointed descriptions of Jewish kids, Mary speaks about race without actually speaking about it. Although she is quick to deny that race plays a part in any of her negotiations, at times she displays a certain confusion or uncertainty about this, as do some of the other subjects for whom race has not ostensibly been an issue:

³¹ Mary's narrative is also peppered with "I don't know's"; feminist researchers have pointed out girls start to use this phrase at adolescence as a constant refrain that de-legitimizes any opinions that they may be offering.

Mary (16): (So you don't feel like what happened with your friends had anything to do with your being different). (long pause) I don't know, like I can't say for sure, no.

Asha (29): I think when second generation immigrants make Indian friends, or I guess with the friends I have, a lot of times, it's because um, we have similar values and we can relate to each other on a certain level. There's just certain things that you don't have to explain in the sense of, things going on at home, how your parents are, because you know, our parents are from the same generation and they have the same values, so if you just say "my dad's doing this or my mom's doing this today," or "they want me to do this," they'll understand and you bond on that, and you can share that experience, and you learn from each other in terms of how to handle it or how not to handle it, or it helps to put things in perspective, like "oh yeah, my parents tried that on me, and that's just them being you know," whereas I find sometimes with non-Indian friends, they don't necessarily always understand that.

Although Mary has made the claim that race has not really been an issue for her, we can read the above unguarded moment as a tension in the coherence of this narrative of sameness, of which she herself is aware. Similarly, we should recall Asha's earlier statements that people should not ghettoize themselves, but should make an effort to integrate; and that the Indian community can be much more restrictive than her white friends. The above excerpt seem to contradict these sentiments: here she is expressing a sense of ease and comfort with fellow South Asians because of shared cultural identities, and she is also suggesting that she might want to marry a South Asian because of shared values and experiences (the latter statement could be read as a form of ethnic ghettoizing).

Finally, if we look at the following excerpt, we find that Aleena's narrative of being 'Canadian' and feeling more accepted by white Canadians is momentarily interrupted by the discourse of "where are you from?" Furthermore, Aleena herself recognizes that this positions her outside the Canadian national imaginary and she is clearly annoyed. What is remarkable is that rather than exploring this, she quite deliberately shifts the narrative: in the statement that follows "who really cares", there is

a noticeably forced quality to her attempt to re-establish the ethnic villain/Canadian savior storyline:

Who really cares? Like I asked the hairdresser "so are you French?" because she spoke French, I didn't know what she was, and she was like "no I'm actually Portuguese" and I wouldn't know the difference. Like who cares? That's what I think. Who cares? (do you think other people care? People from the dominant culture? Or do you think there's a dominant culture at all?) um, I think there's a dominant culture, yeah, for sure. I don't know if they care. Like I think that people do care, um, I don't know, I guess the problem is, the white people that I've met don't care. I feel like they don't care. I mean they always ask "what are you?", but I think it's cause they don't know the difference between whether I'm like from Saudi Arabia or, like people ask me if I'm Spanish. Basically I think that for some reason, that they care more, like when white people ask me, they're asking me just because they want to know. But I feel like when Muslim people ask me, or Sikh or Hindu, it's like to analyze me, to put me into a category, like I feel like they're doing it so that "okay, she's Muslim so that means that I can date her, or" you know what I mean? Like they're doing it for a reason, like it's not because they're actually genuinely interested in what religion I am, like who really cares what religion you are. It sounds so mental and kind of paranoid but um, that's what I feel like. Whereas with white people, they're just asking me because they're genuinely interested, you know.

Aleena "monitors and modifies" her story because she is aware that there are contradictions. I sense that she is uncomfortable with where I am trying to go in this moment. I think she realizes that I am trying to raise the question of power relations between members of the dominant culture and those that have been constructed as minorities. She has herself just narrated a common experience of minorities - being asked where you are from - which immediately suggests that the person does not belong here. But Aleena quite deliberately resists my attempt to take the conversation in this direction. She wants to belong and has constructed a narrative where she does belong (or at least *could* belong if not for her family and community). She is unwillingly to have her narrative challenged so she shifts back to the dominant storyline, which allows her to claim that when white people ask where she's from, they are genuinely interested, whereas when South Asians ask, they are trying to pigeonhole her.

The Importance of Memory: Remembering and Forgetting as Strategies of Self

According to Ricoeur, memory is what establishes humans within time meaningfully, through the relationship between repetition and potential in human experience (1991: 199). The importance of memory in terms of people's narratives cannot be judged through a concern with truth or objectivity; as Tennessee Williams once said "memory takes a lot of poetic license. It omits some details...others are exaggerated, according to the emotional value of the articles it touches, for memory is seated predominantly in the heart" (1945: 3). But memory is crucial because it allows us to understand the self of the person narrating her story, both her deliberate choices as well as the more unconscious or inadvertent decisions that she makes to remember or forget. If this last statement seems to suggest that there is some kind of purposiveness to people's assemblage of memories, it is meant to. People exercise narrative control by choosing to remember and re-tell certain stories and, often, when they re-tell these stories, the meta-narrative accompanying the memory is a re-interpretation or what Steedman calls a "recasting" (1988: 151) of past events or emotions. This recasting allows the subject to return to the past imaginatively, with a sense of omnipotent knowledge of how things will turn out, and a different perspective on why certain things happened in the first place. Furthermore, within the developmental model of the self that has such hegemonic status in western society, maturity, wisdom and growth are only gained through the linear experiencing of time. When an adult subject looks back on her childhood or adolescence from the great heights of maturity, ostensibly she is able to see things differently from the childish or youthful self who actually experienced them. Yet at the same time, these

memories provide her with a link or continuity with those past selves, which is necessary for the functioning of a 'normal' subject.

But just as the text escapes its author's intentions, stories of the self escape from the boundaries and structures placed on them by their narrators. This is where the unconscious comes into play, where people's stories break down in terms of consistency, coherence and even self-understanding. The stories that people choose to tell about themselves are revealing on so many levels, not the least of which is what people 'choose' to forget. The unconscious holds onto certain things and forgets other things. As Giddens points out (1991: 49), the unconscious has no sense of time: all things past, present and future are grist for its existential mill.³² Furthermore, conscious and deliberate attempts to avoid certain storylines or to erase or deny certain memories, are only efficacious up to a point. While it is true that the subject always has agency, it is equally true, as Hall (1996), Brah (1999) and many others have pointed out, that the repressed always returns in some form or another.

Time, memory and forgetting are all crucial to the concerns of my project. The discourses and embodied experiences of adolescence construct it as a key existential turning point in the development of the western subject. Adolescence is lived as a time of emotional, physical and psychic changes. It is spoken about in mainstream western culture in a highly temporalized fashion (i.e. a difficult time, an emotional time, the time of one's life etc.). It is also remembered in very epic terms. According to Best, when people look back and remember events such as their prom, they are situating themselves in an experience that is culturally and historically specific, but which has been constructed as universal, enduring and timeless (Best, 2000). Cohen argues that "Youth is

³² Giddens is actually paraphrasing Kierkegaard here.

simultaneously constituted as a place and time of marginality and powerlessness and as the bearer of a whole series of special symbolic powers" (1999: 225). Adult memories of adolescence, shaped in large part by cultural narratives of nostalgia, are both painful and idealized as people draw upon the dialectic of *becoming/belonging*: the process of 'growing up' which encompasses both the 'magic' of youth - the set of 'firsts' that a subject experiences - and its suffering - negotiating peer relations, chafing at familial and societal authority, feeling dependent and powerless, and being controlled by one's hormonal urges.

If, in the western story of the existential self, adolescence is a crucial turning point in people's lives that they remember with a great deal of emotion, how do subjects who are outsiders to this story remember adolescence? For the subjects that I interviewed, particularly the adult women, what memories did they have of adolescence? What did they want to tell me about their pasts? How would they interpret certain events and experiences, now, from the vantage point of adulthood? How would they use memory to give shape and form to their lives? How would they influence my sense of who they were by choosing certain memories to tell me? Finally, what could their memories tell me about people's strategic uses of remembering and forgetting in contexts of identity making? My own sense of the narratives is that subjects' memory work could be divided into three categories: memory as a form of resistance, that is a source of strength or thoughtful reflection; forgetting as a form of resistance, where the subject chooses to allow a kind of washing away of things in order to sustain her present narrative of self; and the third (and perhaps most interesting), memory as a kind of imprisonment, what Sarup calls the "the distortion of the absolute present" (1996: 38). According to Pillemer,

memories can sometimes have “life-altering effects” on people’s identities (1998). It is particularly the case with traumatic events that subjects have a hard time re-establishing a ‘normal’ sense of a self-in-time; that is a self who has a past, is experiencing the present and has aspirations of the future. Instead, they sometimes become trapped in “a past which does not pass by” (Kristeva, 1989: 60).

However, there is a catch to the organization of this section that reflects the larger dilemmas of this thesis: in each of the sub-categories, there is a story that potentially does not belong because it is not about race. Or is it? Anita’s use of memory as a positive tool of self-affirmation tells a story of racelessness or individual success, the potential for certain subjects to go relatively unraced and the effects of this on their identities. Crystal’s story is also not about race: she has never experienced racism, yet she has almost no memories of childhood and adolescence, and can only talk about the recent past, almost as if she does not want, particularly, to remember a time where she was “more Indian”. And finally Aleena’s dominant memory is about sexual abuse, but it was apparent to me that she also wanted to tell a story about difference, in this case the difference-making of her community. I have left these three stories in, with the recognition that they clash with the other stories in each sub-section. At the same time, their jarring quality is what makes them, ultimately, interesting illustrations of the remembering and forgetting of difference.

1. Remembering as a Form of Resistance

One of the ways that I identified a subject as having ‘ownership’ over her memories was to look for overt signs of narrative control. This might be found in the measured, slightly more distanced narrative voice used to talk about the past. Giddens describes “autobiographical thinking” as an important element of positive selfhood: it allows the subject to develop a coherent sense of self-history, and is a way of “escaping the thrall of the past and opening oneself out to the future” (1991: 73). When we connect past events to our present and future in a way that enables us to maintain a coherent but dynamic narrative, we neither fear the past nor do we wish to return to it. I also looked for the presence of distinct “I’s” in a narrative; that is, the subject’s ability to express what her adolescent self might have felt at a given moment, while still offering the perspective of her present self on that particular moment. Occupying multiple narrative positions, through what Smith refers to as the “doubling of self” (the narrating I and the narrated I), is a common rhetorical device in both autobiographical thinking and writing (1987: 47). However, this does not automatically entail narrative authority. I would characterize ownership of one’s story as the presence of a strong editorial “I” that is distinct from both the narrator “I” and the voice of a past “I”.

For example, Anita, who is 34, married and a successful doctor, had no trouble looking back on her adolescence, and she did so with a great deal of honesty and humor. Her memories of adolescence are somewhat painful; in her own words, it was not “the high point of my life”, and this had to do largely with her family’s cultural restrictions on her at a time when belonging to a peer group was so crucial. However, Anita describes the ups and downs of her adolescence without evincing a great deal of discomfort or pain,

and she contrasts her “geek” status with subsequent experiences in university and medical school, where she was free to “make yourself whatever you wanted to be”. Anita’s university experiences were mainly positive and, as a result, she is now able to look back on her adolescence, and recognize some of the social and structural factors that inhibited her ability to belong.

However, Anita’s story is not about race. Or at least, it is not about racism. Although her family’s rules affected her, and she identifies race unconsciously (through her labeling of Jewish kids), she has not really encountered being spoken into difference as an adolescent. Therefore, I offer her story as potentially significant, precisely because she did not experience racializing of any kind. She is able to sustain a coherent narrative of self and use her memories as a way to remind herself that her life has only gotten better since adolescence. But she really has not had to negotiate race as a central or even secondary storyline in her narrative. Add to this the fact that she comes from an upper middle class background, and we may find that what Anita’s memories offer us are actually hints about the importance of systemic forms of privilege in the making of certain types of selves.

Like Anita, Shazia and Sarah have also not experienced direct or overt racism and this is also suggestive in terms of their ability to sustain a coherent sense of self. However, they have had second-hand experiences of difference-making that have affected them. Although they are both still adolescents, they use their memories as a tool of resistance, as a way to remind themselves about difference, belonging, and their own changed projects of self. Shazia’s memories tie her identity shifts to race/difference. She attributes her childhood and early adolescent shyness to the fact that she only spoke Urdu

when she first went to school, and also to the fact that her parents' cultural rules about speaking to boys confused her and made it difficult to negotiate school spaces. As previously mentioned in this chapter, one of her big turning points is the fight with a close friend, at which point she is no longer this shy quiet girl but someone who stands up for her beliefs. Like Anita, Shazia disowns this former self, but she does so because she sees it as being inauthentic, since it was produced in the space of difference. This turning point is implicitly tied to race, as she talks about the development of a self who joins the anti-racist group, has post 9/11 reflections on 'Canadian' society's tolerance, and is aware that she has nothing in common with many of her white mainstream friends.

Sarah, more so than either Anita or Shazia, draws upon a mainstream and individualized narrative of adolescence (i.e. the ups and downs, good times etc.) to frame her remembrances. But Sarah still 'owns' her story: she talks about some of the turning points and difficulties in her life with a great deal of honesty and reflection. Although she may not actually be 'voicing-over' dominant conceptions of difference that have shaped her life, she seems to be aware there is a racialized element to her some of her choices, what I would describe as the whitening of herself in order to belong to white places. She recognizes that being different had an impact on the choices that she made when she was a little younger. Unlike Shazia's disownment of an 'inauthentic self', created through difference, Sarah recognizes that the self who chose popularity and belonging over meaningful friendships is not a thing of the past, but still a part of her psyche with which she actively wrestles. Sarah, much more so than Shazia, is still struggling with wanting to belong, perhaps because she has the option to belong, since she fits in with dominant aesthetics of female attractiveness. The agonistic nature of Sarah's narrative does not

mean that she is less defiant than Shazia, but only that she is still much more conflicted, and she uses memory as a way to keep herself on track, to make sure that she does not fall back into the false comfort of 'the popularity game'.

2. Forgetting as a Form of Resistance

It was interesting to see how subjects chose to forget their adolescent pasts, both through their positioning of themselves, as well as their positioning of me, the researcher. To begin with, there was a level of discomfort with my probing about the past that I did not find with Shazia, Sarah or Anita. In Rose's case she admitted that she had experienced shame in adolescence at being Indian, but she denied any experiences of racism. She also seemed to be very reluctant to discuss the details of her life with me, and while this may have been due largely to her quiet and reserved personality, there were indications that her memories of being different were somewhat difficult for her to articulate. Fischer describes ethnic/racial anxiety as "an approach-avoidance to a past that is larger than oneself, that is recognized by others as defining one's identity and yet does not seem to come from one's own experiences. It makes one feel not in control of one's own being" (1986: 206). Rose was one of the subjects that I discussed (pp. 325-326), as having mainly second-hand boundary events, where experiences of racism were directed not so much at her, but as one might say, *near* her. The few memories that Rose did share with me linked a sense of personal shame with what she perceived to be a mainstream intolerance towards South Asians. For Rose, the blurred relationship between the I and the We of the community was a burden. She did not really want to look back,

and did so in a vague fashion, offering me a watercolor version of things that happened and how she felt, but with much less detail than any of the other subjects:³³

(Okay. Well is there anything else you'd like to share with me?) um, like in terms of what? (Well, any more memories about adolescence?) I don't know, I guess just what I mentioned, about feeling embarrassed about being Malayalee, and hiding that from people, like not wanting to emphasize that. Trying to fit in. you know. I can't really think of anything else. I wish I could remember more, but I don't really .

As I mentioned in chapter five, at this point, Rose ended her narrative at this point, and then asked me to turn the tape-recorder back on, in order to tell me the following:

...yeah, I just remembered, just in terms of like feeling ashamed and I guess what you were saying, like about trying to blend in and not be seen as Indian, I remember when like sometimes at school, people would make comments about Indians, not to me, but about Indians, in front of me, and when I heard those things, it used to make me feel so awful inside. So awful. And like that incident with my mom when she was dressed in a Sari, like I was so, I don't know, I just didn't want to be associated with it. It's that whole thing that you talk about, being seen as different, I just didn't want anyone to know about my being Malayalee, and maybe I could've talked about it with my friends, and they would've accepted it, or maybe some of them wouldn't have and that's fine, but I just didn't, I didn't even give them the chance. I was a very private person. I didn't talk about the culture or anything with friends. And it's really different now, and I wonder why that changed for me, I've been thinking a lot about it. And I find now that even on TV and stuff, before if there was an Indian, he would be, I don't know, like it was a stereotype or something, like the accent or whatever. But now I find it's not like that, like you see Indians on TV and represented normally, like they don't have accents and they're not, they're more just like other people... it's so different now. Or like cooking, like now I want to learn how to make the food. Or for my son's baptism, I'm going to wear a sari, which I would've never done before. All of these things, they're, it's a really big change from before. I guess I feel proud now to be Indian. That's been the really big change for me.

The above excerpt cuts across the storyline of not remembering that Rose first ended with. For a number of possible reasons, she suddenly steps back into a space of remembering, suggesting that until this moment, she has used forgetting as a strategy. If

³³ Going back and looking at the transcripts, I noticed that the average number of pages was approximately 11. No one's was less than 10 pages, except for Rose's transcript, which was only 5 pages.

the struggle against power is in part the “the struggle of memory against forgetting”³⁴ then asking me to turn the tape recorder back on may be a central moment in Rose’s conversation with me, the researcher. I therefore read this moment as an interruption of her self, or a reclaiming of what Michelle Cliff once famously described as reclaiming “an identity they taught me to despise.”

Unlike Rose, Mary did have a great deal to say about various things. In her case, it was her lack of consistency that suggested that a partial attempt to use forgetting as a strategy. Mary’s remembering narrative lacked coherence because of the contradictions of what she said and what was revealed in her descriptions of her life. She denied experiencing racism when I asked her, even while she confirmed it by admitting that she experienced name-calling, but could not remember the details and did not “think about that stuff much, it’s just a few stupid people, you know?”. Like Matthews’ and Handa’s subjects, if she remembers these incidents as racist, she would have been the victim of racism. This way she is not, and race is erased from her past. She also denied that race played a role in any of her interactions with her friends, and yet simultaneously said that she was not sure. It is this uncertainty that plays out in Mary’s narrative where, at various points, she claimed that she could not remember things, and then went on to remember them. Even her lengthy discussion of the fight with her friends was in response to my question about key memories that jump out at her, but it begins with the statement “that’s interesting, I don’t really know, like I’ve never really thought about it”. She then goes on to recount in quite a bit of detail what happened. She also ends this anecdote with “I’m not saying I’m scarred for life or something...I try not to think about it much, like to tell

³⁴ Milan Kundera. *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. New York: Knopf, 1980. Cited in Brison 1997: 26.

you the truth I hadn't even thought about it until now, I mean it was so long ago". Yet, in real terms, it only happened the year before and, clearly, it has affected her. My sense is that Mary has no narrative control over this memory for two reasons: 1) she did not force herself back into the group, instead it was her friends who 'allowed' her back in, and she continues to occupy a seemingly subordinate role in her friendship circle and 2) Mary still cannot make sense of what happened with her friends. She is genuinely confused by it, and confused by the dynamics of both race and gender that may be part of this interaction. Her lack of narrative control leads to her choosing to forget. If she remembers what happens, she will be forced to ask difficult questions about the nature of her friendships, questions that we have seen both Shazia and Sarah ask,³⁵ with the answers leading to a certain amount of alienation. Mary seems to sense this, so she uses forgetting in order to belong:

(it doesn't bother you when you look back on it?) Not at all, I mean I hardly ever think about it, you know? I mean, yeah sure, if I think about it, then yeah it would bother me, but (What specifically bothers you about it?). um, (long pause) I don't know. (pause) well, like, why would my friends, I don't know, why would they just believe that girl? Especially Paula, because we were like best friends and everything, so I don't get it. I would never do that to them. But I'm not resentful or anything, at all. like I guess people make mistakes. I just try not to think about that stuff.

Unlike Mary, who displayed some ambivalence about the success of her 'forgetting', Crystal used forgetting to actually shift the agenda of our discussion away from either adolescence or race. Crystal had only generic memories of high school and adolescence: she was a geek, she studied a lot etc. She did not raise anything specific, and she denied the importance of race or difference. Her discussion of race was very confused: she said that there were no Indians growing up near her, yet she and her sister

³⁵ To be fair, Mary was the youngest of any of the subjects, and she was still very much in the process of carving out a belonging self.

were the black sheep of the community because their parents' were more liberal. She claimed that the reason she did not fit in during high school is because she was too Indian at that point, and became "more open minded" in university but, strangely, it is in university that she became immersed in South Asian youth culture. Despite the apparent lack of racializing experiences in her adolescence, she claims that she has no friends left from high school because "they were all white". Although I returned several times to her account, I could not really understand the story of race that Crystal was trying to tell me. There was an underlying fragmentation or lack of coherence to her narrative of difference that made me wonder whether she had deliberately not thought about it much, as a way to avoid recognizing her difference.

I also felt that Crystal was actually resisting my narrative agenda. She did not want to talk about adolescence or race. Instead, she "remembered" - with greater detail and much more enthusiasm - her university days: her struggles with parental/community demands, the many men who were after her, the sexism of South Asian men, the jealousy of other South Asian girls because of the attention that she was getting. Gubrium and Holstein point to how narratives are framed in terms of institutional/ structural agendas: for example, in a support group for families of Alzheimer's patients, the stories that people tell are about their experiences or emotions in terms of the illness. In this context, people do not talk about how much they hate their job, or the fight they had with their significant other about infidelity etc. Rather, they respect the narrative flow, and when they begin to get off topic they are brought back to it by other members. Gubrium and Holstein describe this as "occasions 'owning' stories as much as people do" (1998: 173-174). However, Crystal resisted my attempts to do this. She wanted to tell me a certain

story of self that acknowledged, but did not dwell on, her geeky adolescence, and she denied the possibility that being racialized may have been an element of her outsider status. If, as Barker claims, identity must be understood in its discursive-performative terms (1997: 615), then Crystal's memory work seemed to be a strategic attempt to perform belonging to an audience that, in this context, was myself. Her account is a reminder of the mutability of the past as a resource for the constructing, mapping or understanding of certain types of selves. As Berger points out, "In the present, there are things we choose to pay attention to and things we choose to ignore. But unless we're literally mad, we are often forced by other people to pay attention to or recognize some of these things. But the things in the past that we have decided to ignore are much more helpless against our annihilating non-remembrance" (1963: 56-57). Unlike either Sarah or Shazia, Crystal had no interest in a redemptive or heroic narrative; it struck me that her attempts to subvert my agenda displayed a desire on her part to live in the present and the recent past where she has 'always' had some semblance of belonging.

3. The Living Past

A common characteristic of all three subjects' stories in this section is their location in the category of narrative incompetence. According to Gubrium and Holstein, at various historical moments, certain individuals and groups (i.e. minorities, women, children, mental patients, adolescents etc.), have been declared "narratively incompetent"; that is, their stories are not told or if told, not listened to (1998: 20-21). This silencing has a significant impact on the selves of those marginalized. As Brison points out, speaking about painful experiences requires an audience that is willing to both

listen and acknowledge (1997: 21), and this does not always happen. According to her, “that fear, anxiety and so on, are psychological and hence, controllable responses to trauma is an assumption underlying the view held by many liberals, that victims of hate speech should simply toughen their emotional hides to avoid being adversely affected by it” (1997: 34).

The theme of silencing runs through the narratives of Ritu and Anjana as they struggle to tell their stories. They have both, in different ways, been silenced by the hegemonic discourse of Canadian tolerance and multiculturalism. Ritu is openly resentful of her little cousins, whose own belonging is a subtle admonishment for her to ‘just get along’, thereby denying her experiences of brutal racism. Anjana has been silenced even more effectively; she cannot really speak outside the dominant discourses that offer her various contradictory subject positions of South Asian female Other (i.e. unattractive, exotic etc.). The only time that she comes close is when she talks about Indian values and the respect that she owes her parents. Otherwise, throughout her story, there is a strong sense of what Masson describes as “discursive closure”, where the range of existing meanings precludes the “expression of the unexpressed” (1997: 70). Finally, although Aleena has not been silenced by the power of racism, her family and community has still tried to shut down the telling of her story of abuse. Like both Ritu and Anjana, there is a sense that because no one really wants to hear about it, she is doomed to repeat it endlessly.

This sense of endless repetition is one of the ways in which I identified these three stories as belonging to this category of remembering. Incidents, experiences or feelings become part of the subject’s re-tell, in an almost compulsive manner. By this I mean that

subjects cannot let go of the past nor can their experiences be absorbed into the general narrative. Time is written against; to repeat Sarup's description: "...an incident which occurred in the past can become a true present. There is a stagnation of time, a dread, a fear that chokes the subject. The traumatic experience becomes a style of being...the present strives to be the 'absolute present' which oppresses the person" (1996: 38). The rupturing of being/selfhood occurs through the disruption of linear time. Instead of the experience being in the recent or distant past, and therefore either forgettable or absorbed into the storyline of growth, change and renewal, the subject carries the experience with her wherever she goes. She is unable to let go of it; in psychiatric terms, she is imprisoned in what Bruner describes as a "frozen narrative" (1993: 39). I found this to be the case with all three subjects: their respective experiences of painful or traumatic events had disabled their narrative ability to "turn the page".

Another sign that subjects were living in "a past that does not pass by", was the confusion between their narrative I's. Unlike those subjects who used memory as a form of resistance, and whose I's could be separated by time (the past self or selves, the present editorial self, the narrator of both), there was a confusion or blurring between the narrating self and the narrated self, between the adolescent self of the past and the adult self of the present. It struck me that subjects trapped in the past either still speak in a past voice or talk about how they felt at the time in a present voice. For example, Aleena describes her various encounters with family, community etc. in her present voice. She describes telling her mother about being sexually abused, but her nine year old voice seemed to me to be the voice of her 25 year old self looking back:

Aleena (25): I tried to explain to her and then things just fell apart, because in the film the man got arrested. So I said "so you're gonna call the police?" because you know, you're young, and you're listening to what your teachers are telling you, and she was like "don't be stupid". It was really weird. It was really weird. Because she, it seemed like she, I remember, like I'm 25 and so we're talking about quite a long time ago, but I still remember a couple of things that she said to me and I couldn't understand. She said, I remember she asked me, "What were you wearing?" and I was like "what do you mean what was I wearing? How could I be wearing anything, it was three friggin' years, the guy lived in our house, it's not like I had to be wearing anything!" and I remember that specifically because I got really mad, I was just like "what does that have to do with anything?"...my mom asked me "well did he hurt you", and I was like "well, no, it didn't hurt", I mean I wasn't too keen on it, I remember going home and thinking I don't want to do this, but I wasn't, I mean it didn't hurt, I mean he didn't smack me or anything, he didn't threaten me.

I was nineteen, and I remember, it was Id, which is our religious day and we went to my dad's older sister's house and ah, we're there, and all of a sudden he walks in and I'm like, he's there with his wife, and I'm like, what the hell is going on! Apparently his brother, who's his real brother decided you know that everyone should start talking again, but nobody asked me. And I was flipping, like I think I went, like I was so livid, I didn't say anything then, but I told my mum, "I'm leaving and you can't stop me". And I'm like "you know, I'm not nine years old anymore, you have to ask me, this is like, this affected me more than it affected anyone else in this damn room, and you didn't ask me" and I'm having a huge fight with her, but I can't fight with my dad, because he's always like, that you can't talk back to your dad, but my mom and I have a huge fight about it. And it wasn't even a huge fight, I say "how could you not tell me about it?" and she says "I didn't know". And I say "I don't care if you didn't know, someone knew in that room that he was going to be there and nobody told me".

Aleena's voice in the above descriptions seems to be her adult voice, speaking angrily to her parents, even using adult slang (the word "friggin", which presumably a child of nine would not use, at least when talking to her parents). In the second quote, she switches between the past and present tense to discuss a related incident; according to Pillemer, using the present tense to describe a memory violates conversational codes, suggesting that the memory being talked about is quite significant (1998: 185). And although Aleena does not return again and again to the story of abuse *overtly*, I read her narration of sexuality as well as race as substitutes for this story, that is, unconscious vehicles for the expression of this trauma. If, as Knowles contends, conceptions of home and belonging play a key role in the "lived interior" of racialized lives (1999: 124), how

does the de-stabilizing of 'home' which occurred through this trauma intersect with her need to establish some kind of belonging that is safe? I would argue that Aleena's traumatic experience has not only irrevocably affected her narrative of self in terms of sexuality, but also in terms of racial belonging. In a diasporic context, she has come to see Pakistani Muslim culture as her victimizer, and White Canadian society as her only escape. Like Crystal, she hijacks my agenda to tell her own story; when I ask her about her adolescence, the conversation becomes about unresolved anger, pain and bitterness that has been woven into the story of race and difference:

And it was fun. I can't remember anything bad. I have some really bad memories, but, I guess this is where the privacy thing comes in. do you mean like really bad? (Whatever you want to tell me about your adolescence). So, adolescence, you're talking about what? Between the ages of like 12 and? (18 or 19?). Okay (laughs). The really bad stuff happened before that. When I was very young, I mean I haven't told anyone about this except my close friends, but this is confidential so, I was sexually abused by my uncle, which was very traumatic, but that ended when I was like ten.

Aleena's story is the fall from innocence. In "the time before", Aleena was a whole (possibly unracialized, unsexualized) child/subject. Everything after has been stained by this one event and, as a result, her narrative is frozen. She engages in a great deal of sexual behavior in order to try to reclaim an identity as a subject not an object, but she is largely unsuccessful because she cannot let go of her own shame and guilt, expressed through the narrative thread of how 'bad' she is. She cannot forgive her victimizer, her family or her community and has constructed them as hypocritical, backwards etc., everything in fact that 'Canadian' society is not. Most importantly, Aleena has no conscious awareness of the intersecting of her sexual history with the story of race, nor does she ever express recognition that her self-confessed obsession with sex may have something to do with her early trauma.

Unlike Aleena's account, Ritu's story of race is one of direct and brutal racism. Ritu tries to use, and partially succeeds in using, her memories as a form of resistance. She sees herself as being very strong and resilient in the face both of her family's extreme restrictions and the racism that she experienced. When asked about what advice she might give her adolescent self, she gives the following response:

(Okay. One more question. If you had to go back and talk to your adolescent self, what would you say? What advice would you give?) *um, I don't know, she doesn't need much advice. I think she did fine. There was nothing much I could do at the time, and I'm always proud of the fact that when that guy spat in my face, I didn't even turn, I just kept walking and I turned the corner before I took off my glasses to wipe the water off. I think she did fine (You're proud of her) yeah, I had a good adolescence, yup so, there is nothing that I would change about it.*

Ritu's past self, the one that was spit on, seems to be very much alive in her consciousness. Her pride in that girl is quite poignant, but my sense is that she is proud of that self because she still retains it to some extent. Over an 11 page narrative, it struck me as significant that the above excerpt is where she ends her story: by returning to the incident where she was spit on, which happened almost ten years before. Despite her recognition of racism and how it has affected her life (all of which are signs of the use of memory as resistance), the quality of Ritu's reminiscences is too raw for them to be unambiguously empowering. Ritu has clearly been scarred by these experiences and every encounter with mainstream Canadian society, even in adulthood, is like some kind of terrible déjà-vu. As she herself points out, she hates white people because she is afraid of them, undoubtedly because of what she experienced in adolescence:

I see my little cousins and they're all, they all get along...I hate white people and I'm afraid of the big white guy, because I always associate it with, like the big white guy is going to do something, or the big white guy is there, so um, yeah I has actually um, affected me, and I don't even realized it's affects me, so much actually. Because I can be really confident in some things. But in other things, like if I have a big white guy sitting in front of me with a lot of power, I shrink. So they're so "Hi how are you", and I'm all you know mousy, instead of being strong and confident, which I know I can be, but for some reason it does not come out when I'm with white people, big white men.

Like Kristeva's subject of depression and melancholy, Ritu suffers from some kind of traumatic memory where she is "riveted to the past...everything has gone by...but I am faithful to those bygone days, I am nailed down to them...an over-inflated hyperbolic past fills all dimensions of psychic continuity" (1989: 60). Ritu's past has deformed her, she lives the dreaded past in her present. Her self, although it has not been broken, like Anjana's, has been damaged, a fact of which she is well aware:

(Do you think that the experiences of racism have affected you or your identity in a significant way?) yup. For sure. Because I grew up in a racist environment, completely affected the way I am today. Probably not in a good way. Sometimes I wish I wasn't so racist myself. I know I'm racist... I've got a note stuck up somewhere, I hid it because my parents came, but it says "stop feeling inferior", because I have interviews coming up next week so I've got to get over that. So I do definitely, racism has affected my self-esteem, and negatively, really really badly actually.

Anjana's narrative, like Ritu's, is poignant because of how much race has affected her sense of self. However, there is an even sadder inflection to it: unlike Ritu who is damaged, but struggling, Anjana's sense of self-esteem seems to have been destroyed almost completely by her experiences of racism. To begin with, like the other subjects in this category, her past self is still very much present in her story. In her case, this takes the form of drawing upon adolescent discourses of belonging that are potentially anachronistic, given her adulthood. At the age of thirty, Anjana is still uncomfortable in the presence of people whom she associates with the "cool crowd" that looked down on her in high school. She cannot transcend her feelings of inferiority, because she is still locked into a relationship with adolescent notions of belonging:

even to this day you know if I date, if I go out with somebody who's considered, what I would've considered 'cool' in high school, I'd still get very insecure, because it's like I feel like I don't belong to that part of their world, like I was dating somebody last year in the states and he took me to a football game, and you know to his college, um football game, and his dorm and everything, and I..I was surrounded by a bunch of university students who were beer guzzling, drinking, being kind of like, smoking pot, partying, outside and stuff, and I never was a part of any of that from high school through to university.

Anjana is still very much concerned with 'being cool', although she has a confused sense that in adulthood this term either has no meaning or it means being yourself and carving out a space of belonging with others like you. But clearly she is caught up in trying to belong to a *living* past, one which is very much about adolescence and continues to define her in the present as an outsider. Furthermore, despite the fact that she is a fairly successful professional (interestingly in TV journalism, a field where she is on display all the time), she is still consumed by insecurity. She recognizes the changing discourse of South Asianness and the fact that now South Asian women may be seen as exotic and desirable. She herself has been constructed in adulthood by the male gaze as aesthetically pleasing, yet she cannot participate fully in this, because she does not believe it. She appears to be overly caught up in monitoring her flawed ability to negotiate heterosexual interactions, as evidenced by her statements about confidence with men³⁶ and the fact that when her romantic life flagged a couple of years before, she returned to an old refrain of "Indian girls are so unattractive". In her own mind, she is still the Indian girl who never belonged:

³⁶ Anjana: *I notice now that when I see an insecure guy it really turns me off, so I can imagine for them it really turns them off, but then on the other hand, when you're too confident or when you know you're confident a lot of times it scares them away. So there's a fine line or equilibrium that you know is very hard to maintain.*

I have so much makeup now and so much perfume and so many hair products and so much this and so much that, that I could open up a counter. If you open up my drawer, I probably have about 600\$ of unopened stuff in my drawer. It's quite sad so. I think it's a security blanket for me for making up for in high school just feeling so ugly, and even to this day there are times when I look at myself and I still you know it's still it's still something I'm fighting w/ and grappling w/ and I've heard more times than not about 'what have you got to worry about' or 'you could look this' or 'you're so this' or 'you're so that', but it's doesn't, it's not, it hasn't, I haven't shaken it. I have not shaken it. And I think I carry it w/ me because I think men see right through it and if you're not comfortable, and somebody said it to me very well, I'm not comfortable in my own skin, and if you're not comfortable in your own skin, a man is not going to be comfortable w/ you. (So, in other words, do you feel that those experiences as a teenager affected you as an adult?) Absolutely. (More so than childhood?) Absolutely. (Why? Because it affected your sense of self?) Definitely. Yeah, self-worth. Dignity.

Brison talks about how difficult it is to regain one's voice after being reduced to an object (1997: 24). Anjana's experiences of Otherness in a adolescence are what post colonial theorists refer to as epistemically violent (Gilbert, 1997: 86). Unlike Ritu who, although still imprisoned in the past, has struggled, at least, to forge a defiant identity, Anjana has not been able to prevent dominant peer culture's "symbolic annihilation" of her sense of self. She has been named, or rather un-named, and this un-naming is an act of erasure that seems almost irrevocable:

She is doubly or triply the subject of other people's representations, turned and turned again and again, in stories that reflect and promote certain forms of selfhood identified with class, race and nationality as well as with sex. In every case, moreover, she remains marginalized in that she finds herself resident on the margins of discourse, always removed from the center of power within the culture she inhabits (Smith, 1987: 51).

To varying degrees, the memories of Ritu, Aleena and Anjana all tell stories of powerlessness, what Steedman describes the situations in which the powerless end up, "those places where people can do things to you and with you" (1988: 7-8). This does not, however, mean that they have been completely silenced. All three of them spoke about their pasts reflectively, perhaps trying to recover a lost sense of "dignity", "self-esteem" or (in Aleena's case), bodily integrity. To quote Wiesel, "I try to make the ghosts

within me speak. Does that mean that the wound has healed over? It still burns...but I can speak" (1990: 143). Most importantly, they voluntarily shared their painful memories, all the while knowing that these memories would be dissected, examined and then placed in a public context. Each of them was willing to expose themselves to analysis, criticism and possibly even judgment. This takes courage and, thus, in its own way, is an extraordinary act of resistance.

Conclusion

"That's a lot of time spent living in somebody else's emotions"

Susan Tilley "Challenging Research Practices"

This chapter was an attempt to link my discussion in the first four chapters on adolescence, race, gender and South Asian identity, with the qualitative interviews that I conducted with ten second generation South Asian women and girls. Using the framework that I developed in chapter three, I analyzed selected excerpts of the interview transcripts, in order to examine how, and in what ways, discourses of racialized belonging are embedded in subjects' accounts of adolescence. I also explored the relationship between the psychic and the socio-political or, as Knowles describes it, the ways in which race is implicated in the existential story of the self (1999: 118-119). To this end, I was inspired by the narrative analyses of writers such as Knowles or Steedman, whose discussions of identity and social relations of power such as race (or class) make a strong case for the need to inquire further into how ordinary people live

with the contradictions of being a part of - but also apart from - particular cultural, social and historical spaces.

I hope that the above discussion has been both a useful intervention into the literature on second generation subjects, as well as providing a point of entry into further and larger explorations of the links among generation, race and age as a relation of power. I also hope, as a feminist researcher, that the subjects I interviewed found their “re-tells” meaningful in terms of understanding their own identities. I found all ten stories riveting in different ways, but I will conclude this chapter with an admission of my own: analyzing other people’s narratives for a living is - for any researcher - productive and stimulating, as well as frustrating and debilitating. The act of telling someone else’s story also requires living in someone else’s story, at least temporarily. This is an exciting, but also very frightening experience, whereby other people’s feelings, emotions and identities are grafted onto one’s own. It is particularly so for an insider researcher, whose experiences of being South Asian both resonate with, and are completely distinct from, the narratives that I have analyzed.

Ultimately, however, I am indebted to the women and girls who shared their stories with me, and I accept full responsibility for the temporary loss of self that I have experienced in the wake of this exercise. Perhaps it is an unavoidable consequence of choosing to occupy the space between the I and the We of any community that has been, to quote Fischer, “on the wrong side of history” (1986: 213).

Conclusion: Stories for Girls

Main Arguments

In this dissertation, I have argued strongly for the recognition of age as a relation of power that intersects with other social relations such as gender, race, class, ethnicity, etc. At first glance, this argument appears to be a statement of the obvious, and one that has been incorporated thoroughly into the swollen body of research on adolescence and youth. However, on closer examination, I found, strangely enough, that this was not so. The concept of age has not been problematized adequately in the bulk of research on youth, which continues to look at differences within youthful populations without asking how the category of youth or adolescence is actually constitutive of difference. Research in psychology, sub-cultural studies, cultural studies, feminist research and even, to a lesser extent, education, does not offer a framework that could comfortably accommodate an analysis of adolescence as a crucial site of difference-making. Constructivist work on adolescence that theorizes the links between modern adolescence and larger projects of racialized, gendered and classed nation-building offers a much more useful way of theorizing adolescence and difference. Nevertheless, its broad canvas does not allow much room for the everyday experiences of youth with these racialized, gendered and classed discourses.

My central claim throughout the dissertation has been that the discourses of modern western adolescence play a crucial role in the development of racialized subjectivities. This is because adolescence has been constructed and lived as a period where subjects are in the process of 'making' a self, within a peer culture that is built around the identification of difference or Otherness. This claim represents a major

intervention into both the general research on adolescence, as well as more specific work on minority youth. Neither of these bodies of work has produced a sustained analysis of the links between adolescence and racialized subjectivity. In most of this research, minority youths' experiences of racializing practices are treated too descriptively. We are not told why subjects experience racialized social exclusion; it is taken for granted that the reason is because they are members of a racial/ethnic group. This circular assumption obscures the workings of race, because it assumes that neither children nor adolescents have to be taught how to identify, construct or live difference. In this scenario, difference is simply there, waiting to be discovered in the process of identity construction.

In strong opposition to this perspective, I have taken the position that continuing to theorize a fixed relationship between identity construction and the identification of difference does not allow us to ask how, and in what specific ways, subjects come to be seen as Others. Following Knowles (1999), I have asserted that we need a clearer understanding of how lives "acquire race", particularly in periods such as adolescence, where the modern western self is in the process of 'becoming somebody'. In order to explore how difference gets made in a period such as adolescence, I argued that it was necessary to reformulate the identity/difference dualism as a more fluid and incomplete negotiation between *becoming* someone and *belonging* somewhere.

The Case Study

Although the above claim is an important theoretical contribution, my location as a feminist, anti-racist researcher also demands that I explore how negotiations of *becoming* and *belonging* actually play out in the lives of minority youth, in specific social, historical and political contexts. To this end, I chose, as my focus of study, second generation South Asian girls in Canada. The experiences of this group offer a particularly exciting terrain for a researcher, since very little work has been done, in the Canadian context, on their adolescent experiences. Most of the research in this area has focused on immigrant South Asian women's negotiations with difference; however, the experiences of the second generation are quite unique, and we should not continue to lump them into the study of immigrant families. This is because generation is one of the key identity markers complicating the lives of these subjects. They are neither part of their parents' past cultural landscapes, nor are they completely part of the 'Canadian' mainstream. Their complex negotiations in the latter context are mediated both by dominant constructions of belonging that conflate Canadianness with Whiteness, as well as familial/community demands that they maintain the 'heritage and traditions' of the specific regional or religious communities to which they belong. This is especially so for females within these communities who are expected to be the bearers of culture in diasporic contexts.

My main interest was to explore how adolescence was experienced by subjects in terms of the interaction between identity struggles and relations within peer culture. Using a narrative approach, both theoretically and methodologically, allowed me to ask questions about how girls come to understand themselves through both dominant and

marginalized cultural narratives, and the diverse and creative strategies that they use in their identity work, to resist, accommodate and sometimes re-shape these narratives. I conducted 10 in-depth one-on-one interviews: with three adolescent girls, four women in their twenties, and three women in their early thirties. My rationale for this age-spread was that subjects become racialized in a number of ways that are dependent on the specific historical moment in which they grow up. The significant changes in Canadian discourses of South Asianness suggested that girls growing up in the eighties might have somewhat different experiences from girls growing up in the early nineties and beyond. Doing so also allowed me to identify a range of experiences within the category "South Asian girl". Subjects' narratives ran the gamut from experiencing no forms of overt difference-making to subtle racializing practices to overt experiences of racism. As well, the strategies that subjects used to deal with their experiences of 'growing up different', ranged from internalizing dominant discourses that construct immigrants as responsible for their own experiences of exclusion or belonging, to expressing actively hostile sentiments about White Canadians and their hidden or polite racism.

Subjects' struggles with belonging were also very much mediated by familial/community restrictions on their behavior, and the assumption that, as girls, they were responsible for reproducing the so-called traditions of their ethnic communities. For instance, many of the subjects identified patriarchal cultural practices that scholars such as Handa (2003) and Aujla (2000) have written about. However, what also emerged from the interviews was the presence of age-related hierarchies *among* women in South Asian families and communities. None of the literature on South Asian women has explicitly theorized these intra-gender tensions, suggesting a sort of tacit acceptance of the policing

role of mothers, aunts, older female siblings and so on. This policing is left unexplained in the literature, as if it were obvious that it takes place at the behest of fathers and other patriarchal figures in the family/community. But my fieldwork pointed to some interesting dynamics, where although fathers often appeared as silent figures of authority, they also sometimes appeared as supporters of their daughters' attempts to resist or transgress certain cultural restrictions. Even in insider research, there has been a certain amount of taking-for-granted of the restricting and sometimes even terrorizing role played by fathers in South Asian families, yet it is worth noting that many of the subjects mentioned the prevalence of female authority figures in terms of struggling with culture. This suggests the need for further studies on the question of how adult/non-adult relations in the South Asian diaspora intersect with gender to complicate a straightforward understanding of the ethnic male as patriarchal villain.

Contributions of the Research

Although the dissertation makes several theoretical contributions, I also want to re-emphasize the crucial importance of the fieldwork. The interviews offered me the space to discuss my own concepts, whose addition to the existing conceptual repertoire will only enhance research on minority girls. For instance, although I analyzed the interviews through Twine's important concept of the 'boundary event', I also re-worked the concept in two key ways: boundary *moments*, which are not necessarily only event-driven, but potentially process-oriented and based on subjects' own choices; and boundary *work*, the positioning of girls outside western cultural norms by family and community, particularly with regard to the role that South Asian mothers and older

women in the community play in the “management” (Griesemer and Starr, 1989) and “patrolling” (Proweller, 1998) of this positioning. This latter insight is quite important, since current work on both immigrant and second generation South Asian women does not address the tensions among women, and the role that age plays in these intra-gender conflicts over the second generation subjects’ obligations as *daughters* of the diaspora.

Finally, incorporating the voices of ‘real’ subjects is absolutely necessary, in a work that wants to challenge the workings of racism and racialization. Speaking about race and racism openly is itself a political act, because it radically undermines the illusions of sameness maintained by dominant cultural discourses in western societies. Telling stories of difference calls into question the possibility of *complete* belonging, even for members of the dominant racial group (Yngvesson and Mahoney, 2000: 103-104). In part, this is because acknowledging the presence of difference disrupts the myth of home/homeland. If, following Macgregor Wise, ‘home’ is associated with a space of comfort and security (2000), how can members of the dominant group feel comfortable, given the presence of Others in their ‘homes’? Judging from the accounts of white women in Frankenberg’s work, many of them do not, and yet are reluctant to actually say that they are made uneasy by these ‘strangers’ and potential ‘enemies’.

For those who have been constructed as ‘strangers’ (through such questions as “where are you from?” and ‘what is your nationality?’), or worse, ‘enemies’ (through racist epithets and hostile demands to “go back where you came from”), there is even more at stake in asking how race has been part of their everyday struggles with belonging:

These lived experiences of slippage, of not being 'in place', are not, as much postmodern literature would have it, simply a matter of playful or even strategic repositioning. Neither, however, are they inevitably experiences of subjugation, of 'annihilation' by the 'killing ideals' of racial or national belonging...[such narratives] point towards a more complex story of movement between (temporary) positions, of desire that is shaped by hegemonies of race, blood and nation, and the impossibility of ever completely belonging in the places we find ourselves (Yngvesson and Mahoney, 2000: 103-104).

The 'impossibility' of complete belonging for racialized subjects remains one of the most compelling insights offered by the interviews. Despite the fact that only a couple of subjects described experiences of direct racism, ultimately race embeds itself in every account. Even those subjects who claimed to be completely comfortable in dominant spaces and ostensibly did not feel singled out by their difference, have been denied what Yngvesson and Mahoney (2000: 101) describe as "a seamless origin story". These "broken stories"¹ are stories of dislocation: for second generation subjects, the space of belonging is always riven by the tensions of home/not home, the pain and sometimes pleasure, of belonging everywhere and nowhere at the same time.

Concluding Thoughts

One of the main political concerns driving my research has been to challenge what Giroux describes as a growing hostility towards youth in modern contemporary society (1998). To this end, I hope that I have presented the struggles of adolescence in a compassionate manner that recognizes my distance from this identity space, without assuming an "adultist" perspective of condescension, contempt or dismissal. Furthermore, as a feminist, anti-racist researcher, I have sought to provide the sociology of youth with an alternative approach to theorizing adolescence, one which does not

¹ Yngvesson and Mahoney (2000: 77), describe broken stories as those told by "refugees, immigrants, adoptees, and other diasporic populations [that] confront us all with the anxiety of lack of certitude".

uncritically assume either the category of age, or its relationship to other categories such as gender, race, class, generation etc. In this endeavor, I am heavily indebted to the work of feminist scholars such as Gilligan, Brown, Proweller, Twine, Hey and, of course, Handa; as well as critical and anti-racist theorists such as Giroux, Cohen and Lesko. I am also grateful to theorists such as Steedman, Knowles and Davies who have argued so persuasively in favor of studying the everyday workings of class, race, age etc.

My final debt of gratitude is, of course, to the girls and women who shared their “broken stories” with me. This particular dissertation could not have been written without them. Handa called her conclusion ‘Endings’ (2003: 159), and in the moment of sadness that characterizes the completion of any project, I am tempted to do the same. But this conclusion could also be called ‘Beginnings’. As I come to this end of this work, I am keenly aware that I have not scratched the surface of the material provided by my subjects. The richness of their narratives offers an invaluable resource in the pursuit of projects that could not make it into this already too long dissertation: questions around conceptions of ‘home’ and belonging for racialized girls who are abuse victims; the power dynamics among girls *within* South Asian cultural spaces; the power of popular culture to inform community and vice versa (for example, father/daughter narratives and the dynamics of family in the new wave of mainstream diasporic films); the internal dynamics of class identity and how this intersects with racial difference

But most of all, I want to thank my subjects for re-affirming my commitment to telling other people’s stories for a living. Listening to them speak about their everyday struggles with ‘growing up’ South Asian was a great deal of fun; it was also, at times, difficult and painful, and it forced me to re-think many issues in my own narrative of self.

So, I think that I will leave the title of my conclusion as it stands. This dissertation was itself a story of dislocation, a story for and about the ‘Other’ girls whose voices, as Ohye and Henderson point out, have not been heard very much in the literature (1999). It was also written by a ‘girl’ who has shared some of the same struggles with *becoming* and *belonging*. These struggles have spoken her into existence as a racialized woman; perhaps more importantly, they have engendered her identity as an anti-racist, feminist sociologist who believes that troubling the silences around people’s everyday experiences of difference is one the fundamental ways in which we change our social and cultural landscapes.

Appendix A
Interview Prompts

1. what are some key memories you have of adolescence?
2. Did your relationship with your family change while you were a teenager?
3. What role did friends play during your adolescence?
4. Did you feel like a typical teenager or was this something you didn't think much about?
5. Were there any incidents of racism during your adolescence? If so, how did they affect you?
6. If you experienced racism, at which period do you feel you dealt with it most: childhood, adolescence, or adulthood?
7. Was being a teenager a period you enjoyed?
8. Did you ever feel different from your friends and peers at school, and if so for what reasons?

Appendix B

LETTER OF CONSENT

I have been approached by MYTHILI RAJIVA, to be a participant in a research study in partial fulfillment of the PhD requirements in Sociology at Carleton University. She is currently gathering information on the process of identity development for Second Generation South Asian Canadian women. In particular she is interested in the period of adolescence, when subjects often have to deal with a great deal of social pressure to "be like everyone else". She is interested in how people negotiate these social demands, and what effect being seen as racially and ethnically "different" has on people's identities. Her interview with me will therefore explore my experiences of adolescence, my own understanding of how being South Asian affected my sense of Belonging and whether this has had any major impact on my sense of self.

My voluntary participation in this project requires one interview at a place of my choice for an estimated 1.5 hours, and follow-up questions or interviews may be requested for clarification.

- I am free to stop or withdraw from the interview at any time, for whatever reason.
- Equally, I understand that I can choose not to answer any question I do not want to answer.

Concerning privacy and confidentiality, the following precautions will be taken:

- Ms. Rajiva will be the only person listening to and transcribing each tape-recorded interview
- For safekeeping, all data will be stored in her private office at her residence, in a locked filing cabinet
- Ms. Rajiva will erase each interview tape after the dissertation is written
- She will eliminate identifying information from the transcripts of the interview, from the dissertation and from any lectures, research, articles or books not yet written or published. A pseudonym with a generic identifier will be used; the pseudonym will be determined by Ms. Rajiva.

*Upon completion of Ms. Rajiva's PhD, copies of the written dissertation will be available for my review at the library at Carleton University and at the National Library of Canada.

This letter of consent outlines the nature of Ms. Rajiva's research and her responsibilities as a researcher; it also clarifies my rights and recourse as a respondent. Should I have questions regarding the research or the interviews (content or process), I am free to contact the researcher (Mythili Rajiva) by phone at (613) 737-0902 or by email at mrjajiva2@connect.carleton.ca. If I have any additional concerns, they can be addressed to:

Professor Klaus Pohle

Chair of the Ethics Committee

Email: klaus_pohle@carleton.ca

Work Phone #: 613 520-2600 ext.7434

Charles Gordon, PhD.

Chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University. Work Phone #: 520-2600, ext. 2585

Bruce Curtis, PhD.

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University. Work Phone #: 520-2600 ext.2596

IF, at any point I decide to withdraw from this study (either during or after the interview), I have made the following choice concerning the data already received:

- A) I **DO** give consent,
for the information provided up to this point to be used

☐

OR

- B) I **DO NOT** give consent,
for the information provided up to this point to be used

☐

Informed by the details outlined above, I understand the purpose of the research, the researcher's role and my rights as an interviewee.

Therefore I, _____, consent to participate in this interview. I do so with the understanding that the information collected will be used for research purposes only.

Subject's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

** The period of adolescence is associated with a great deal of psychological and emotional stress for many people. This study is concerned with exploring people's feelings at the time and their method of dealing with some of these issues. Participation in this study may unintentionally affect subjects, causing them to re-live certain traumatic experiences in their adolescence. If this interview causes you any subsequent psychological or emotional unrest, and you need to talk to a professional counselor/psychologist, please feel free to contact The Kanata Psychotherapy Centre, Director, Jayni Bloch M.A., registered with the College of Psychologists of Ontario, 613 599-0937.*

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