Ethnographic Study of the Creation and Usage of Diasporic Capital for Education and Identity Construction of Indian Diasporic Youth in Montreal

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Abstract

People from India are the second fastest growing ethno-cultural group in Canada. There are more than fifteen thousand people of Indian origin in Montreal alone. I use "diaspora" as a heuristic tool to understand the social formation and cultural patterns of these international migrants. In this research I have focused on the role of the Indian diasporic community in Montreal, specifically on the educational experiences and identity negotiation processes of youth. I have situated this inquiry within the macro terrain of globalisation and transnationalism, while the micro facets focus on social education as manifested in the contemporary society, marked by different foci of influence and similarly diverse modes of resistance. My research is located within post-formalism, and I propose critical transnational ethnography synergized by the different loops of research bricolage to study people in the diaspora. Based on my analysis, I argue that people in the diaspora invest in and create certain social energy which can be comprehended as the diasporic capital. Diasporic capital must be understood as the combination of different social energies, including but not limited to social capital, cultural capital, human capital, and economic capital. It is my contention that the role of the community on the youth depends on the manner and process through which the diasporic capital is invested in, and is used by the parents as well as the youth themselves.

Résumé

Le groupe ethno-linguistique indienne connaît le deuxième plus haut taux de croissance au pays. A elle-seule, la région métropolitaine de Montréal compte plus de quinze mille personnes d'origine indienne. Comme outil heuristique, cette étude emploie concept de la diaspora afin d'analyser les dynamiques sociales et modèles culturels engendrés par les immigrants internationaux au Canada. Plus spécifiquement, cette recherche analyse les enjeux d'éducation et négotiations identitaires vecus par la communauté de jeunes indiens à Montréal. A l'échelle macro, les concepts de mondialisation et transnationalisme y sont discutés tandis qu' à l'échelle micro, l'éducation y est présentée comme le symbole d'une societé contemporaine déchirée par divers pôles d'infuences et forces de résistance. Dans une tradition post-formaliste, je propose une ethnographie a la fois transnationaliste et critique de la diaspora indienne a Montréal. Basé sur cette analyse, l'article souligne le fait que les immigrants hindous investissent tant à l'intérieur qu'à l'extérieur afin de créer une certaine énergie qui peut se concevoir comme 'capital de diaspora'. Cette forme de capital peut aussi être vu comme une combinaison de différentes formes d'énergies sociales qui incluent, mais ne se limitent pas au capital social, culturel, humain et économique. Ainsi, le rôle de la communauté sur les jeunes dépend donc de la manière à travers laquelle le capital de diaspora est investit et utilisé par les parents ainsi que la jeunesse hindou elle-même.

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Finally, any/all mistakes are mine. I apologize for any typing errors, or referencing oversight in this dissertation.

Aditya Raj
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Chapter 1

ME, MYSELF, and MEMOIRS

I begin with confessions and not with either review or analysis. In a doctoral dissertation, confessions are generally noted as formal acknowledgements. This approach is widely accepted but it limits the dynamism of the research process within the time spent in graduate school. I need to confess that my questioning of the world around me started long before I could dream about a formal doctoral degree. Questioning the self and the situation, the forces that shape human condition or consciousness, and the human quest for hope inspired the researcher in me. In this chapter, I want to explore those pertinent forces and experiences that have shaped me and the choice of my inquiry.

I spent the first few years under my grandparents' cultivated culture of care and concern amidst feudal hostilities and caste oppression in the backwaters of Bihar, India. My formal education began at St-Xavier's School at Sahibganj (Jharkhand, India), an English medium school run by the Jesuits. I stayed at the school residence, home remained behind, and my *lingua franca* got "baked brown in English syrup." Sahibganj was carved out by and for the British *sahibs*[1] so that they could rest in their journey from the east to north India. Our school was part of the "un-forming or rather re-forming"[2] that came first with the British and then in the struggle with what they brought to us - taste English, rest Indian.

[1] The 'officers' of the British East India Company who were involved with administration of Colonial India and coerced power and privileges over Indian masses.

[2] Loomba (2005) considers this process of un/re-forming as an allegory of the colonial encounter for communities that come under colonialism.

As mentioned, the school administration was run by the Jesuits, who were mostly from Malta, but we had several teachers who were Indians. Obedience and syntax were part of the grooming. Wordsworth and Shakespeare became our jargons alongside Gandhi and Tagore. Cramming came easily; questioning was permitted but with difficulty and in recluse of shyness. Ten years went by quickly but St-Xavier's has remained engrained in my memory. I passed with assumed excellence in science subjects and moved from my second home with few certificates, plenty of blessings, and radiance in the eye.

It was obvious to my parents that I should learn physics, chemistry and mathematics at Science College, Patna (Bihar, India) and become an engineer. I should have been on my way but my attempts to better understand incidents that were taking place in India then caught me like a whirlwind. The Mandal[3] furor and the Masjid[4] crisis left a deep scar on me. Caste and religious divides seemed more prominent than ever. I was beginning to understand the constraints in society and the way politicians used social issues to create "power blocks"[5] for themselves. Also, what did it mean for an upper caste Hindu youth? It became hard to pursue "pure" science or rather given rationality. While the implementation of the Mandal Commission recommendations necessitated an urge to better understand the society I lived in, the demolition of the *Babri Masjid* only pushed me towards learning history.

[3] The Mandal Commission was a body established by the Government of India to consider the question of seat reservations and quotas for people of lower caste in government schools and services in order to redress caste discrimination. This is also known as affirmative action or reverse discrimination. The recommendations were implemented in 1989.

[4] This is about the destruction of *Babri Masjid* by right wing hostile Hindu activists in December 6, 1992. Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP), a rightist party, mobilized orthodox people with the belief that this grand medieval mosque stood at the birthplace of ancient Hindu God *Ram*.

[5] See Fiske, J. (1993) *Power Plays, Power Works* New York: Verso.

The ensuing caste classification, growing religious intolerance, re-figuring feudal and patriarchal ethos widened the gap between what I saw and what I had assumed to be. Although I completed my higher secondary education in science, I pursued my undergraduate degree in History at Delhi University. Becoming a student of history came with strong desire but with difficulty. Indian culture and social formation, the rise of modern western nations, and the history of the Americas were the threads along which I lived. The different libraries in Delhi were my home then. History as an explanation of how things were in the present came as a result of the British rule- first to the Bengali intellectuals[6] and then to their academic progenies. Others like me had to intervene to understand what colour E.H. Carr gave to historiography or how subaltern studies rebelled against nationalist historicism.

For my Masters, I had to choose between Social History and Sociology. I chose the latter. I needed few tools to comprehend what I was beginning to understand. My acquaintance with some of the social theories that became part and parcel of my life started then. I also completed a Diploma in Journalism and realized that I had become a better observer and writer. While it is one thing to understand the situation and inform others about it, dreaming for a level playing field in society is quite another. Similarly, difference exists between how society is and how we hope it should be.

These predicaments were at the back of mind when I joined Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) at New Delhi for the Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) degree in the Sociology of Education. Marxism was the most common philosophical stance on the JNU campus but it was misguided and connected with in-fights. I suspect the reason was in the

[6] Chakravarty, D. (2003) Globalisation, Democratisation and Evacuation of History? In *At Home in Diaspora* (Ed.) Assayag and Benei Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

lack of "conjectural knowledge"[7] and structural Marxism as well as in the prevalence of the utopian dreams of youth willing to change the world. I "met a wall" with the Marxist toolkit but managed to walk the academic lanes with critical theory. I experimented with my location in academia, with a strong desire for change in the social status quo. Hope fuelled my educational drive. Moreover, my friends and colleagues allowed me to keep my sanity intact.

Those who wanted to cash on my assumed brilliance expected me to join the Indian bureaucracy- the circle of the elite and of the powerful- but I deserted the project to the dissatisfaction of many. I detested joining "a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals, and in intellect[8]." I understand that, however hard I try, I will not be able to rid myself of those forces and conditions that have shaped me, including the British paraphernalia. I guess I was beginning to oppose the defining vectors of capitalist power, which come in many forms and guises. As it is, during colonial rule the need of the metropolis was for cheap raw material, but during the neo-liberal time it was cheap labour. The metropolis may be diffused now but there were different centres of control and similarly, different methods of exploitation. The neo-liberal Indian State provided opportunities to the re-figured "masters" to reap what they had sown during British Raj- English education in India, which made **ME**.

Power in Culture

To begin with, it must be pointed out that the system of education in India is largely shaped by what Viswanathan (1989) submits as English literacy education as a

[7] Gramscian understanding wherein knowledge is assumed to be situated in and applicable to specific circumstances, as well as understanding of structures of representations that instruments of power.

[8] See Macaulay's Minute on Indian Education, in Ashcroft et al. (2006) *The Post Colonial Studies Reader* New York and London: Routledge. Pp 374-375.

cultural ideal. As Viswanathan argues, the Charter Act of 1813 gave new responsibility to the British towards Indian education while relaxing the missionary work in India. The English Education Act of 1935 further cemented the colonial cultural inroads in Indian education. Viswanathan refers to Gramsci and corroborates that cultural domination operates by consent. Consent in the educational sphere in India is operationalized through populist developmental rhetoric for the upliftment of the "natives."

The relationship between culture and empire is not what I intend to brood upon here. Lest I am misunderstood, I must dwell upon current educational practice in India, but not before mentioning that education in India is measured against the British formal method of schooling, and counted as "literacy." It is without doubt that the literacy rate in India, like most developing countries, has been rising, but pedagogy around critical consciousness is hardly addressed. Either in the English language, which is one of the eighteen languages spoken in India, or in any other language, literacy makes people useful to fulfill the needs of the "smarter lot." People with functional literacy are created to serve the system, and they are those who become vulnerable to religious appeal or caste manipulation by a "select few." The elite play God with people's imagination and aspirations. They create cultural symbols of affiliations with their agenda for the masses. A contextual example is the propaganda of cultural emancipation by the rightist political groups in India which led to the tragic *Babri Masjid* demolition and bloodbath in its aftermath. The appeal to create a collective force using religio-cultural symbols is misleading. While human beings in their natural disposition relate to the world in a reflective way by grasping their objective reality and critically examining their being, the colonial legacy in the Indian educational system fails to extend people's natural being.

My contention is that, either due to ignorance or due to lack of critical thinking, human beings are subject to one or more form(s) of subjugation. The nature, form, or content of oppression may be different, but, in any case, people are either not aware of their lack of control of their lives or they do not dare to question the system. Education emancipates while functional literacy or vocational/functional training of the masses only creates followers of the system. Vocational training in tune with market demand for labour is expanding in India. It allows the powerful minority to impress the scattered majority with the consciousness of "being educated." Colonial roots of English medium education, coupled with post-colonial vocational training, automatically creates a cheap labour force to be exploited by the giant corporations which have been moving to India since the 1990s. While it was the East India Company that was the tentacle of the British Crown, I wonder who will share the booty of the situation being perpetuated by several transnational corporations.

Using the post-colonial lens to highlight the unequal power relations, I bring my attention to understand the interaction between the empire and the colony. During the colonial practice of indentured labour for the plantation economy, several thousands of Indians moved out from India. The migration of educated Indians to metropolitan centers has continued with increased pace in the post-colonial epoch. Therefore, imagining India without the Indians abroad is not reasonable, especially when there are more than twenty million people of Indian origin outside India. Although there were several waves of migration from India during the ancient and medieval eras, migration under the forces of capitalism was different and coercive. The latter was oppressive and created marginality-of being the "other" in the host society, of multiple dislocations and ruptures. The

indentured labourers were relatively compelled compared to post-colonial migrants who were indirectly lured.

The above got **my SELF** interested in the diaspora studies. They allow me to use my limited knowledge of history, sociological theories, and pedagogical practice to situate myself within the gambit of the power relations that cultural consciousness creates. As I perceive, India stays in the consciousness of those who migrated as indentured labourers under British imperialism as well as those who moved after the end of British Raj. I draw from Vertovec (1999) and define diaspora as "transnational ethnic groups." Vertovec further notes that diaspora is a condition of marginalization and of suffered multiple ruptures and dislocations. These conditions bring together people to form collectivity based on one or more shared characteristics. Although people from India come from diverse linguistic, religious, regional, class, and caste backgrounds, their experiences of being the "other," the shared experience of marginalization, and a shared Indian cultural repertoire bring them together.

With the communication revolution, and favourable conditions for investment in India by the Indian government, disparate people in the Indian diaspora are increasingly showing signs of renewed contacts with India. The global Indian diaspora has the potential to shape the future of India (Raj, 2006), with those from North America being the forerunner. Indians in the diasporic posts send remittances and engage themselves in "homeland" socio-economic issues as well as in foreign relations with other nation-states. It is ironic but true that such involvements on many occasions have been blinded in orthodoxy. The Sikh militancy has its base among the expatriate Sikhs, mostly on the

West coast of Canada. The Hindus and the Muslims, in their illusion of destiny, fuel religious outfits in India.

Herein, I want to address the support base of the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* (VHP), the parent organization of the rightist political party, the *Bhartiya Janta Party* (BJP) in North America. Although most the "saffron dollar[9]" goes from the United States, there is an increasing support base for the VHP/BJP among the Indian diaspora in other parts of the world too. It might seem surprising but it is true that the demolition of *Babri Masjid* was celebrated among the overseas Hindus with much fanfare, as a mark of the end of a medieval oppressive symbol (Kumar, 2004). The Muslims, on the other hand, have retaliated through sporadic violence with support from the Islamic world. I have constantly wondered about the reasons which propel the émigré to support cultural politics in the homeland.

Said, in his book *Culture and Imperialism* (1994), affirms culture to be associated aggressively with the nation or the state that differentiates "us" from "them" and creates a breeding ground for xenophobia. He contends that, in this sense, culture becomes the source of identity and turns the wheel towards tradition. He explains that in formerly colonized societies, this in turn leads to religious or nationalist fundamentalism. My understanding of the power of culture, becoming fanaticism in the diaspora, came through Vijay Prasad's essay titled *Dusra Hinduatan* (2004) in which he explains the social anxieties of the immigrants from India. Prasad examines the work of *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* of America (VHPA), the American counter-foil of the VHP, which through its

[9] Saffron is the color with which the right wing religious and political party attach themselves in India. It is the acknowledged colour/banner of VHP. The dollar flowing to support the cause under the saffron banner is referred as the "saffron dollar."

cultural networks urge "*desis*" to look inward, to channel their political and social energy into the liberation of a "homeland" that they feel guilty for having abandoned.

The vulnerability of the diaspora to the long distance nationalism of imagined communities grows in the minds of the diasporic elite (Kapur, 2004). While a Gujarati[10] is a Gujarati in India; in the diaspora, a Gujarati might become an Indian. It is amazing how culture comes calling and why, as Varshney (2002) has argued that Gujarati Americans have been among the most and South Indians among the least, anti-Muslim in their predispositions. My argument is that many Indians, either in India or in the diaspora, become susceptible to the orthodoxy of culture due to lack of a critical engagement with their being and their experiences.

When I started my M.Phil dissertation at JNU, I encountered a vast array of diasporic literature but decided to focus on the Indian diaspora in Canada. My M.Phil dissertation, which I completed in 2001, was "a Sociological study of the Indian diaspora in Multicultural Canada." I understand that Canadian multiculturalism is not ideal but I assumed that the multicultural ethos, set even through policy lip service should, influence the dispositions of the Indian diaspora in Canada. My research affirms that although Canadian multiculturalism sensitizes the public sphere (Raj, 2002), pedagogy around its philosophy does not strengthen it against susceptive influences. Here I am talking about the majority of people who do not exercise their ability to reflect upon "right and wrong," both in India and her diaspora.

Canada… Calling!

I spent a decade in Delhi and experimented with different ways and means to increase my visibility. One needed to belong to a particular group: of caste, class, region,

[10] People from the north-western state of India named Gujarat.

religion, and political orientation, to garner support, to feel privileged, and be counted. I wanted to come to Canada for my doctoral research so that I could better understand the Indian diaspora in Canada. I applied for a few scholarships and managed to get the Canadian Commonwealth Scholarship. The process of obtaining this research fellowship involved a typical struggle to convince its administrators in India and then in Canada. I had to solicit support from established academicians for my research. The process also involved what in the Indian diaspora discourse is known as *girmit*[11] (agreement) with the funding organization. I joined McGill University which has been an important learning experience. My trans-disciplinary background allowed me to attend courses in different departments at McGill and conduct a broad survey of literature.

Looking back prompts me to reflect and move forward. McGill started a new chapter in my career and here I have grown both as a scholar and as a person. I tried hard to be structured, but failed to be coerced. I made choices from a given set of options and have stood by them. Every day has remained a struggle. Like most Indians in the diaspora, home is still engrained in my imagination, and in the constant struggle to figure out the social vectors to which I belong. Canadian culture still maintains the British connection. The Governor General living in Ottawa or the photograph of the Queen on $20 bill constantly remind me of the British Commonwealth. It confirms that as a Commonwealth Scholar, I have carried my colonial baggage from a former colony to a dominion.

Canadian culture manifests multi-cultural catalogue within the bi-cultural English and French dynamics. The English- French dualities as well as the ever-increasing multicultural milieu are probably best represented in Montreal. Although Montreal is part

[11] It involved the signing of an agreement before the indentured labourers were sent to work in socially and culturally alien lands.

of Quebec, a predominately French province, Montreal has a significant number of Anglophones and Allophones. There are around fifteen thousand people of Indian origin in Montreal (CIC, 2004). The Indian diasporic post in Montreal consists mostly of those who migrated from post-colonial India.

Post-Colonialism as a cultural practice engrosses circuits of flow between the metropolis and the colony. Both the colony and the metropolis have been shaped by this dynamism. While earlier Britain and France, with their capitals London and Paris, exerted the colonial cultural influence in the metropolis, after the middle of the last century even North America joined the fray. Montreal with its English and French duality, and its location in North America, with ever-increasing émigrés from India, provides a challenging research site to observe, comprehend, and express the post-colonial cultural admixture in a diasporic milieu. People from India in Montreal represent a diverse group with members from most regions of India, although the Gujarati, Punjabi, Bengali, Malayali, Hindi, and Tamil linguistic groups are pre-dominant[12].

Though Canada and India are both part of the British Commonwealth, the "social field" is different in these two countries, especially with regard to cultural practices. It is interesting to know how those like me, in whom the sense of home is fleeting and all culture is but "traveling culture," adjusts in the new social field. It is equally important to understand what "capital" émigrés bring with them to the new social system and how, in interaction with the new system, people develop new "capital." I am trying to use the tools which Bourdieu (1977) has explained in the diasporic context and therefore, my intent is to know how the new "habitus" gets formed, and how dispositions get set among the Indian diaspora in Canada.

[12] These groups represent North, Western, Eastern, Southern, and Central India.

"Imagining India" in Canada through the lens of the Indian diaspora would be limited to what would remain in the memory from the past, or what would be learned through different mass media in contemporary society. The feeling of the "other" in the Canadian culture came to me through raised eyebrows in reaction to my English. It ranged from-"your English is good," to "you need to improve your English communication skills." Nevertheless, my baked brown English got a maple coating. I realize with Rushdie (1991) that to conquer English may be to complete the process of making ourselves free. This freedom to express would be to comprehend better what I observe and how I express myself, within my trans-disciplinary discourse community. This process of achieving freedom started long ago when I left my first "home" and has continued throughout my attempts to belong to my different communities of practice. It should not come as a surprise when I choose to side with those outside the "power blocks" that keep reconfiguring themselves.

Freire asserts in his seminal *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2005) that while some people work to maintain the system, others work to change it. My **memoirs** guide me to critical intervention, both in my perception of reality and in my evolving critical consciousness of the reality. My cultural voice allows me to dream of the rejection of a class-based society, to denounce the neo-liberal position, stage-managed aura, manipulated social status, and sadistic love. I see the dialogical negotiation, with which I engage, at two levels. The first is within me, with my inner consciousness, which has been shaped by reflexive involvement with my contextual experiences. The second involves my dialogue with the power of culture at large. My present location and my

historical context, engrained through the experiences in my memoirs, set my ontological vocation.

Critical Ontology

Kincheloe in his piece titled *Critical Ontology: Visions of Selfhood and Curriculum* (2003) lists twenty-three basic ideas to develop the notion of critical ontology. Critical ontology necessitates personal transformation based on an understanding and critique of forces which shape one's experiences. The macro terrain of my current research as well as the micro focus are located within critical ontology, which I envisage through the delineation of who I am, how and why I situate myself within my inquiry, and what my vocation entails me to do. To be neutral is to take a position with the status quo. I do not stand neutral but, rather, feel privileged to understand the unequal distribution of power in society and stand for those fighting restrictions on their lives.

My focus on the youth in the Indian diaspora in Montreal is borne out of my understanding of the transnational context in which Indian diasporic youth experience their life. They imagine their homeland culture through the globalized cultural repertoire of "Indianness." The cultural consciousness of being the "other" in the diaspora as well as in their "land of origin" stimulates a culture of powerlessness and a desire to see change in everyday experience. My inquiry also suggests that while the first generation in the diaspora looks for community ties, the second and subsequent generation(s) find such ties restrictive of their choices. Indian diasporic youth in Montreal draw their cultural repertoire from a complex intercultural admixture that they experience in their everyday lives. While I have been interested in how I/we recognize ourselves, my vocation also compels me to gauge how youth in the diaspora are seen by the "other" (the majority in

this case). I am reminded of a Guns' N' Roses song- "immigrants and fagots…they make no sense to me…they come to our country…and think they'll do as they please…"

I understand what the song conveys to me. I have faced it in the frowns and the question of why I am here, when will I return to India, and their like. What youth in the diaspora do depends on what they are allowed to do by their parents, their peers, their community of practice, and socio-cultural forces at large. I am drawn to community practices in locating my critical ontology- rather evolving critical ontology- to see what role the community plays. When I see synergetic youth being socially reprimanded for their creative energy- for thinking outside the box in which society has placed them- I am pained. My imagination runs to take their side, to understand the cultural forces and the social system that perpetuate such situations. I cannot applaud narcissistic agendas, hegemonic forces of dominance, and cultural powers. I feel we need to resist and the harder, the better. As outlined earlier, my fleeting home and traveling culture, my hybridity, as well as my multi-cultural, multi-religious, and multi-axial repertoire, strengthen my resolve.

My understanding is scattered, therefore, my writing looks abstract. Writing is a dialectical process at multiple levels. An important dialectic is between the author and what s/he has to communicate. What the author reads, either in textual form or through experience (including experience with the research site), has a bearing on the writing process. With critical ontology, my understanding and my expression are changing, enabling me to make better sense of the interaction and appropriation, acculturation and hybridization, collaboration and resistance, which result from encounters both in the "homeland" and the diaspora.

According to Kincheloe (2003), critical ontology is a symbiotic, evolving, contextual, productive, transformative, and justice oriented recognition of power complicity through critical construction of the self. It involves, as I have done in this chapter, historically situating the self, researching the self first, with a belief in the human possibility while avoiding Cartesian reductionism. Having done this, I take a break in my dissertation-writing voyage in this chapter with a poetic expression, an idiom I learned as a post-colonial being.

i keep wondering rather confused
why didn't kipling comprehend west meeting east?
maybe his creative lens took us "not to be"

i was made to believe the west was busy, and orient lazy
therefore, the west had the right to shape east as it should be
and then the west were pushed out by the westernized "we"

to carry the mission and replace the creamy spill, smartest
among us, have power to shape as we should think "to be"
then only we can reach, they tell, where we should be

O knowledge! thou art such a delightful treat

Chapter 2

THE INQUIRY

India, like most post-colonial societies, has been largely shaped by a dominant metropolis culture, the British in India's case. However, the resilience of India lies in its ancient and diverse culture which has been enriched by successive waves of migration to India. People from India have also migrated to different geographical locales and have added to the diversity of those regions. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, there are more than twenty million people of Indian origin across the globe[13]. Therefore, a comprehensive account of Indian civilization and culture should not be envisaged without the study of the Indian diaspora. To elucidate the relationship between Indians in India and her diaspora, I chose the metaphor of the banyan tree (Tinker, 1977; Prasad, 1999), a sacred tree in Hindu mythology.

Prasad (1999) argues that the aerial roots of the banyan tree giving rise to newer and newer trunks make it impossible over time to distinguish the mother trunk. For many Indian communities, it is a symbol of never-ending life. Rabindranath Tagore (cited in Tinker, 1977: iii) remarked-

> To study a banyan tree, you must not only know the main stem in its soil, but also must trace the growth of its greatness in the further soil, for then you can know the true nature of its vitality. The civilization of India, like a banyan tree has shed its beneficent shade away from its birthplace…

[13] Government of India. 2000. *Report of the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora.* Chaired by L.M Singhvai.

This metaphor, which defies boundedness in time and space, provides an example of a way of looking at Indians spread around the world. The scattered trunks (Indians abroad) are associated with the central trunk (India) as they negotiate their socio-cultural practices and identity. The following image (Figure 1) provides a glimpse of scattered branches and aerial roots from a banyan tree.

Figure 1. The Banyan Tree [14]

A section of this banyan tree (Indian civilization) can be imagined to be in Canada and a segment of it to be located in Montreal. I locate this inquiry of the Indian diaspora in Montreal, an urban city in a bilingual French province of Canada.

[14] Source: downloaded on 5th May, 2006 from-
http://www.plantcultures.org/pccms/action/showFullSizeImage?id=420)

India existed in the grand pipe of western consciousness long before Indians started migrating to western shores. It is strange but true that the search for India by way of geographic reconnaissance changed the socio-cultural map of the globe. Christopher Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci located the North American continent in their search for India by default, while Vasco de Gama crossed the Cape of Good Hope (South Africa) and reached India. Thereafter, the original inhabitants in North America are also referred to as Indians. People from India, on the other hand, started coming to North America during the British rule. After the 1960s, when the immigration system opened a little bit, the pace of immigration increased and now North America is one of the favoured destinations for people from India.

My detour, like the loop of a bricolage, is contextual when we understand that the cultural repertoire of North America is shaped predominantly by people of European descent. I consider the diasporic consciousness appropriate to understand the socio-cultural mooring of the Indian diaspora in North America. I problematize multicultural education as well as politics of identity and difference within critical social theory (see Kincheloe and Steinberg, 2001) and consider power or the "absence of power" (in the Foucaultian sense) central to the understanding of cultural consciousness. I also recognize that the context of the diaspora is central to the development of critical social theory.

Firstly, the philosophical standpoint that critical theory attempts to clarify oscillates between "knowing" and "being." Marx turned Hegel on his head and made economic determinism (being) pivotal, while Weber brought religio-cultural consciousness (knowing) to the forefront of understanding human nature. Cultural consciousness and dialogue regarding human nature and social order assume centrality in

critical social theory, with the Marxist concern for emancipation. Consciousness, as will appear later in the dissertation, is central to an inquiry of the diaspora.

Secondly, prominent thinkers of the Frankfurt school spent considerable time in the United States (U.S.), where they elucidated the basic tenets of critical theory. While they lived and thought away from "home," the context of their "being" lay in Europe, especially in northern Europe. Like critical theory, diaspora is a contested (Toloyan, 1991) and evolving term which is increasingly used in the scholastic lexicon to understand the social formation and cultural pattern of the contemporary era- an age marked by the mass movement of people, the ever increasing information technology boom, and different foci of global influences. Lastly, the diasporic notion of "victim" and "better than the original" (read, nation-state for diaspora), which has come about in the diasporic study circle (Clifford, 1994) holds centrality for both the founding figures of critical social theory as well as to their theoretical descendents who articulate its basic tenets.

I will expand the above argument further in the appropriate section. In the next section, however, I briefly discuss the context of this study and narrow the focus to situate community practices, formal and informal education, and youth, before moving on to discuss the locus of my inquiry.

Context

Diaspora is an ancient word and originates from the Greek word for "dispersion." Like the people who inhabit the spaces designated by it, diaspora is a transient term related to travel (Mishra, 1996). The word essentially had a positive overtone although some dislocation was due to poverty, over-population, and inter-state wars (Cohen,

1995). The Jewish use of the term in the pre-modern period overlaid the benign meaning (ibid, 1995) and the notion of diaspora was coloured with elements of forced exile, collective suffering, and an infinitely strong and binding sense of identity, as well as a great nostalgia for homeland (Lal, 1996).

To a large extent, the negative connotation of the term diaspora has remained predominant in the common scholarly notation of the modern period. The horrific slave trade followed by the quasi-forced indenture of the Indians, Japanese and Chinese, as well as the harsh treatment of the Armenians by the nation-building Turks, all conform to the notion of "victimization." In the post World War II era, the term also denotes various groups that were previously described as exile groups, overseas communities, ethnic, and racial minorities (Vertovec, 1999). The boom in information technology has bridged the gaps among diaspora (Patel, 2000) and the current period of globalisation has enhanced the practical, economic and affective roles of diaspora (Cohen, 1995).

Diaspora studies have gained importance in socio-cultural debates as well as with questions of boundaries, space and mobility. People in the diaspora have come to be regarded as representative protagonists rather than as marginalized exiles (Tololyan, 1991). They are also assumed to be the "moral better" of the nation-state (Clifford, 1994). Although diaspora carries lot of historical baggage due to its connection with Jewish history, diaspora assumes importance in understanding people whose origin is in India. This is because to most Indians in the diaspora, the notion of being the victim in their adopted land through structural and cultural means is predominant. In addition, it is because India still holds a place in their hearts and minds as well as in their cultural practices (Jain, 1989).

Prominent research on the Indian diaspora has focused primarily on adults, and only recently have there been studies conducted on the youth in Indian diaspora (Ghuman, 2003; Handa, 2003; Maira, 2002; Brah, 1996). Ghuman's research (2003) has dealt with the cultural conflict and identity crisis of second-generation youth. He considers youth as basically confused over which cultural practices to value. Handa (1997) and Brah (1996) find that youth appear to locate their experiences as negotiated across boundaries of ethnicity, gender or culture and historical domains of migration. Maira (2002) looks at the cultural performance of youth surfacing through nostalgia. These studies provide valuable insights about the Indian diasporic youth but they largely ignore the influence of the first generation on the experiences of the second/subsequent generations.

Some studies like those of Saran (1985) and Rayaprol (1997) vaguely document the efforts of the first generation in the life and life chances of the second/subsequent generation. While Saran's (1985) research is sketchy, Rayaprol (1997) plays with gender and identity issues in a trans-religious context. Moreover, most research on the Indian diaspora confirms the importance parents attach to the educational success of their sons and daughters (Gibson, 1988), but none looks at the educational experiences of the youth as it is shaped by the efforts of their parents or their larger community practices.

In the educational context, I concur with Dewey (1961) that examining experience is the key to understanding education. For Dewey, education, experience and life are knotted together, and research is but the study of life experience. This perspective gives me an opportunity to extend the confines of education from formal, to include informal and non-formal practices. It also gives an opportunity to find out the educational

experiences of youth in family, with peers, and in the community. My intent is not to defy the importance of formal education but to highlight educational experiences in social interactions at multiple levels- dialogues that take place with members of the family, peers, and the community. In other words, I am inspired by Freire's (2005) insistence on situating educational activity in the lived experience of participants in their community of practice.

Community does not qualify only the neighbours, but as Bauman (2002) illustrates, community gives a good feeling. Bauman (2002:4) argues "missing community means missing security; gaining community, if it happens, would mean missing freedom." Diasporic community can be best understood through Anderson (1991), who shows the way through his postulate of "imagined community" because the diasporic community is not geographically bound but relates through consciousness and imagination. Culture of a community, including diasporic community, can be either expressive or instrumental.

By instrumental culture, Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001:156) denote "skills, competencies, and social behaviors that are required to successfully make a living and contribute to society". By expressive culture, they imply a "realm of values, worldviews, and patterning of interpersonal relations that give meaning and sustain the sense of self". Taken together, these qualities of culture generate shared meanings, shared understandings, and a sense of belonging. A sense of who one is and where one belongs is modeled by these qualities of culture, which *is shaped by our community of practice.*

According to Lal (1996), Indian cinema, cricket and cuisine are the three aspects of Indian culture that bind Indian people together. Nevertheless, the aspect of culture that

Indian diasporic community espouses also entails norms and values of Indian culture that are assumed to be different from the culture of the mainstream Canadian society. The cultural practices of Indian diasporic are different from those of India and I see them as a complex admixture of eclectic choices (Raj, 2005). Suarez- Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001) report that while a diasporic community makes economic gains, its members are not able to achieve social status equivalent to the majority in the society. Suarez- Orozco and Suarez-Orozco point out the motivation of high achievement, especially educational, of Asians as a complement to lower social status. With Leistyna (2001) I observe the "model minority" stereotype for Asian youth, including Indian, as a form of divisive and re-figured racism. Uncritical thinking on the part of the target group pushes its members towards buying into the agenda, and several minority communities start living the illusionary dream.

The role of community in the lived experience of youth, especially diasporic youth, becomes important for other reasons as well. The number of diasporic youth is increasing in North America, and so is their marginalization due to their class and colour in the society. Giroux (2003) brings into focus the situation of these "abandoned generations" within the circle of the neo-liberal state, aggressive capitalism, and consumer citizenship. This leaves community as a cover and as an agent to protect and promote marginalized youth.

I draw from specific research regarding community involvement in the life of diasporic youth, from the sociology of migration and the sociology of education, significantly the work of scholars like Portes, Rambaut, and Zhou (since the early 1990s) in the U.S., which has shed light on the experiences of the second-generation resulting

from the influence of the efforts of the first generation immigrants in the U.S. While these studies are contextualized in the larger perspective of international migration, assimilation, social capital, and so on, none of them has focused on Asian Indians- as people from India are referred to in the U.S. Moreover, there is hardly any research, in my knowledge, that links issues of identity and difference with educational experience and community practice, especially in the diasporic context with emphasis on youth. Therefore, this inquiry becomes important. This study will provide a new perspective with which to look at the transnational migrants or the diaspora, will set in motion the comparative study of various diaspora, and will provide a new academic dimension to the studies on youth in general and those in the diaspora in particular.

Locus

This inquiry is located in Montreal, a challenging post-colonial research setting within a Canadian French-English duality and an increasing transculturality. The island of Montreal has a significant number of people born outside of Canada. The 2004 Census of Canada shows that there are approximately fourteen thousand people of Indian origin in Montreal and this number is constantly increasing. According to most participants in this inquiry, Montreal appears to be a prime location for people from India as it offers better career opportunities, a multicultural milieu, and social security to family and kin network.

Montreal was also considered by several respondents as a "gateway" opportunity into other cities of North America. For example, *Ruma*, a participant in this study, pointed out that several of her colleagues had moved to Seattle in the last few years. *Ruma* came to Montreal as a six-year-old with her parents and has attended school and

obtained professional degrees in Montreal. Her mother was very active in community activities, especially during the *Durga Puja*[15] celebrations. *Ruma* would attend most of these community functions with her mother. Now, as a youth, she is involved in the same activities in which her mother used to participate. In a way, *Ruma* is very active and respected in the Indian community in Montreal and therefore, I consider her opinion important. Another respondent, *Abhay*, who was born and brought up in Montreal, plans to move to Toronto after he completes his degree at Montreal's Concordia University. *Abhay* considers Toronto to have more economic opportunities for him and believes there are more Indians there. He feels that he cannot go to India, and by staying in Toronto he will feel at "home." On the contrary, *Nina,* a new graduate of Montreal's Dawson College, who has been admitted to Princeton, is relocating there with her family to study chemistry. She is enthusiastic and feels that she will be able to stay connected with her friends from Montreal.

Such examples are common as geography rarely restricts youths' desires to migrate. They draw inspiration from their parents' convictions, dislocation, motivations, and struggle. Canadian cosmopolitan cities such as Montreal are global exemplars of peaceful intercultural co-existence. Global cities are important circuits of socio-economic (Sassen, 1998) and cultural globalisation (Appadurai, 1999). This global character adds to the multicultural richness of Montreal and it serves as a nodal circuit of transnational and transcultural flow. Besides Montreal, there are a sizeable numbers of people of Indian origin in Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton and Halifax (Buchignani, 1989).

Most research on the Indian diaspora has concentrated on English speaking parts of the world (Parekh et al, 2003; Shukla, 2003; Guman, 2003; Puwar and Raghuram,

[15] Hindu religious celebrations to worship the mythological *Shakti* (power) cult Goddess *Durga.*

2003), including Canada (Jayaram, 2004; Jain, 1999; Buchignani, 1989). My choice of Montreal as my research site, as previously pointed out, was prompted by a gap in the research literature and was further facilitated by my social contacts in Montreal, which helped build rapport with the research participants. Montreal's Indian diasporic community is scattered in its residential pattern, but there are large numbers in Park Extension, the West Island, LaSalle, and Brossard. While those at Park Extension can be understood as lower middle class[16], those at LaSalle as middle class, the West Island and Brossard Indians are of upwardly mobile class status.

Social status and social class precede the struggle for social identity (see, Alcoff and Mendieta, 2003). What I observed is that, in the geographical locale of Montreal, the first generation usually draws empathy from other people from India, as well as from their co-ethnics in other parts of the world. These networks forge a sense of community, which is definitely not geographically bound. My aim in this inquiry is to understand the role of people of Indian origin in Montreal in the educational experiences and identity negotiations of youth of their community. I used the age cohort of 15-24 years based on the World Health Organization (2001) definition of youth. I focused on this age range of the population in order to take into consideration their enriching experiences and layers of power, agency, advocacy and subjectivities.

The research hypothesis stems from the fact that with increasing immigration and therefore increasing diasporic population, the numbers of diasporic youth are also increasing in North America. Most research on youth positions their educational experience within formal settings like schools, colleges, or universities. In several research studies, youth is either defined as a problem category, or as a group for policy

[16] Based on low income and relatively low level of formal education level.

manipulation. My understanding, with Maira (2004), is that youth in the diaspora are confronted with variegated experiences surfacing with their renewed configurations of information technology, increasing cultural complexities, border crossing of different nation-states and the accompanying marginality or empowerment.

The questions that have guided my inquiry are as follows:

(1) How best to prepare to do research and write about the efforts and experiences of people in the diaspora?

(2) What are the educational experiences and identity negotiation processes of the Indian diasporic youth in Montreal?

(3) What role do the Indian diasporic community practices play in shaping the experiences of the youth of the community?

(4) How can the resources of people in the Indian diaspora be best conceptualized, understood, and evaluated?

Knowledge production through a focus on unanswered questions is a major trend in academia. I use this approach as a guide. In my attempt I am drawn to understanding the way power (or powerlessness) in a culture shapes consciousness. I am interested in understanding why some people (of a particular class, age, and gender background) gravitate towards diasporic community and others do not. I want to understand how culture operates in such community circles and whether it is empowering to those who adhere to it. Central to my inquiry is the reorganization of social relations in a diasporic context which has a bearing on the redefinition of culture. The Indian diasporic culture may fall within Bhabha's (2004) "third space" and may represent hybridization, but even within that third space there is struggle for representation of socio-cultural differences.

Approach

The aim of my research involved understanding in ways that do not require quantification or precise measurement. I assumed that my project, therefore, requires a qualitative methodological orientation. Although I am disdainful of monological reductionism, I delineated the cultural consciousness and voice of participants in an ethnographic approach. Like diaspora, ethnography has colonial baggage and is controversial. Initially, ethnography was defined as the "descriptive accounts of non-literate people" (Radcliffe-Brown, 1952), and it allowed imperial scholars to construct colonial cultural practices in a myopic vision and with a hegemonic ideological standpoint. As a post-colonial scholar, I am suspicious of ethnography as an ideological tool and prefer to delineate lived experience of people through participant-observation.

The key assumption is that by entering into a close and relatively prolonged interaction with people in their everyday life, ethnographers can better understand beliefs, motivations, and behaviors of their subjects than they can by using any other method (Hammersley, 1992). The current configurations of the world necessitate taking research in new directions, beyond the borders of conventional ethnography. Appadurai (1999: 196-197) convinces us "that a new style of ethnography can capture the impact of deterritorialised on the imagined resource of lived, local experience." Burawoy's (2000, 2001) global ethnography is a good approach to study life experiences of people in the diaspora as it takes care of the forces, connections and imaginations in the present world. Keeping this methodology at the forefront and drawing as well from anthropological research (Levitt, 2001; Froner, 2003) I have problematised and developed my understanding of what I call "transnational ethnography."

Transnational ethnography is born out of the reflexivity I experienced during the course of my field engagement. My understanding starts with global ethnography (Burawoy, 2000). Like global ethnography, as described by Burawoy, transnational ethnography is assumed to be useful while taking into account the context and the contents due to the forces, connections and imaginations of the resurgent global world. Nevertheless, transnational ethnography will also be useful to understand the transnational social space, including diasporic networks and associations as well as trust, solidarity, and collaborations among co-diasporics. The transnational social space is etched at various sites and operates in the diasporic web of social relations that crosses the borders of nation-state.

I realize that understanding the self is the first step to any qualitative research and, as Meek (2003) maintains, unconscious mental processing is a necessary part of qualitative research, underlying under what is also called "reflexive processing." It is important to recognize the information that has crept into our research in disguised forms. Meek points out that unconscious mental processing are not a favoured topic of discussion in research circles though it can serve several positive ends. I started maintaining a daily journal in order to record most information during the period of my field study. Reading and re-reading the notes helped me in bringing to the fore such issues that must have crept into my unconscious mind during my field work.

This engagement with my "subjective self" served as a research guide, and the process of attending to it helped me to engage myself with the dilemmas and difficulties of the field. As well as empirical engagement, it was an attempt to understand the research praxis for my theoretical moorings and methodological stance. I collected field

information between the summer of 2004 and the summer of 2006, and walked a metaphorical tightrope, both as an insider and an outsider, considering the fact that I am an "Indian" with the Indian diaspora. I started with a large sample, following purposive sampling (to make it representative of the Indian diversity of language, region and religion as well as the geographic locale of Montreal) shifted to conducting 20 in-depth interviews of parent-youth dyads, first jointly and then separately. In addition, I also conducted 10 in-depth interviews of people from across the community spectrum, including those involved with ethno-religious associations, and people of other ethnic groups. Finally, I followed the lead of informants in Montreal and conducted five informal interviews in Delhi, India.

Participant observations have mainly facilitated the research. As Malinowski (1922:2) argues, "it is good for the ethnographer sometimes to put aside camera, note book and pencil, and to join in what is going on." During the field study, I joined people of Indian origin in Montreal in various activities. But "there is no way we can totally capture the lifeway of another person or group of people" (Walcott, 1999:15-16). Therefore, a combination of research methods, such as participant observation and in-depth interviews, became imperative.

Although facts speak for themselves, Walcott (1999:12) argues "ethnographic accounts arise not from the facts accumulated during fieldwork but from ruminate about the meanings to be derived from the experience." Reflecting upon the facts led to my understanding of the diasporic resource and its importance in the educational experience and identity negotiation of Indian diasporic youth in Montreal. The need to reflect and re-

engage with the literature became similarly obvious as a way to find the best approach to understand and interpret this transnational resource and its importance.

It is difficult to conclude an inquiry such as this because, with each passing day, cultural narratives of both the researcher and the researched generate more questions than they answer. As is obvious, this inquiry is located in a postmodern/postpositivist emancipatory anti-theoretical stance where one sees theories as a tool and a way of organizing various locus of knowledge (Thomas, 1997). The methodological approach corroborates my hunch and is not a "truth-revealing" corpus. In this dissertation, I do not present applicable theories separately and work my empirical information based on them. Rather, I am fascinated by "research as praxis" (Lather, 1986) - guided by emancipatory action and egalitarian participation. Pivotal to my inquiry, therefore, and guiding my knowledge production project, is targeting metanarratives and focusing on power discourse, especially when it is not visible in social relations.

Chapter Outlines

The First Chapter helped me to situate my ontological vocation while this chapter has outlined the basic tenets of my inquiry. The Next/Third chapter maps the macro terrain of this research with a systematic review of the literature on globalisation, transnationalism and diaspora, and their contextualization with a literature review concerning education, identity, global cities, and youth in the diaspora. A conceptual framework is deduced toward the end of the third chapter that guides the following chapter.

Chapter Four brings in a literature review on themes and perspectives related to the global Indian diaspora, and then narrows the review to the North American, and

subsequently the Canadian context. The role of networks, ties, and associations as embedded in the diasporic community and as proliferating in the contemporary era, guide the review of literature, the framing of locations of inquiry and the conceptual framework of the rest of the research process. In line with "dialectic criticism," I critically discuss the above, based on my field observations in Montreal. I also introduce a few selected examples from my field observation to substantiate my observations.

The Fifth Chapter is on the methodological orientation and methods used in the research. Herein, I am guided by Kincheloe and Berry's (2004) attempt for rigor and complexity in educational research using multilogical and contextual bricolage. Although my limited understanding of the empirical reality is based on participant observation and semi-structured interviews, in an attempt at rigor through a "feedback loop" (see Kincheloe and Berry, 2004), I have relied on other sources such as content analysis of relavant cinema, novels, newspaper reports, and opinion pieces. I distinguish my methodological approach as rooted in my philosophical stance on transnationalism and my attempt at deconstructing ethnography. Therefore, I have problematized both my technique and tools of empirical information within this philosophical stance. In trying to visualize my research figuratively, I am also drawn to use "crystallization of the study" using Richardson and Pierre (2005). My case is like crystals, which reflect externalities and refract within themselves, generating extraordinary colours and patterns, and thereby synergizing the research process and findings.

It might seem that I have not followed the typical research tradition of presenting the review of literature in one section/chapter or two, and then showcasing the conceptual framework thereafter. My argument is that from my study of the plethora of literature that

graduate studies demand, I should outline only those that influence the framework of the research. Although the literature review may shape the body of the research, the conceptual framework befitting the research moves from the broader locus to the specificity of the study. I have not presented a literature review separately and followed with a delineation of the method and then the analysis. Rather, I chose to allow my trandisciplinary literature review to guide me and shifted my inquiry simultaneously with analysis, from the location of macro terrain to those of micro issues.

In Chapter Six, I discuss the lived experiences of Indian youth in Montreal as reflected to me through the lens of their perceptions. The theoretical tools that I use in this chapter, as other chapters in my dissertation, depend on my attempt to make sense of my field observations and my quest for social justice. In a sense, the methodological bricolage is synergized by the theoretical bricolage. This helped me to make better sense of the social complexity through which the role of the diasporic community can be understood in the life of diasporic youth in general, and the life experiences of these youth in particular. Critical to my understanding is a nuanced teasing out of consciousness around which diasporic community operates its cultural voice. My toolkit of knowledge production allows me to envisage the "diasporic capital" which the (Indian) diasporic community creates and uses based on its members' collective community consciousness.

The last chapter is based on inferences and shows new directions for future research. I did extensive fieldwork and it was not possible to include all the information I gathered in this dissertation. Nevertheless, my findings have made me recognize those issues that need to be focused in future research.

Preliminary Inferences

I believe this research will allow scholars to take into account the context with which the life experience, including education and identity, of people in the diaspora is enmeshed. I expect future researchers will comprehend the transnational context that shapes the lives of people in the diaspora. Although people in the diaspora witness ruptures of unprecedented magnitude, they also generate their own resources. The resources of people in the diaspora include social capital, human capital, cultural capital, and economic capital in varying degrees, but diasporic capital/resource has its own configuration and synergy. Diasporic capital/resource influences the decision making ability of the people in the diaspora in several ways. I consider the present situation and future ability of people in the diaspora to be dependent on their ability to contribute and utilize this resource. My argument is that different diaspora have different diasporic capital, which is used in different ways depending on the socio-economic and political configuration of the "host" society as well as that of the "home" society.

During my research, I was careful to understand the power dynamics in social relations which helped me understand the subjectivities of the research participants. In my writing, I have tried to give voice to their concerns. Writing about people in the diaspora should involve power dynamics that shape cultural consciousness in both-culture of origin and culture of adaptation. Besides, this study can also be useful as policy guidelines for the "host" society (Canada) as well as the "home" society (India). This is because people from India are the second fastest growing ethno-cultural group, after the Chinese, in Canada. India has a population of 1.1 billion (and growing) and almost 70 per cent of this population is below 34 years of age. A significant proportion of this

population will move to other parts of the world, including Canada. It is imperative to gauge the future social matrix, in both the sending and the receiving countries, in order to guide public policy accordingly.

It is to the migrants who constitute the diaspora that this research will be most useful. The contemporary world is marked by unprecedented mass movement and in many instances- migration is not a choice. On the contrary, it is a state of mind that consumes the body and the soul of migrants that comprise diaspora. Transnational migration is assumed to be a risk and the manifestation of a desire to fulfill dreams. Migrants and people in the diaspora may also adopt some of the arguments because it is they whom I represent through this inquiry.

Finally, as Jayaram (2004:330) argues, "the study of the Indian diaspora is not a discipline by itself, but only an area of specialized study utilizing the data, concepts, methods and theories of many disciplines." While my multidisciplinary background enabled me to draw from several disciplines for this research, my work is moored in critical cultural study and I expect it will guide cultural workers, academics and non-academics alike.

Chapter 3

MAPPING THE TERRAIN

In this chapter, I examine themes and perspectives that are pivotal to map the terrain of my inquiry. I thematically reviewed select literature on globalisation, transnationalism, and diaspora to provide the macro canvas of this research. The triadic relationship of globalisation, transnationalism, and diaspora helped me to outline the global social field shaped by the contemporary guises of capitalism and imperialism and elucidate important research around which I delineated the framework of my research. I also reviewed select literature on education, identity, and youth culture- as befitting diaspora discourse and as shaped by the above mentioned triadic macro forces. My drive behind mapping such a terrain is to understand the intersecting contexts and related multiple epistemologies.

While not denying the fact that globalisation discourse has reached its current crescendo mainly with and in response to the involvement of the United States of America (U.S.) in the international economy, I agree with Appadurai (1991) that there are different foci of global influences and, conversely, different modes of global resistances. I also comprehend that, in the present era, there are multiple ties and interactions that link people and institutions across borders of nation-states. Transnational communities and practices, in my view, are proliferating as well as the social configurations of their power (or, their powerlessness). Diaspora as a re-emerging heuristic tool allows me to understand the social formation and cultural patterns of the present world. Under such

problematization, I concur that it is important to understand the experiences of youth in the diaspora as they have the potential to shape the "home" as well as the "host" society.

I begin the discussion in this chapter by looking at the nature of global reality after which I situate "globalisation from below" (Brecher et al., 2000) in the labyrinth of the discussion.

Comprehending the Nature of Global Reality

Globalisation is a key catchphrase in today's world. Generally, globalisation discourse cuts across academic disciplines and sets in motion examinations and explanations rarely imagined before the last decade. Attempts at interpretation and discussion of globalisation are carried out even as the present world order is changing. Kellner (2000) argues that globalisation denotes increased economic, cultural, environmental and social interdependence. He further posits that globalisation has led to new transnational financial and political formations arising out of the mobility of capital, labour and information, with both homogenizing and differentiating tendencies. Kellner's arguments can be complemented by an understanding of the power dynamics in the interdependence of the global systems. Similarly, homogenization and differentiating tendencies necessitate the examination of the power blocks in the global society.

Giddens (1990) characterizes globalisation as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa. While Giddens sees globalisation as "time-space distantation," Harvey (1989) takes the standpoint of "time-space compression." Harvey's (1989) hypothesis is based on the assumption of revolutions in information and communication technologies that have enabled

instantaneous communication around the globe, bringing more places and people into contact with one another. Harvey states that the organization of space defines relationships, not only between activities, things and concepts, but also, by extension, between people. If Kellner (2000) elucidates "what" with globalisation, Harvey (1989) shows "how."

The discourse of globalisation has grown both in amount and complexity. In their systematic review of literature on globalisation discourse, Fiss and Hirsch (2005) point to the major perspective in its study. According to them, one standpoint highlights the destructive effects on democratic processes, workers' rights, the environment, as well as the nation-state. Another proposes that growth in international trade has led to benefits and positive effects. Third, stresses the extent and effects of globalisation on the increased flow of technology, information, practices, free capital, and transnational organizations. Also, globalisation has been praised or criticized for increasing or decreasing cultural homogeneity around the world and it is seen as a condition of modernity- a new and distinct global age. While Fiss and Hirsch (2005) have done commendable coverage of literature on globalisation, they have not been able to rise above the cost-benefit or advantage-disadvantage analysis.

In the "Runaway World," a discussion on globalisation and its effects, Giddens (2003) divides scholars and advocates on globalisation into two camps, namely, "skeptics" and "radicals." According to him, the skeptics believe that globalisation is a myth- an ideology rather than reality. The skeptics point out that the world has been hijacked by the neo-liberal ideology that is spreading its tentacles, more so after the collapse of communism and the ensuing increase in influence of the World Bank and the

International Monetary Fund (IMF). Giddens proposes that the radicals, on the other hand, refer to significant transformations that have noticeable consequences, not only for the world economy, but also for basic institutions of society. Giddens places himself in the radical camp and acknowledges that globalisation is the culmination of the project of modernity. Yet, as Burawoy (2000) points out, Gidden traces globalisation to the origins of modernity in the sixteenth century, and therefore contradicts his own argument

While elucidating and not being drawn into the debate on globalisation, my intent is to approach the literature on globalisation to visualize a lens through which to study the Indian diaspora. I have tried to categorize the voluminous literature on issues around globalisation under three headings- globalisation, glocalization, and localization. As I discussed earlier, under "globalisation" discourse I understand that in the contemporary global world there are different points of influence and resistance with positive and negative effects. With research that I categorize under "glocalization," I bring to focus the hegemony of gigantic corporations and struggle for resistance by local communities and cultures. Finally, under "localization," I see those literature in which there is a wish to perceive local milieu and way of life as defining the nature of society.

In the first analysis, globalisation thesis, I consider those researchers whose central concern is to show the diminishing hold of the nation state (Appadurai, 1991). A recurrent theme in this argument is that most corporations act solely on the basis of profitability without regard to national or local consequences (Burawoy et al., 2000, Brecher et al., 2000) and so does labour. In my understanding, labour knows no national borders and labourers look for work to meet needs for themselves and their loved ones. Globalisation, therefore, is marked by global competition among workers and localities to

offer their services to investors' in order for them to maximize profit. Conversely, it is a competition among corporations to exploit labour. Therefore, in the globalized world, there is a common consumer culture- although with varying homogenizing and differentiating tendencies.

The second perspective, glocalization thesis, would encompass those researchers who see globalisation as transforming the power-relation between the nation-state and the international powers. This view is more of a global localization, in which the state is still an important agency (Luke, 1994; Yeung, 1998; Kelly, 1999). Dicken (1997:162) argues that, "like a constitutional monarch, nation-states remain both sovereign and subject." This idea acknowledges the dominance of large, powerful corporations acting on the world scale as well as the characteristics of particular communities and regions (Peck and Tickell, 1994; Luke, 1994; Cox, 1997; Mittelman, 2000). Hence, glocalisation is the double movement of globalisation on one hand and localization on the other.

The third perspective, localization thesis, also known as the localization variant in the globalisation debate, stresses the continued relevance of the nation-state as the locus of political decision. According to the localization thesis, therefore, dynamic economic growth has a distinct geographical order to it. It occurs in the spatially concentrated form of "clusters," "industrial districts," "technopoles," or "territorial production complexes" (Gertler, 1997). Moreover, the spatial configuration of economic activities will have a significant influence on costs, productivity and efficiency by reducing the transaction and costs incurred in buyer-supplier interaction.

The debate on globalisation can be understood through the mythological story, I learnt, which is about seven blind men and an elephant. Each blind man touches parts of

the elephant and describes it based on their partial understanding, each one adding to the group's overall understanding of the elephant. Similarly, each above approach adds to the understanding of the nature of global reality. While contextualizing diaspora, I concur with the mainstream discourse on globalisation; when analyzing the role of the diaspora, I abide by the glocalization thesis. I agree with Appadurai (1996) that the power of the nation-state has diminished in the contemporary era. I also regard Brecher et al's (2000) demonstration for social transformation as important to situate diaspora. I consider "grounded globalisation" (Burawoy, 2003) as a novel perspective and a foreground to "globalisation from below" (Brecher et al, 2000), discussed in the next section.

Globalisation from Below

The fundamental tenant of "globalisation from below" is that everyone is entitled to participate in the social dialogue on the question of the world and its future. The pivotal contention with globalisation from below is that what is generally understood as globalisation is, in fact, globalisation from above that has increased the power of corporations in relation to local, regional and national governing mechanisms (Brecher et al, 2000). Brecher et al points out that more than half of the largest economies of the world are corporations and not nations. Their argument shows government authority severely undermined by trade agreements such as North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), World Trade Organization (WTO), and the international financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank. I locate globalisation from below to look at the global spread of the Indian diaspora as well as the activities of people in the Indian diaspora for "homeland" advocacy, including India's development (Raj, 2006).

I must signpost my key concerns. When corporations undermine the power of the state, the power to rectify the situation lies with the people. Globalisation from below provides an opportunity to link several situations, specific to the context of people, against the hegemonic influence of globalisation. Brecher et al (2000: 23) illustrate,

> in the case of globalisation from below, for example, we have seen significant mobilizations from French chefs concerned about preservation of local food traditions, Indian farmers concerned about corporate control of seeds, and American university students concerned about school clothing made in foreign sweatshops.

The necessity for globalisation from below arises when, as Chomsky (1998) points out, the U.S. controls and influences the economic decisions of several countries. He argues that this is done in the interest of giant corporations rather than in the interest of people from influenced countries. He further postulates that these are not born out of mysterious economic laws. Rather, they are human decisions subject to challenge, revision, and reversal. An example that shows the enigma of globalisation from below can be drawn from Gandhi's (2002: 357-358) research that shows the support that the Indian diaspora provided in 2001 to the *Narmada Bachao Andolan* (NBA, Save the Narmada Movement), which was called in the wake of the decision of the Gujarat government in India to close the gates of the *Sardar Sarovar* dam. This movement was necessitated because the Gujarat government was about to close the gates of the *Sardar Sarovar* dam and, with monsoon waters to come, the tribal villages would be submerged.

While diaspora adds to diversity in their "host" society, people in the diaspora are subjected to exploitation and are abused as scapegoats for the economic troubles caused by globalisation from above. The suitable example in this case is hue and cry against people of Indian origin in North America because corporations outsource jobs to India.

The havoc caused by globalisation can be assessed by examining the ways in which cultural practices of original habitants have been disrupted and their economic resources plundered.

Besides issues around politics of difference, globalisation in its present form is unsustainable to the environment as well. Global corporations, oil refineries, chemical plants, steel mills, and other factories are the main sources of green-house gases, ozone-depleting chemicals, and toxic pollutants. The over-fishing of the world's waters, cutting of forests, and the abuse of agricultural land has been increasing. These activities are driven by comparative cost benefits and have added to poverty in developing countries.

In his discussion of global warming, Brown (1996) predicts that in the next 50 years the sea level will raise so fast that some low-lying island nations will disappear altogether. He further points out that in the unprotected deltas of countries like Bangladesh, Egypt, and Vietnam, there are more than 30 million people living within three feet of the high water mark. Similarly gruesome is the destiny of people who will suffer as crops fail. There are millions of people in dozens of sub-Saharan countries who are on the edge of starvation due to the prolonged drought of the early nineties.

The situation is not rosy and transnational resistance strategies provide impetus to engage in globalisation from below.

Transnationalism: World Beyond Borders

Transnationalism broadly refers to multiple ties and interactions linking people and institutions across the borders of nation-states (Basch et al, 1994). Despite great geographical distances and the presence of international borders, several forms of networks and associations have arisen and have been intensified with the help of new

information technologies, especially that of telecommunications. Vertovec (2002) delineates that transnational practices and their consequent configurations of power are shaping the world of the twenty-first century. Vertovec further argues that, in some instances, transnational forms and processes serve to speed-up or exacerbate historical patterns of activity, while in others, they represent arguably new forms of human interaction. Reviews of literature around transnationalism (Kennedy and Roudometof, 2002; Levitt and Walters, 2002; Pries, 1999) often encompass transnational social spaces, transnational communities, their practices and the renewed configurations of power and their impact on identities and education.

Transnational activities and, in several cases, activism emanating from some such activities is not a new phenomenon and they change conventional understanding of civil society and the role of various agencies (Smith and Guarnizo, 1998). This is when globalisation from below comes into play. Transnationalism is chosen over internationalism as such activities often involve more than two countries and enlist their dynamism. Smith and Guarnizo (1998) write that a core theme in transnational discourse is that global and local forces affect national social structure and culture. These forces are effective in contesting the hegemonic narratives of race, ethnicity, class, and nation. Smith and Guarnizo (1998:6) have also come up with their conceptualization of "transnationalism from below."

Their conceptualization is complementary to globalisation from below with sharper focus on how transnationalism as a multifaceted and multi-local process affects power relations, cultural constructions, economic interactions, and social organization at the local level. Globalisation from below, or its pointed focus transnationalism from

below, then, becomes important to understand migrants, global-local interactions and multiple foci of global influences. Mahler (1998) extends the argument and points out that transnationalism does not erase local identification or socio-cultural meaning systems, rather transnational processes rely on these cultural configurations to sustain themselves. I note that although life experiences in the diaspora are subjected to global social formations, nevertheless they can precipitate change in both their "adopted" society and "country of origin"- based on their ability to use networks and connectivity. Moreover, as Kennedy and Roudometof (2002) argue, transnationalism is not limited to the cultural practices envisaged by "new immigrants" alone.

In their co-edited book, Kennedy and Roudometof (2002: 20-21) list five categories, based on the key concerns and orientations that help understand transnational communities. The first category describes membership to be of ethnic and national origin which is basically concerned with the linkages in the homeland and with those dispersed across national boundaries. The second category covers the widely dispersed migrants whose attachment to the homeland is of a symbolic nature and who have become assimilated in various degrees in the host society. The third category encompasses the community of meanings cohering around shared lifestyle orientations and practices. Communities based on political, moral or ethical perceptions of local or global injustices seek transnational collaborative action for redress and are grouped in the fourth category. Their fifth category is about groups and bonding due to professional ethos, which might be useful to negotiate corporate globalisation. This category shows an underlying sense of community based on membership, bonding, common cause espousal and reprisal.

These categorizations assist us to grasp the configuration of the diaspora as it stresses ethnic membership, symbolic attachment to cultural practices of origin, shared meanings, and seeking justice. I consent with Kennedy and Roudometof (2002) that physical proximity, defined by locality and residences (territorial containment) that were pivotal to understanding of communities earlier are overridden. As they add, transculturality has become an alternative conceptualization of cultural conditions influenced by combinations, permeations and augmented dynamic interactions based on information technology. Added to it is Appadurai's (1991) argument that media and migration have improved the power of imagination in the everyday life of ordinary people in present world.

Appadurai's (1991:32) conceptualization of "ethnoscape," by which he means "the landscape of people who constitute the shifting world," provides an opportunity to understand the transnational space. Nina Schiller and her associates (1994) conceive transnationalism as boosting "deterritorialized" nation-state formation. Different countries are adopting policies to engage their diaspora populations, both old and new, for "homeland" development. Although transnationalism shows the declining significance of the nation-state, it does not completely negate it. On the other hand, it illustrates that, with the declining importance of nation-state, diaspora can assume prominence. Contextualization of globalisation from below also adds to the understanding of the role of agency such as diaspora. Transnationalism operates at multiple levels including nation-state, community and individual but begins with defying marked borders and has deterritorialization as its base.

In a way, it provides opportunities to the grassroots internationalism against bourgeois cosmopolitanism (Gramsci, 1988). As Appadurai (1991) shows, deterritorialization is one of the central forces of the modern world. He argues that the deterritorialized population, in the abiding sense of placelessness and timelessness, pick up and carry with them ideas and images from the "old home" to the "new host" setting. Appadurai further states that deterritorialised space liberates people oppressed within the confines of the nation-state. Deterritorialized groups face the challenge of defending their interests in the global order. These challenges may be in the host society or in their countries of origin.

Transnationalism has been studied and theorized from several perspectives- individual, collective, organization, and those delineated above, to name a select few. In my opinion, a sociological standpoint entails the understanding of transnational relationships among individuals and communities as well as their configurations through the networks they carve, the organizations and institutions they create and participate in. In understanding the configuration of "home" and the "host" milieu in the present global world of transnationalism and deterritorialization, the terminological discussion of diaspora assumes importance.

The next section delves into an explanation of the relation of diaspora with globalisation and transnationalism as discussed above. At the same time, it opens contextual dimensions of relation of diaspora with pertinent issues in education, identity and youth culture in sections to follow.

Diaspora: Theory and Practice

In Jewish history, "diaspora" represents a concept that has meaning for different periods in the existence of the Jewish people (Ages, 1973). Ages further argues that the first diaspora experience of the Jewish people came well before the rise of Christianity and then, in their classical formulation, the Jews were seen to have been expelled from their homeland for the heinous sin of deicide. Having rejected the Saviour, the Jews were condemned to wander all over the face of the earth until such time as their crime is expiated. The age-old doctrine of Jewish homelessness has helped to define the typical marginalized consciousness that has become a recognized part of the diasporic syndrome. The marginalized consciousness has been exacerbated by the holocaust experience.

My usage of diaspora- thematically, metaphorically, and contextually- is not to limit myself within any particular experience, for example, Indian diaspora; but to draw from multiple perspectives and experiences. I believe that globalisation from below has given tools to people in the diaspora which will render the negative and marginalized connotation of the diaspora invalid. Today, people in the diaspora shape the world as it is, and I envisage that they will do so in future. Diaspora has assumed special significance in the national and international affairs of the contemporary world, and globalisation has provided an atmosphere for the same. Globalisation also facilitates the home and the host societies as a single arena of action (Sheffer, 2003) between the homeland and the adopted society.

Sheffer posits that globalisation has made it possible for individuals and groups to participate directly in the global processes because their actions need not be mediated by the nation-state. Being in the diaspora also offers numerous dislocated sites of

contestation against the hegemonic and homogenizing forces of globalisation (Braziel and Manuur, 2003) in that it allows for the flow, not just of people, but also, of their ways of life. People in the diaspora network with friends and families in their homeland and with co-ethnics in other countries across the globe and, in trying to do so, they play a significant role in today's world (Hear, 1998).

The discourse of diaspora calls for an understanding of the theoretical and practical issues around it. Armstrong (1976) uses diaspora to look at any ethnic collectivity that lacks a territorial base within a given polity and he has come up with the typology of "mobilized" and "proletarian" diaspora. According to him, the proletarian diaspora is essentially disadvantaged. Mobilized diaspora may not have status advantage but enjoy several material and cultural benefits compared to other groups in a multiethnic polity. He perceives discourse around diaspora as a norm of multiethnic polities and suggests an historical perspective to understand them. Further in his analysis, Armstrong brings forth the social interaction between the elite of the diasporic group and the dominant group elite of the multiethnic society. He distinguishes the mobilized diaspora as the "broker" of diasporic culture. The elite of the diaspora group, whom Armstrong labels mobilized, are the ones mostly involved in the foreign affairs and advocacy of the homeland based on their perception of the need. The proletarian diaspora, as I see it, desire change for change but are limited in their ability to translate their limited resources.

Braziel and Mannur (2003) argue that theorization of the diaspora must involve historical and cultural specificity and they also highlight colonialism and post-colonialism as important inferences around which to map further understanding of diaspora. Although long distance migrations and the existence of groups as guilds,

merchants and military in alien lands are common historical facts, they accelerated during the colonial period. In their analysis of historical allusion of diaspora, Braziel and Mannur situate the African diaspora as part of the colonial rumblings. When slave trade stopped legally, it was replaced by indentured labourers for colonial plantations. Under British imperialism in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, a large-scale emigration of people from India took place. This aspect is discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. However, it is important to point out here that the involuntary phase of migration is part of the colonial and thereafter post-colonial contexts of migration. Any theoretical understanding of diaspora cannot be complete, as Goonewardena (2004) argues, without taking stock of the geopolitics of imperialism and colonialism, which globalisation now glosses over.

Hall (1992) considers the colonial experience and the ensuing post-colonial migrations as the basis of "cultural hybridity." While the focus on the postcolonial diaspora is salient to Hall and other cultural studies writers like Braziel and Mannur (2003), Cohen (1997) extends the understanding of diaspora beyond post- colonialism. Even the postmodern view is synonymous with diaspora because, like diaspora, post-modernism symbolizes rupture, multiple locales and attachment, and an attempt to move beyond fixed boundaries. Therefore, understanding the theorization and practice of diaspora within a postmodern perspective is important.

What is "home?" Can migrants call their new places of settlement "home?" Questions like these concern diaspora debate. Cohen (1997:134) writes: "It does not matter where you're from, or where you've come to, but where you're at?" Travel and transition is what encourages me to link Clifford's (1986) idea of "traveling cultures" to

the conceptualization and contextualization of diaspora. People in diaspora carve their space in new ways. To Basch and his associates (1994), contemporary diaspora would be "nations unbound."

Diaspora is also differentiated as involuntary and voluntary (Jain, 1989), based on the nature of migration. In my opinion, both kinds of diaspora are the result of capitalism. Even in the present times, international division of labour and unequal economic development of different countries lie at the bottom of contemporary international migration and formation of different diaspora. Vertovec (1999) looks at diaspora as a social form, a mode of production, and a type of consciousness. According to him, diaspora as a social form involves the understanding of specific social relationships produced as a result of migration, and includes attempts to maintain collective identity, have myth of common origin and struggles to get accepted in the host society. This collectivity translates into political orientations and economic strategies.

Vertovec's concept of diaspora as a mode of cultural production entertains the global flow of cultural objects, images and meanings as well as their production and reproduction in the contemporary transnational world. This process often results in forms of creolization and syncretization, and Homi Bhabha's (1994) "third space" seems apt to describe the process of mixing of cultures. The resultant cultural product is a blend of one and all available cultural variables and ingredients. I consider the transnational flow of media images and messages as adding to the complex admixture of culture.

The understanding of diaspora definitely involves Anderson's (1991) concept of "imagined communities." Diaspora consciousness, like the national collectivity and consciousness, is awareness and state of mind that coheres dispersed transnational people

into a common rubric. These set in fluid identity and multiple contestations along history, memory, resistance and reproduction. Such fluidity and multilocality can help escape the hegemonic influence of national culture which might be empowering. At times, diaspora experience based on imagined consciousness of cultural community can be misleading. In fact, consciousness built in recent times around religion and class background (or, its like) can have negative consequences like terrorism or religious fundamentalism.

Appadurai's (1991) terminological discussion of "scapes" around ethnicity, technology, finance, media and ideology is most appropriate to further contextualize diaspora within contemporary social changes, including globalisation and transnationalism. These terminological discussions are important to theorize the role of the imagination and consciousness of the migrant population and the configurations due to media in the global social system. Appadurai (ibid: 31) uses the suffix "scape" to point out the disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy with fluid, irregular and contextual "imagined worlds" of global life. By ethnoscape, he indicates "the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world" (1991:32) and whose movement generates unprecedented socio-cultural and political dimensions. By technoscape, he refers to the global configuration of technology; and by financescape, to the disposition of global capital. The next two, namely mediascape and ideoscape, are closely related to the landscape of images. Mediascape suggests electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information. Ideoscapes are also concatenations of images but they are often conspicuously political.

Appadurai (1991) postulates that, with mediation and motion, deterritorialised people incise "diasporic public sphere." The imagined world of the diaspora, according to

him, confers a social fact. He draws from Emile Durkheim's sociological idea and illustrates that imagination in the life of modern subjectivities, like diaspora, is independent of the subject's volition, constraining on the subject and can be generalized. Appadurai (1991) rightly points out the importance of both memory and desire for the people in the diaspora that exist in the form of images. Most consumption and reproduction is precipitated due to either the memory of the socio-cultural traits of the homeland, or the desire to reproduce socio-cultural elements in the host society.

In the present era, diaspora imagination and consciousness is being refigured through cyberspace and the World Wide Web is used to keep connected with activities in not just the homeland but also with people of common origin across the globe. As Mannur (2004) points out, there is an ever increasing community number of people in the diaspora over the internet and cyberspace and it serves as the new location for activities that keeps people in the diaspora above the hegemonic influence of the nation-state. Often people in the diaspora use the emergent cyber community to vouch for a better condition in the homeland.

Another significant feature in the life experience of people in the diaspora is the crossing of borders (Paranjape, 2001). Paranjape suggests that the unique consciousness of diaspora primarily results from the crossing of borders. These borders may be of region, religion, language or life preferences. Gilroy (2004), in his essay "The Black Atlantic as a Counterculture of Modernity," refutes nationalist and essentialist modes of cultural production and envisages a transnational space of (cultural) exchange, reproduction. Gilroy's argument, when counter posed with Clifford's (1989) "traveling culture," further suggests a transcultural and transnational dynamism.

Diaspora discourse further becomes important with Schiller (1992) who posits that transnationalism is becoming a global phenomenon as people in capitalist-dependent countries are migrating to capitalist countries for better economic opportunities. Kennedy and Roudometof (2002) add that transnational practices can be an escape mechanism or a mode of coping with global capitalist transformations for migrants. Apart from economic opportunity for the immigrant, it can be useful for those who stay behind as well. An example in point is the transfer of remittances, as well as human rights or environmental concern in their local or national community, by people in the diaspora (Raj, 2006).

With the above delineation on globalisation, transnationalism, and diaspora, in the next section, I contextualize the literature review around education and identity as befitting people in the diaspora. As I see it, formal learning in every country today must take into account the emerging differences and complexities exhibited due to this triadic relationship. Like Suarez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard (2004:6), I understand that "globalisation is de-territorializing the skills and competencies it rewards, thereby generating powerful centripetal forces on what students the world over need to know."

Contextualizing Education and Identity

With increasing international migration and intense demographic transformation, people of different cultural backgrounds are coming to influence each other's experiences. Questions revolve around issues of- how and what are the "young" learning. The movement of professionals from developing countries to urban conglomerates of developed countries further adds to the complexity of the situation. For example, different cultures from around the globe should influence education in countries like Canada to a great extent because Canada is home to people from different corners of the

world. It is my argument that this dilemma of difference and complexity (Suarez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard, 2004) should be addressed through critical multicultural/ intercultural education in Canada.

With focus around diaspora and education, I proceed with Hirschman and Wong (1986) who posit that although Asian Americans have not achieved equality in all spheres, they have consistent high achievement in the field of education. Through their pioneering research, Hirschman and Wong recognize the fact that immigration itself is a selective process and only people with credible resources and motivation come to America. Their research has specifically focused on the Japanese and the Chinese in the U.S. during the early twentieth century. Their data analysis points that in 1910, the percentages of Japanese and Chinese children attending school were significantly less than the comparable white cohort. By 1920, the gap had substantially narrowed and, by 1930, Asian American children were more likely to be attending schools than their white counterparts.

In the atmosphere of widespread racism against the Asians during that period, this kind of educational achievement, though based only on school enrolment, was remarkable. Minority status and high educational achievement is not a strange phenomenon in the U.S. and one of the best examples is that of the Jewish Americans. Rosen (1959) believes the reason for the educational success of Jewish Americans lies in their ambition, persistence, deferred gratification and strong desire for intergenerational transfer of culture and values. For Asian Americans, Hsu (1971) reasons that culture as exemplified by the family unity, respect for elders and those in authority, industry, high value on education and exceptional discipline are the likely justifications. On the other

hand, Montero and Tsukashima (1977) observe that second generations identify themselves with the middle class majority and strive hard to do better in education compared to those who remain traditional. Hirschman and Wong (1996) also suggest other possible explanations for the educational success of sections of immigrant children. They argue that the favorable educational opportunities in the urban areas, where most of the post-1960s immigrants have settled, along with the educated parents' motivation result in comparatively better educational success. They also believe that a culture of professionalism motivates children and even the relatively lower-class immigrants take it as a challenge to educate their children.

As well, one must consider that the diaspora condition creates extraordinary situations. Individuals and groups who leave their homeland for better opportunities try hard to survive. For example, Wirth (1943) argues that the Jews place strong emphasis and high valuation on learning and this has created a consciousness and coherence that has assured their survival as a separate group despite their wide dispersion. Besides historically placing strong emphasis on compulsory education, the Jews believe in strong community networks. They have their own community schools and in many American cities a centralized Jewish Board of Education regulates education of the group.

Portes and MacLeond (1996) have focused on the educational progress of children of South American decent in the U.S. They point out that immigrant parents' socio-economic status (SES), length of residency in the adopted country, and hours spent on children's homework affect their educational success. Their key assumption is the extent to which the first-generation patterns of advantage or disadvantage are reproduced in the second generation. Their research uses an understanding of social capital but falls

within the social reproduction agenda. They have argued that the outcome of the second-generation (read, their success in education) is dependent on the skills and resources of the first-generation besides, the political and social context in which they settled down.

Portes and Rumbaut's (1990) study on the sociology of immigrants recognizes that the outcomes of the diasporic community are significantly influenced by the groups modes of adaptation. Coleman's (1988) thesis echoes the same line but uses a definite academic vocabulary. He says that the social capital within the family and in the community outside the family aids in the formation of human capital of the young diaspora generation. Coleman (1988:95) states, "conception of social capital as a resource for action is one way of introducing social structure in to the rational action paradigm." According to him, social capital is the set of resources that inhere in the family relations and in community social organizations and that are useful for the cognitive social development of a young person. He takes into account three forms of social capital, namely, obligations and expectations; information channels; and social norms. He examines their effect within the family and in the community outside the family. I will delineate and contextualize the literature review on social capital in chapter four. Now the focus is on education and diaspora.

Tsolidis (2001), while analyzing the identity of youth in the diaspora, argues that gender and schooling play a significant role. While identity is loosely used to refer to selfhood (Erickson, 1959), it is treated more sociologically to put emphasis on the individual's social and cultural milieu and the process of her or his acquisition (Giddens, 1991). One defines or gets defined according to his/her membership to the segment of the society or culture. Explaining identity theory, Stryker (1992:872) enlists four assumptions:

- (1) human beings are actors as well as reactors, (2) actions flow from the shared meanings during the process of interaction, (3) self-conception is critical to the meaning of his/her actions, and (4), finally, self reflecting society. To me, a reflecting personality or a society is one that puts in lot of energy to change according to the needs of the time. I conceptualize Canadian multicultural ethos as evolving from such social reflection.

The subjective self is multifaceted, as comprised of multiple parts, which are at times interdependent and at others independent, sometimes mutually reinforcing and at other times conflicting. Stryker (1992) rightly points out that a person has as many selves as there are "others" to react to and interpret. Therefore, views on identity must focus on the process eternal to the construction of identity and it should be approached as being formed in the social process and always in the making. In contemporary postmodern existence, our conception of the 'self' has become multiple, pluralistic, and saturated; and therefore academic indulgence around identity becomes significant. To quote Hall (1995:225), "identities are different names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past." Identities are formed along multiple axes of ethnicity, gender, nationality, religion, generation and sexual preference. Identity surfaces at the individual as well as at the societal level and gives meaning to lives. One's multiple identities are not apparent in all contexts and vary with different spheres of reality.

Identity is thus a socialized sense of self, a self-perception of how one perceives oneself as seen by others. Taylor (1994) defines identity as a person's understanding of who he or she is, of his or her fundamental defining characteristics as a human being and this whole process is dependent, to a certain extent, on the recognition, misrecognition, or

absence of recognition by others. Taylor affirms that the negotiating process of the development of an authentic identity therefore requires the transcendence of one's culture of origin. The diaspora transcends many points of location and culture is certainly one of them.

Brah (1996), whose life has been marked by place of residence in four or five continents, positions the way difference gets constructed. Brah talks about the notion of "home" in the life of the diaspora and also the racialization of looks in understanding the politics of difference. Accordingly, home is a site of everyday lived experience and takes into consideration the network of friends, kin, colleagues and various significant others. Brah believes appearance matters a great deal in identity discourse mainly because of the history and politics of racialization of looks and the way racism has operated.

The heritage of racism shows its ability in making categories of "others" to exclude, inferiorise and exploit. The rubric of a post-modern paradigm opens up the possibility of new and overlooked forms of racism. If the biological basis has taken back seat, the cultural form has gained prominence, but both derive their sources from the politics of difference. Identity issues, therefore, call for an examination of the relationship of identity with ethnicity and culture as well. Culture is the way of life of people. It can be viewed as the symbolic construction of the vast array of social groups' history and must be understood within the matrix of power relations between various groups (Brah, 1999).

Cultures of different groups in society differ considerably and these differences are the outcome of socio-political and economic relations and are ranked hierarchically in reference to the dominant group. The binary notion of dominant and minority does not

explain the social distribution of power. Even hierarchical conception does not explain the power dynamics in society. I note that the dominant culture of a complex (read, multicultural) society is never a homogenous structure. It is layered, reflecting different interests within the dominant class, containing different traces from the past as well as emergent elements in the present. Sub-ordinate cultures will not always be in open conflict with the dominant and there are periods as well as elements of co-existence and negotiation. Cultural identities, according to Bhabha (1990), are the conjuncture of the past with the social, cultural and economic relations of the present.

Kibria (2002) coins the term "racialized ethnics" to understand the puzzle of new immigrant's integration in the U.S. It serves a useful purpose to understand the way in which groups like Asian Americans are both racial minorities and ethnic Americans, *depending on the way the dominant group plays its cards. The economically mobile and politically active groups are generally co-opted within the power bracket* (emphasis added). Kibria pays attention to what she calls ethnicization and brings notice to complex conceptual distinctions between race and ethnicity. According to her, while race flashes a dominant group's power, ethnicity calls for the emergence among its members of a self-conscious and shared sense of belonging to a distinct group. In a way, Kibra's ethnicization is a two way process of identity negotiation.

To Radhakrishnan (2003), ethnic identity is an attachment to a group with which an individual shares common ancestry and characteristics. Radhakrishnan suggests that ethnicity is always in flux and is context-specific and so is ethnic identity. Stronger ethnic identity may result in weak identification with the majority group. Bhabha (1990) argues that identification is a process of identifying with and through "other" subjectivity.

Components of one's culture may serve as objects of identification. Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin (2003), whose research deals with the Jewish diaspora, refute the geographical notion of identification and advocate generational, one linked with kinship and organized around shared spirit. This brings to attention kinship bonds across geographical boundaries in the transnational context.

Among the cultural traits that serve as a repertoire of identification, cinema is important (Hall, 1990). In the case of Indian diaspora worldwide besides Indian cinema, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Indian cricket and Indian cuisine also provide as junctures of identification. Apart from these, religion is another powerful means to preserve and reinforce group identity (Rukmani, 1999). However, the most important enigma in the case of diaspora is community practices, which provide pivotal means of identification (Rayaprol, 1997). While Frykman (2001) stresses ties with homeland and co-ethnics, Hear (1998) elucidates the role of networks as noteworthy in identity negotiation for people in the diaspora.

With focus on the diasporic youth in this inquiry, it is important to review research that looks specifically at issues that concern youth. My contention is that family and community in the diaspora have different configurations and youth cannot be seen as a preset, pre-existing entity or as a unified image.

Youthscape

Youth studies literature has generated many descriptions of how young people's lives and experiences are problematized. There is a tendency to focus on problem behaviour and on the social construction of youth along vectors of race, ethnicity, social class, sexuality, use and abuse of life chances. I proceed from a broad sociological

perspective that conceptualizes youth as a relational process, framed with both structural issues of class, gender, race, ethnicity and sexuality, as well as agency that shapes identities and priorities.

As White and Wyn (2004) contend, the sphere of leisure is emerging as an important basis of identity. The choice of leisure activity brings the class dynamics to the fore because the different groups of young people experience their class through the choice of their leisure time activities. One of the essential facts about class analysis is that it is intrinsically concerned with how young people actively negotiate work, leisure, school, and community in their daily life. Class analysis is also concerned with how youth construct and mould their social identities in relation to processes of inclusion and exclusion in society. The class situation of young people is not fixed. It varies with family and community resources.

In today's world, images of youth can be seen as various elements of a crystal glass. Through their conceptual analysis of "youthscape," Maira and Soep (2005) provide a new conceptual lens and methodological approach to examine the cultural patterns that youth experience. This can be extended to understand both the cultural and the structural dynamics of youth in the diaspora as it brings together questions of culture and relations of power at the local, national and globalized context. Maira and Soep draw from Appadurai's framework of "scapes" but create their own position. Maira and Soep perceive youth as a category of social achievement. They assert that youthscape is in concurrence with Appadurai's terminological discussion of ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes, and ideoscapes because youth as a social category belongs to all these "scapes." Maira and Soep (2005: xvi) point out that-

> young people participate in social relations; use and invent technology; earn, spend, need, desire, and despise money; comprise target markets while producing their own original media; and formulate modes of citizenship out of the various ideologies they create, sustain, and disrupt.

Youth studies are intertwined with modernity, migration, and socio-cultural flows. Today the youth culture of every country has a visible mix of the diasporic culture. For example, the Punjabi "bhangra" (folk dance) has caught the consciousness of many in Canada. Youth culture is getting transnational in nature and scope. Therefore, it is important to consider the youth as a force as well as a product of globalisation.

The construction of youth as a transitional category of citizenship, as a labour pool, and grooming in national ideology reveal the role of the state. Maira and Soep (2005) call on youth to negotiate the state through their schooling, social services, and in various government policies of which some like the policing of their activities may appear as excesses to them. Youth in the diaspora may have to experience added dimensions like that of immigration policy and the differentiating tendencies of the "host" society. As mentioned, while diaspora provides a space free from the hegemonic and homogenizing of the nation-state, it also presents new configurations to examine the life experiences of youth.

Gender role changes in the diaspora have grappled the attention of reviewers and researchers (DeBiaggi, 2002; Baluja, 2003), especially when young women are expected to preserve the cultural traits of the home society. It is important, therefore, to contextualize feminist research in migration as a key constitutive element (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003). While transnational configuration has changed the meaning of "home," nevertheless, it bestows women in the diaspora with new relationship possibilities. As

explained by Handa (2002) young girls in the diaspora negotiate their experiences across various domains of culture in the diaspora.

Another important issue in understanding the youth in the diaspora is the discourse around urban conglomerates. Most people in the diaspora live in urban areas which are centres of global exchange of economy and culture. Anisef and Lanphier (2003), in their book *The World in a City,* explore the challenges with respect to the accommodation of immigrants in Toronto, employing social exclusion and inclusion as a key theoretical perspective. Anisef and Lanphier (2003) have tried to understand the ways through which people of diverse origins in metropolitan Toronto generate a workable milieu.

As I see it, people in the diaspora cross multiple borders of locality and territory for better opportunities for themselves and their children. Crossing of borders in the present post-modern era is both a process as well as product of globalisation and transnationalism. Distinction between locality remains just in the mind, and territories have been redefined with mass movements of people within and across the borders of nation-state. Youth in the diaspora experience crossing of borders at times as part of their parents' quest and at other times as part of their own life pursuit. Social life in such a situation has been largely through internet communication. Computer supported community networking has become increasingly important in the life experience of youth, mainly those whose lives are marked by multiple displacements in time and space.

Based on this discussion, it is my contention that global socio-cultural flows in the contemporary world play a significant role in the life chances and experiences of youth in

general and youth in diaspora in particular. In the next section, I draw a concluding framework to this chapter.

Conclusion and Framework

The literature review in this chapter is an attempt to map the macro terrain of any inquiry concerning people in the diaspora. This framework can be used as a guiding route by other researchers studying diaspora in the contemporary period. In the present times, even though the grand canon of modernity is punctured, there is adherence to nation-states and other projects of modernity. Multi-dimensional global flow of people and way of life has increased with transnational migrants. Therefore, I see diaspora as the defining vector of contemporary times with historical mooring, as a guide to studying post-modern culture, as a post-colonial episteme, and to understand the power discourse. Life experiences of people in the diaspora through their networks are of various kinds, including those against hegemonic globalisation. The diaspora by virtue of being the link between the "home" and the adopted society have the enigma of change and are the prominent that increases complexity as well as differences throughout the world. People in diaspora, through their imagination and consciousness, their social practice, modes of cultural production remain attached to their homeland as well.

Diaspora can be mobilized or proletariat, voluntary or involuntary, colonial or post-colonial- but they remain attached with the homeland. As the literature review suggests, diaspora in the present global and transnational world creates conditions which require examination from various standpoints. Countries like Canada have multiculturalism in their educational philosophy to create conditions to facilitate incorporation of various diaspora in the society. The educational experience of people in

the diaspora might differ with varying social contexts. But their educational and identity negotiation experiences are dependent on the social contexts of their adopted society as well as global configurations.

It is within this matrix that I visualize the framework for this inquiry. The life of youth in the diaspora and their experiences are a part and parcel of the global configurations as well as the transnational movements of ideas, goods and people, the consciousness, imagination and cultural production that define diaspora. These vectors not only shape the life and experiences of the youth, including their education and identity negotiation, but also provide spaces for synergic negotiations of their urges, expectations, motivations and life chances. In the next chapter, I use this framework to review literature that focuses specifically on the global Indian diaspora and spotlight to the micro domain of my research.

Chapter 4

IN-DIA-SPORA: CONTEXT AND CRITIQUE

In an essay entitled, *Cultural Criticism and Society,* Adorno[17] has explored the need to reconcile what he calls immanent and transcendence dimension of critique. According to him, immanent critique finds its home in culture particulars while transcendental critique gazes from outside the culture and usually has ideology as its tool. It is important, as Adorno notes, to first understand the nature of criticism in which we locate our pedagogy. He marks that neither imminent nor transcendental critique is sufficient, and he positions himself within what he calls dialectic criticism. Adorno argues that dialectical criticism does not "immerse in the way of idealizing, redemptive criticism, nor take a stand outside culture by comparing it with a fictitious absolute (1991:19)."

Based on Adorno's directionality, in this chapter, I review literature on the Indian diaspora and issues pertaining to this research drawing from a large corpus of literature on the global Indian diaspora. My focus, nevertheless, is on the Indian diaspora in North America, especially those in Canada. I situate the discussion within increasing global configuration of contemporary society, escalating transnationalism, and diaspora as a post-colonial episteme- where I envisage Indian diasporic youth as shaping their educational experience and identity negotiation. In the framework of the previous chapter, I also outline the role of Indian diasporic networks and associations, identity repertoire, and literature on education.

[17] The Adorno reader / edited by Brian O'Connor.

Although this chapter is primarily based on earlier research, I illustrate from my empirical understanding to either substantiate or critique the earlier research. The empirical curve may be deemed essentially fictitious, while essentialized literature may be empirically false. At the same time, both may be forms of ideology, which are used either to unmask dominant thought or serve as instruments of another form of domination or propaganda. My aim, made obvious through my ontological standpoint in the first chapter, is to stand against structured currents in the Indian diaspora discourse. As the title of the chapter suggests, I visualize the Indian diaspora ameliorated as "In-Dia-Spora"- open to different contexts and critiques, but suggesting both scattered Indians around the globe as well as Indian culture in the diaspora. This attempt, in line with Adorno, allows me to seek advantage from both immanent and transcendental critique. The pivotal contention is to engage in a dialogue, which, according to Bakhtin (2002[18]), should be post-formal, post-structural, and open ended. I do not assume to conclude the dialogue either with literature from previous research or through my empirical indulgence but rather to enrich each by using the other. Since ideological evaluation is inherent in any act of understanding, therefore, I must make clear that my ideological stance is geared towards context specific elucidation of the Indian diaspora that I have teased out, distilled, and explicated using various themes and perspectives.

Global Indian Diaspora

The "Indian diaspora" is used to refer to international migrants who originate in areas falling in the territorial boundaries of independent India (Parekh, 1993). It evokes cultural as well as political and economic conditions (Nadarajah, 1994) and seeks to forge

[18] Holquist, M. (2002) *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World* London: Routledge

a unified identity and common myth of origin (Parekh, 1993). The Indian diaspora throughout the world dates back to the third decade of the nineteenth century when the forced migration of indentured laborers under British imperialism began (Jain, 1989). The Indian diaspora is the third largest and most spread out in the world after the British and the Chinese (Government of India, 2001) and is drawn from different regions of India, professes varied religions, lays claim to dozens of castes, and is involved in a wide-range of occupations. Their mode of adaptation in the adopted society is marked more by economic than cultural integration (Sharma, 1989).

Table 1. **Estimated Size of Overseas Indian Community: Country-wise and Showing Main Presence**

Prominent Countries	Estimated Population
Australia	190,000
Bahrain	130,000
Canada	851,000
Fiji	336,000
Guyana	395,350
Kenya	102,500
Kuwait	295,000
Malaysia	1,665,000
Mauritius	715,756
Myanmar	2,902,000
Netherlands	217,000
Qatar	131,000
Reunion Islands	220,055
Saudi Arabia	1,500,000
Singapore	307,000
South Africa	1,000,000
Suriname	150,456
Trinidad & Tobago	500,600
UAE	950,000
UK	1,200,000
USA	1,678,765
Yemen	100,000

(Based on the Report of the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora-2001: Curtailed and abridged)

The Indian diaspora is reported to have suffered aggravation in the new milieu. Their expulsion from Uganda under Adi Amin is an example in point. Jain (1989) argues that experience of harassment has forced Indians in the diaspora to balance by spreading

out their investments and members of their families in different countries around the globe as well as creating of networks and ties. The twenty million (*and growing)* Indian diaspora is spread over many countries (Seth, 2001) and has a significant economic and political presence in a number of them. The following table, based on a government of India report, exemplifies the spread of people of Indian origin across the globe.

In percentage terms, the Indian diaspora constitute 70 per cent in Mauritius, 50 per cent in Guyana, 48 per cent in Fiji, 35 per cent in Surinam, and 23 per cent in Nepal (Parekh, 1993:8). Scholars infuse a sense of pride in the global spread of the Indian diaspora without unmasking the nature of engagement between India and her diaspora. My understanding of the politics of engagement between India and her global diaspora allows me to state that, while people in the diaspora in their nostalgia expect cultural bonding, India's policy has been to encourage those who have been successful in their adopted country to invest economically in India. Because migration is a self-selective process and operates as an industry, economic investment by those who have been successful in the diaspora is in select sectors of the economy and does not reach the masses in India. Moreover, the government of India has come up with offers like dual citizenship for the Indian diaspora in developed countries and not countries like Fiji where the Indians, though more numerous, are not as successful as their North American counterparts.

Patterns of emigration from India as identified by Jain (1989) are based on the nature of the contract in which immigrants find themselves. After the formal abolition of slavery in 1833, a substitute labor force was found in the Indian and Chinese emigrant workers. This system was nominally a voluntary contract but many of the conditions of

slavery were carried over in the terms of the indenture contract. The push and the pull factors were both direct offshoots of the British rule in India. Singh (2005) submits that small peasants were put in a highly vulnerable position due to the changes the British made in the land tenure and food production in India. Hereditary rights over land were abolished and peasants were converted into tenants under changed land revenue systems. Land revenue was increased manifold and was supposed to be paid even when the crops failed.

Singh brings to light important historical facts in her book *Overseas Indians: The Global Family*, in which she contends that migration reached a new high after 1857 when the first war of India's Independence was waged. Indebtedness increased under the unsettled condition; peasants were even chased from their land, and failure of the crops added to the misery. While these conditions generated the push, the pull came from need for labor in Colonial plantations far from "home." Besides, the recruiters and their agents painted a rosy picture in distant lands. Information provided on the Emigration Passes reveals that the Indian emigrants covered a wide section of rural communities, middle agricultural, and comprised all castes, including the Brahmins. Life was difficult in the plantation, and during the spare time, nostalgic accounts of the homeland represented life and provided leisure activities.

Without going any further into the details of colonial migration from India, I must point out that most people of Indian origin in Montreal are post-colonial migrants, although subsequent generations of those emigrated during colonial era are also present. Jayaram (2004) identifies three patterns of post-colonial migration from India, namely, (1) the emigration of Anglo-Indians to Australia and England, (2) the emigration of

professionals and semi-professionals to industrially advanced countries like the U.S., Canada and England and (3) the emigration of skilled and unskilled laborers to West Asia. The second category of emigration, which some scholars including Khadria (1999) describe as "brain drain" from India, is central to my research. The survey of literature that I have conducted suggests that the study of the Indian diaspora has varied with consideration of socio-cultural and politico-economic perspective (Sharma, 1989), comparative study of the Indian diaspora within two or more "host" milieu (Jain, 1993), study of caste system among them (Jain, 1989), issues of language (Jayaram, 2000), gender (Handa, 2002), and religion (Rukmani, 1999). There are some overarching features common to people of Indian origin including their cuisine and love for cricket as well as Indian cinema. Beyond the taste buds, Indian cuisine remains a cultural element and is often part of the Indian consciousness. It is easy to find a restaurant with Indian names attached to it in most cities of the world, including Montreal, although interestingly several of them are operated by people from neighboring Bangladesh.

Indian cricket can be explained, as in Appadurai's (1991) work, within the post-colonial and global culture framework. Appadurai argues that cricket in India has colonial roots and has grown along the post-colonial trajectory. Originally a socialization process for the urban elite, cricket has broken several social barriers in post-colonial India. Now it is, at times, a national fervor, and at others, as a curse, depending on whether India wins or loses international games. Cricket, with its own etiquette, language, conduct, and other cultural traits, has taken over the consciousness of Indians in India and in the diaspora. It is hard to imagine the life experience of a first generation male in the Indian diaspora whose life is not marked by interest in Indian cricket.

To the second generation, Indian cinema is more appealing. Indian movies act as lenses through which young Indian emigrants see the India that their parents have left behind. As a consequence, I believe, the second generation associate with the dance and song sequences in the Indian cinema, and consider them to be integral parts of Indian cultural artifacts. In the last decade, the movies made in India have increasing diasporic landscapes and social context. These include blockbusters like *Dilwale Dulhania Le Gayage, Salam Namaste,* and *Kal Ho Na Ho*. While the cinema produced in India is popular among the youth of Indian origin in the diaspora, there have been increasing numbers of movies based on the diasporic life experience. This includes movies by Deepa Mehta, Gurinder Chadda and Mira Nair like *Bollywood-Hollywood, Bend it like Beckham,* and *Mississippi Masala*.

Like cinema, Indian religions have spread throughout the world and have assumed their own transnational character. Indian temples and places of worship can be found in most cities around the globe serving as sites for group cohesion (see Rayaprol, 1997). With increasing number, people of Indian origin in different countries tend to form their own associations. The axes of these associations vary but they develop structures to administer Indian culture in the diaspora. It is my contention that such associations create bureaucratic structure and select cultural practices to suit the needs of their members. My understanding also allows me to suggest that the first generation usually immerses itself and its resources in initiatives that spotlight on activities such as building community networks in the new locale, as well as fundraising for places of worship, seniors' community centres, and their like. Subsequent steps by the first generation deal with

socio-economic problems in India, often with a focus on sub-regional issues, depending on their geographic origin in India.

Gandhi (2002) admits that Indian diasporic advocacy has historically been weighted towards political struggles and that progressive activism concerned with development and other related issues has come to the forefront only recently. Increasing involvement of the Indian diaspora for causes in India during recent times can be understood through Gandhi (2002), who asserts that there was a high level of aid in response to the Gujarat earthquake in early 2001 that was missing when the south-eastern state of Orissa was hit by a cyclone in late 1999. The Indian diaspora has also managed to build effective transnational business networks that stretch from the place of origin to the place of settlement. Basu and Altiney (2002), who examines the transition of ethnic Indian entrepreneurs from immigrants, local market operators, to global market layers, points out that the Indian diaspora has changed the pattern of business behaviors in India. They believe that more the successful entrepreneurs among the Indian diaspora have gained competitive advantage by developing international business links. Basu and Altiney also states that most fast growing businesses in the information technology sector have established outsourcing arrangements with Indian firms.

In my opinion, the economic networks such as those highlighted by Basu and Altiney are to take advantage of contemporary forms of capital enterprise and augment profit in the globalized era. This has been pivotal to the success of several Indians in the diaspora who have carved out a dominant space in the knowledge-based technologies and economies. Gururaj Deshpande, Sabeer Bhatia, and Kanwal Rekhi have continually been listed among the world's richest in *Fortune 100* and *Forbes Magazine.* On the non-

economic front, Indian born Amartya Sen and Jagadish Bhagwati have established coveted status in the world. As Sheth (2003) points out, literary writers like Jumpha Lahiri and Shauna Singh Baldwin have won accolades and have successfully presented a mosaic of Indian culture to their readers. Indians abroad, like U.K.-based Gurinder Chadha, U.S.-based Mira Nair, and the famous M.N. Shyamalan, have made their mark on the celluloid screen and are globally acknowledged.

Based on the above arguments, I concur with a quotation from Tinker (1977:19), who affirms-

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

Nevertheless, only those sections of the metaphorical banyan tree that have followed the prescription of modernism have flourished. Indian cuisine, cinema, cricket, or religion has become part of the modern culture industry with bureaucratic administration. While it is easy to find a restaurant with an Indian name in most cities of the world, it must be noted that their popularity is gained through standardized food of Punjab and that they do not represent cuisines from most parts of India. Likewise, Indian cinema, which is the biggest cultural industry in India, has consumed several local traditions of India and has replaced them with an urban lifestyle catalog. Similarly, the board in India that administrates cricket operates as a big bureaucratic corporation. In the same vein, the only variant of Indian religion that are known to the world are those that have administrative units through established networks and associations.

To substantiate my point, I would like to mention in passing an observation from the Hindu Mission temple in Montreal that encourages Hindus to join various religious functions. Herein, the Bengali Hindus from both India and Bangladesh join to celebrate *Loknath Baba* cult twice a year. A supposedly upper class Bengali from Kolkata, to whom I mentioned during a formal interview that I would be going to the Hindu Mission temple to meet some people of Indian origin during *Loknath Baba*'s celebration, was surprised that I knew about it[19]. He said, "this is about the lower class rural Bengalis celebrating a cult of poverty and hopelessness. You should not be interested in religious practice of those who still look towards rural cults when they have several opportunities to better their life in Montreal." Such an observation works to substantiate not only the diversity in religio-cultural practices of people of Indian origin but also power dynamics that operate to classify such practices in the diaspora. I explore these power dynamics further in the next section through the role of networks and associations among the Indian diaspora in North America.

Indian Diaspora in North America: Networks and Associations

A trickle of Indians, mostly from Punjabi farming areas started settling on the West coast of North America from 1880 onwards. This was considered alarming as they were often referred to as a "tide of turbans" and a "distinct menace" (Lal, 2002). Due to persistent hostility also manifested through legislation both in the U.S. and Canada, Indian immigrants declined after 1910 (Johnston, 1984). This continued with some

[19] I admit that I learned about *Loknath Baba* in Montreal. Although I am originally from Eastern India, I did not know about him despite the fact that He is held in high regard by several Bengali Hindus in Montreal.

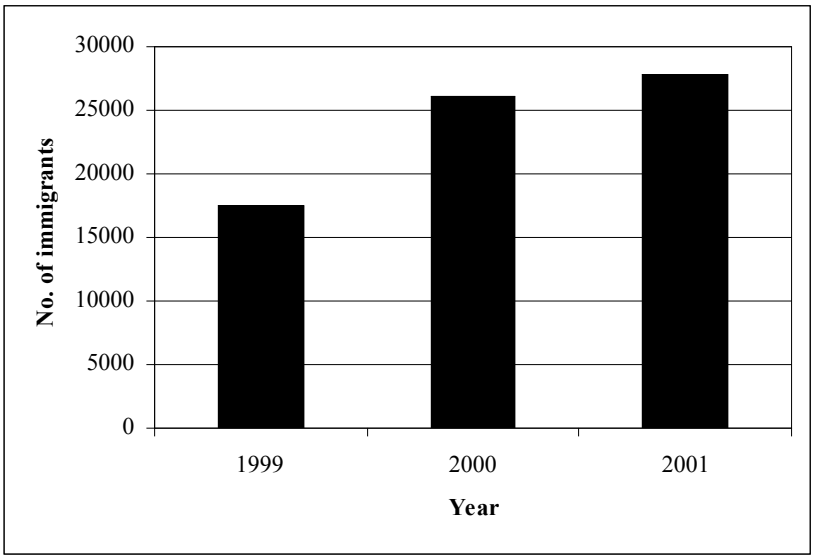
changes until 1965, after which variants of what is know as the "point system[20]" were adopted for the deserving immigrant. Those "deserving" often found promising jobs in private facilities, prospered economically, and many became permanent citizens (Pavri, 2000). More recently, there has been an influx of large numbers of professionals trained at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and other premier institutes in India.

My inquiry necessitated focus on Canada where people of Indian origin began to move in significant numbers largely to build the Canadian Pacific railways and to work in the lumber industry (Parekh 1993). They settled in British Columbia, traveled as directly as possible from their villages, and, although some of them had served in the British Army in Asia, they barely spoke English. Women were largely absent, and social life was organized around the place of worship (*Gurudwara*) and its community kitchen. The transnational context in the historical pattern of adjustment of the Indian diaspora in Canada can be understood through the following example. By the 1920s, Indian immigrants had bought some land and a few lumber mills in Canada and even replicated the name of their locality "Paldi" in British Colombia- the same name in the Hoshiarpur district in Punjab from where several of them migrated. In their new Canadian home, people of Indian origin inherited race relations similar to other minority groups, thus marking what Du Bois calls their "double consciousnesses"- an attempt to define themselves according to the perception of their ethnic community and the way in which they were regarded by the members of the Canadian society (see Varma and Seshan, 2003).

[20] The 'point-system' introduced in 1967 disregards race, ethnicity, and nationality in the selection of immigrants at the surface level.

The "point system" that reflected the "will" of Canada and was a legislative schema to attract immigrants to build Canada led to 20 times increase in people of Indian origin between 1961 and 1976 (Johnston, 1984). Thereafter, migration of Indians to Canada was not only from Punjab but also from other parts of India as well as Indian diasporic posts such as Fiji, Mauritius, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania (Buchignani, 1989). The increase after 1973- when the right of visitors to apply for immigrant status was revoked- was also due to an amnesty granted by the Canadian government to persons who were already in Canada but who had not yet appealed for immigrant status (D'Costa, 1992). The Indian diaspora is one of the fastest growing ethno-cultural groups in Canada after the Chinese. The Government of India (2000) reports attest this, pointing out that the Indian diaspora is more than two per cent of the total Canadian population. An overview with the Statistics Canada data as computed in the graph for 1991-2001 shows significant growth in the Indian diaspora in Canada in the last decade.

Graph 1. Indian Immigrants in Canada, 1991-2001



I do not want to dwell on the progress made by the Indian diaspora in Canada since then, either through professional success or the coming of age of individuals like Ujjal Dosanji. Success and harmony entice one to assess progress in an attractive scholarly fashion, but do not grapple with the complexity of the skewed development paradigm and tend to withdraw our attention from inherent contradictions and diversity common to Indian diaspora. In Canada, for example, discrimination has not been totally eliminated although multiculturalism was adopted as the government policy during the 1970s (Raj, 2001). Buchignani (1980) highlights that people of Indian origin are perceived by Canadians to have curried food usually associated with smell, and use saris, turbans, and different footwear, different color sense, beards, and long hair. This defines the rhetoric of popular Indian cuisine and culture in the Canadian mosaic. Buchignani also asserts that, in linguistic etiquette, Asian Indians are categorized differently due to their distinct home language, and a different accent.

The success graph of the Indian diaspora in Canada portrayed in journalistic and academic discourse alike keeps the lived experiences "under the veil." The complex and discriminatory attitude towards other minority communities such as Blacks or towards its own diverse community is a case in point. Does this mean that with success come discriminatory attitudes towards other minorities? Buchignani (1989) reasons the same in his essay etitled "Contemporary Research on People of Indian Origin in Canada." Also, the drive to define oneself as successful stems from two basic and co-related factors- an ontology branching from an inferiority complex and a gaze based on individual success.

In the lived experience of people in the diaspora, informal networks assume importance. Participant observation in Montreal during my fieldwork shows that it

usually starts as personal contacts with co-ethnics at the individual and household level and grows through work and leisure. Networks support associational activities on the basis of common origin, languages, class, religious backgrounds, socio-cultural and artistic preferences, or professional inclinations. Kurien (2003) argues that these help in the transition of residents and citizens in the new milieu. The nature of these associations varies with cultural, political, or religious dimensions, but their underlying function for the participants is basically to bond with those of the same kind- people of Indian origin in this case. Before moving any further, I must contextualize social networks within the labyrinth of this discussion.

According to Castells (1996), "network" is a set of interconnected nodes, and the nature of the nodes depends on the structure of the social situation. The typology defined by networks determines that the distance (or intensity and frequency of interaction) between two points (or social positions) is shorter (or more frequent, or more intense) if both are nodes in a network than if they do not belong to the same network. The network morphology is a source for the dramatic reorganization of power relationships- individuals and collectives that influence the nodal points in the networks *exercise determining influence* (emphasis added). Similarly, Vertovec (2001) highlights the usefulness of social networks in his assertation that interpersonal relationships cut across boundaries like neighborhood, kinship, and class, both at the individual and the collective level. He points out that for migrants, social networks are crucial for finding jobs and accommodations, circulating goods and services, psychological support, information, and *socio-cultural reproduction* (emphasis added). In fact, as mentioned earlier, migration itself is precipitated by networks, both in the sending and receiving milieu.

Social networks among the Indian diaspora have increased during the information age. Most of the networks operate online, although social relations on and through cyberspace are no less valid than "real" life in maintaining links with the community. But for people in the diaspora who have experienced varying degrees of rupture, networks help re-negotiate life. Social networks characterized by ties with Indians in India and in the diaspora provide emotional and practical support for people. On the other hand, they also decrease people's opportunities to benefit from others in the larger community at their country of residence. I feel compelled to bring in arguments by Erickson (2003), who posits that it is not just what you know, but whom you know that matters in society. For example, Erickson has pointed out that people living in North America find their jobs with the help of a contact roughly half of the time. Besides employment opportunities, networks also help to improve one's quality of life through better information about educational and health services. However, the diversity of the networks accessed is more significant than the mere number of networks.

The needs of people in the diaspora vary according to different phases in migration pattern. My field observation allowed me to contend that those who have arrived sooner look for the basic connections to help them feel less alienated in the new location. Later, they diversify their social network to include co-ethnics and other people. The associational activities form a transnational milieu between the state and the market, and provide a medium to negotiate the "self" and the homeland culture in the midst of corporate global culture. Two perspectives regarding associational activities can be borrowed from Riley's (2005) work. Associations provide people with the means to act without invoking the state and balance state authority by creating alternate power centres.

The more developed sphere of associations enables their members to have their say and decrease authoritarianism. Riley's other perspective regarding associational activities comes from Gramsci who argues that associations are not necessarily opposed to the state but can be absorbed by the state, or be an extension of it. According to this view, the sphere of associations is a ground for hegemony and produces technologies of political rule. In either case, I must signpost that they tend to assume bureaucratic form and create power structures. In case of the Indian diaspora in North America, I agree with Kurien (2003), who argues that associational activities provide individuals with an organizational balancing act at the level of the local ethnic community, but they function as constraints at the pan-Indian level since they are more concerned with presenting a particular image of India and are not bothered about the lived experience of Indians. A detailed analysis of various associational activities of the Indian diaspora in North America will allow me to further contextualize my argument.

The Singhvai Report (2000) rightly and elaborately mentions large numbers of Indian diasporic associations in North America- numerically less in Canada compared to the U.S. The report details that almost every religious denomination in India has its representative body in North America. Then there are Indian cultural associations that celebrate India's national day functions and Indian religious festivals. Ethnic, linguistic, and regional cultural associations such as the Federation of Kerala Associations in North America (FOKANA), Federation of Gujarati Association in North America (FOGANA), Telugu Association of North America (TANA), and the Bengali Association of North America (BANA) hold national conventions in North America that are attended by large numbers of their associates. I see proliferation of ethnic Indian associations in the U.S.

compared to Canada in the relative strength of Canadian multiculturalism that has sensitized the public sphere (Raj, 2001) and does not always lead to in-group activities. Based on my participant observation in Montreal, I assume that usually the elite of the community, or the mobilized diaspora, establishes interaction with the majority group and develops the means and skills to deal with the mainstream society, whereas the proletariat uses their cultural experiences from the homeland and usually interact with other Indians.

The National Association of Canadians of Origin in India (NACOI) is a prominent Indian diasporic association in Canada. NACOI's role, as reported in their official website, is to provide support by harnessing the skills and resources from within the community to develop and facilitate local, regional, and national communities based social and economic development strategies and programs. It has chapters in most Canadian cities and seeks grassroots support. Some other affiliated associations work in close cooperation with NACOI to achieve common goals and objectives. Together these associations serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas, issues, and common concerns for the Indian diasporic community and provide a national voice to protect individual rights. They also stress the importance of recognizing the contributions of Canadians of Indian origin to Canada. NACOI's activities include community and public education; networking with politicians and government officials at the national, provincial, and municipal levels in Canada; and working with other associations that share common concerns.

During a formal interview, one member of NACOI contended: "the diverse networks that are formed through associations help people to achieve a better adaptation

in the "host" society. He further elaborated that "community members gather at these associations to participate in various activities…people talk among themselves and connect on various levels. We also invite members from other communities." I interviewed one past president of NACOI and during our detailed discussion he accepted that it was difficult to engage all members of the diverse Indian community. Nevertheless, most often these pan-associations do not reach the common people and, as Lal (1999) reports, the Indian diasporic community's associations also have deployed some of their most intense lobbying efforts at the local level.

For example, Indian diasporic associations in Montreal take credit for naming a park after Mahatma Gandhi where his birthday is celebrated. I participated in the last three Mahatma Gandhi birthday celebrations and was amazed to find very few youth there. I also want to point out the networking of Indian diasporic community with members of other communities. The following photograph on the next page (p84), taken on October 2, 2005, shows a person of Jewish descent addressing a multicultural congregation. In the photograph one can see the national flag of India and an image of the Mahatma himself. Such intercultural communication increases awareness and community tolerance. At the same time, by celebrating the life and thoughts of personalities like Gandhi, it gives role models to one and all.

The Association of Indians in America (AIA) and Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) are other prominent Indian diasporic associations. While GOPIO brings together Indians scattered throughout the world, AIA provides a forum for common action to all whose Indian heritage and American commitment produce a bond of unity. It is stated in the official website of AIA that due to their commendable efforts,

the United States Census Bureau agreed to reclassify immigrants from India as “Asian Indians.”

Social networks through these associations serve as a basis for producing social capital. Portes (1998) argues that the novelty and heuristic power of social capital come from two sources. First, the concept focuses attention on the positive consequence of sociability while putting aside its less attractive features. Second, it places those positive consequences in the framework of a broader discussion of capital and calls attention to how such social activity can be a source of power and influence while granting leverage to developmental activities. It would be interesting to learn about the role of women and men in such social networks.

Figure 2. Multicultural Event

According to Rayaprol (1997), the role of women has changed and that women are more involved in different diasporic associations. Though there is no study carried out in Montreal, Pearson's (1999) study of Hindu immigrant women in Ontario highlights the central means by which the Hindu tradition is being passed on to the second generation, including the personal example of parents, books, cultural events (for example, festivals) and practices (for example, dance classes) at the temple. My critique, based on my participant observation at the Hindu Mission Temple in Montreal, is that women are the bearers, not controllers of tradition in the Indian diasporic milieu. Most women perceive their mission in life as carrying forward the tradition of the "home" society in the "new" community, at least in symbolic terms. The basis of their network is usually kinship ties, region, religion, and language.

Due to differences of region, religion, language, and class, Indian diasporic associations are driven by factionalism and elitism, and hardly address the specific needs of the general people. But social networks and associations involve the Indian diasporic community and therefore they are a key dimension in the examination of community practices in general and the role of the community in particular. In the next section, I examine select literature connected to the Indian diaspora education and identity dynamics with focus on Indian diasporic youth to further center my inquiry within the current and previous research on the subject. I begin by addressing education first, linking the same with identity and then with specific literature on Indian diasporic youth.

India Diaspora: Education, Identity, and Youth

The basic objective of my analysis of the educational experience of Indian diasporic youth involves locating the ensuing conversation within the gambit of critical multicultural education and understanding the power dynamics that operate through class elitism, white supremacy, and the hold of patriarchy (see Steinberg and Kincheloe, 2001). Such location is born, as McLaren (2001) maintains, when imperialism, colonialism, and transnational circulation of capitalism influences the logic with which Western Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) discourse shapes everyday reality.

Gibson (1988) has analyzed the schooling of one important diasporic group from India, namely the Sikhs in American high schools. She focuses on both barriers to opportunity, and the resources of the community in negotiating the difficulties for the education of those born in the diasporic milieu. Her arguments are focused on adaptation through education which she labels as "accommodation and acculturation without assimilation." By assimilation, she implies a process whereby individuals and groups of one ethnic group are incorporated or absorbed into another which results in loss of identification of the parent group. Acculturation, to Gibson, is the process of change and adaptation that results when the groups with different backgrounds come together. Nevertheless, she prefers to use the term accommodation and by that she means a process of mutual adaptation between persons or groups for the purpose of reducing conflict and allowing separate group identities and cultures to be maintained.

The cultural logic of "accommodation and acculturation with assimilation" defies the foundation of intercultural education and highlights structural violence and invasion allowed through educational attainment. Diasporic learning difficulties, according to

Ogbu (1982), may also be due to the difference between cultures at home and at school. Gibson (1988) notes the differences in values and behaviors learned at home and at school in her study. Learning difficulties of those in the diaspora can also be due to structural inequality and school functioning to maintain the societal status quo. Ogbu (1982) argues that if the ethnic minority students believe that the system of education is unjust to them and that they will be unfairly rewarded, will they reduce their effort to gain education and this may lead to poor performance. This takes the argument beyond cultural and structural difference to the dynamics of majority-minority relations and their perceptions of each other.

Gibson (1988) stretches the argument further and links education to the role of the community. The experience of being minority in the country of their adoption brings Indian people together and creates a sense of communal solidarity that proves to be a source of strength. They draw upon their collective resources including knowledge, skills, community institutions and values that promote success in the new environment and place high importance on education for economic success in diasporic context. Based on this background, I approach my research with the premise that the community resources play an important role for the education of the diaspora. The retention of ethnic culture and values (Rosen 1959), achievement motivation (Montero and Tsukashima 1977), survival instinct (Wirth 1943), or fighting racism (Kibria 2003) - require community effort (Portes and MacLeond 1996; Portes and Rambaut 1990).

Buchignani (1989) summaries the literature on the education of the Indian diaspora in Canada and confirms the priority that parents place on their children's education. Buchignani looks at various studies, such as that of Akoodie (1980) and

Subramaniam (1977b), which focuses on self concept and identity shift; Minde and Minde (1976), which highlights the psychological adjustment; and Ijaz's (1980) analysis of attitudes towards Indians in schools. Samani (1992) indicates that ethnic groups go through the educational system of Canada without adopting all Canadian values. Ethnic students use that part of the educational system that suits their needs and ignore the parts that contradict or do not fit in with their beliefs. Handa's (2003) research focuses on girls and shows them negotiating their educational and identity experience through various domains of the Indian diasporic community as well as through the community at large.

Indian diasporic youth seem to have considerable freedom when negotiating their educational experience. My observation suggests that Indian parents even encourage their daughters to obtain professional degrees and take up careers. According to Wakil et al (1980), most families seem to evaluate the behavior of their children in the light of their conception of a middle class Canadian family. The school forms, constrains, and influences the self-identity and cultural-identity of the student but the influence of the family and ethnic identity cannot be denied. According to Patel (2000), there are twice as many South Asians graduates in Canada when compared to the national average.

Nevertheless, no reported research has analyzed the class dynamics vis-à-vis educational experience in the Indian diaspora. Also, the role of the community is often seen in affirmative gaze pointing to the positive role of social capital. To substantiate my arguments, I bring to attention my participant observation of a select youth organization called "Shree Ramji Mandhata Temple Youth Organization" (SRMTYO). A Gujarati family that was part of my study informed me about this group and introduced me to the members. In the words of one participant of this youth group, "we have formed a

community of our own… (laughs)…against the hypocrisy of the community elders…We see gap between what our elders want us to be and how we want to live" (12/6/2005). This perceived gap surfaces when the cultural stock of the parents (who, in most cases, were born in India) and the youth (who are either born in Montreal or were relocated at an early age) become different. While the cultural repertoire of the parents remains frozen in time with what they learnt in India, the youth draw their cultural catalogue from a complex intercultural admixture that they experience in their everyday life. The youth live their life in the transnational context and imagine the "homeland" (Indian) culture through the globalized cultural repertoire of "Indianness." The consciousness of being the 'other' in Montreal, usually projected by the parents, stimulates a sense of powerlessness and a desire to see change in everyday experience.

I was able to establish contact and interview parents of some youth who were associated with the SRMTYO. *Mr. Patel*, one participant, elaborated that a youth group under the supervision of the parents and the banner of the temple was necessary because the youth needed to be groomed in the Indian cultural tradition. He elaborated,

> *our youths are marrying outside the community…when they will meet those of their kind in such a group…marriages among our children will be restored…see they (youth) do no know much about the meanings of some of the religious traditions. We, the parents, feel these issues. We talked among ourselves and have encouraged them to meet regularly and this will help…*

Before he finished, he also suggested that "You should also keep in touch with them. You will also remain good." The latent function was coming to the surface. I was alarmed about the idea of "civilizing" me as well. The purity, the virginity and the attempt to restore the lost ground is typical of the right agenda. Drawing from Gramsci

(1977), I feel that disciplining is the end of conquest. While in earlier times, war was waged to conquer and capture, now the conquest is followed by disciplining.

Another vexing concern, and related to identity as well, is language. It is hard for Indian diasporic youth in Montreal, who are expected to learn English and French, to learn and achieve a level of proficiency in another one (or two) languages in the name of the "cultural of the community" (Sen, 2006). A Gujarati girl would be expected to choose a Gujarati boy; second in choice would come any Indian but anything else would be despised. Cyberspace has opened new dimensions to choose mates of the same in-group from across the globe. Community pressure comes through the parents. Deflection from an obligation is a form of imposing a negative externality. SRMTYO, as a youth group under the supervision of the community elders, creates a closure (see Coleman, 1988). The dangerous aspect is that, outside the closure, the community does not exist in the social imagination of the cultural brokers. This brings me to another narrative of *Neetu*. This contextual analysis is aimed at highlighting responses of the Indian diasporic community to homophobia as well.

Neetu has declared her sexual preference to her parents and has become an outsider to the Indian diasporic community. Her parents think that she has brought shame to them and their values. They advised her to keep away from fellow Indians. *Neetu* has withdrawn herself and is staying with her partner. She is also from the same in-group in Montreal, which has most boys, and girls in the SRMTYO, but she does not dare participate in any of the group activity. Freire (2002) stresses that oppression starts when human beings are considered as "things." In this case, *Neetu* is considered to be no more than a carrier of cultural tradition. She is objectified and her innate nature and her

"choice" do not matter to either her parents or her peers of Indian origin. These are some of the issues that make me question positivistic research that does not unearth the layers of power and the re-figuring neo-liberal and neo-right schema.

Education and identity are closely related and schooling plays an important role in the identification of the youth. People of Indian origin in Canada transcend many "locations of culture" (Bhabha, 1999) and their negotiations in the transnational sphere with their place of origin, co-ethnics in other parts of the world, and their experiences in Canada allow them to negotiate their identity. Although earlier literature on identity focuses on individuals, the research of the last two decades has shifted the concern to the level of the collective (Cerulo, 1997). The first among these factors is the role of group agency. Through their collective action, people from the Indian sub-continent in the diaspora not only reenergize the identification process but also create, maintain and sustain ethnic boundaries. New information technology (NCT) provides the latest dimension to the identification process by changing the generalized others to "generalized elsewhere" (Meyrowitz 1989). NCT makes it easy to be connected with the "roots" with their ever improving services.

To understand identity, one has to take into cognizance various levels, boundaries and contexts of identification. According to Sackman et al (2003), identity depends on "self- localizations" that engross patterns of orientations, self- conceptualization, feelings of belonging and perceptions of symbolic boundaries. For the Indian diaspora, measure of self-identification through a sense of belonging, pride and sense of satisfaction in one's own culture is as vital as participation in ethnic group activities (Woollett et al, 1994). Despite all scholarly definitions, I am compelled to perceive, as one of my participant

argued (mentioned earlier in this chapter), identity as a luxury. In his definition, the participant highlights his class position as well as his location from which he perceives himself as "not being able to define him/her self" and as "invisible" to the social mirror (see Kincheloe, 2002). The social mirror reflects those of its own "choosing" and considers it safe to refract few more, while keeping many as "too small to see."

In the case of Indian diaspora, with its multiple diversities and apparent plethora of identification repertoires, Indian cinema seems a way out of the difficulties of everyday life. As mentioned earlier, Indian cinema connects with homeland culture as well as allows the living of a desire through the cinematic screen. The social organization of the diasporic community and the individual's positioning in regard to it lay out the process of constructing identifications. This process shows identities as produced rather than fixed, personal attributes (Burman and Parkar, 1993). The membership in organizations and the composition of circles of friends and acquaintances can exert an influence on the social identities of individuals as well as collective social identity. Diasporic associations are sites of communication about collective identities whereby identity models are reproduced or changed according to the perception of the group. Nevertheless, collective identity of some kind will exist without much group organization or actual community formation.

It is my intention to illustrate that identity negotiation lies in the social relationship and therefore unraveling the complexities of the relationship between structure and agency is important. Bhavnani (1994) states that it is the construction of identity, where structure and agency collide *and thereby gives shape to the individual as well as the collectivity* (emphasis added). The role of agency in the case of Indian

diasporic community can be further examined in the way imagination and consciousnesses are revoked. Ghuman (2003) perceives identity crisis in diasporic milieu. His perception is based upon his consideration of cultural conflict between homeland and host society norms and values. Handa (1997 & 2003) employs the cultural conflict model and argues that this model of examining the diasporic youth experience is rooted in the colonial discourse of dominance, difference, and assimilation's agenda. Handa rightly calls diasporic culture as the traveling culture and based on this I assume Indian diasporic identity as "traveling identity."

The spotlight on Indian diasporic youth can be initiated with Saran (1985), who contends that the main anxiety of people in the Indian diaspora is their children. Besides maintaining a favorable atmosphere for the retention of ethnic distinctiveness at home, parents also engage in a variety of activities such as going to the temple, organizing *puja* (religious prayer) at home, watching Indian movies, participating in Indian associations, and visiting other Indian families. These can be seen as strategies to cultivate Indian tastes and values among the young. As Saran argues, most parents feel that the young ones are under strong peer pressure and therefore activities outside the four walls of the house must be organized. My observation allows me to add that doing and sharing things, maintaining contact through ethnic Indian networks and associational activities, result in development of youth's networks and friendship groups and these immensely help in the desired activities.

Mukhi in her book *Doing The Desi Thing* (2000) delineates how by doing things in New York city the way they are done in India, the community is able to maintain ties with the roots and retain a distinct cultural identity. "Desi" is a Hindi/Urdu word and

hence comes into the vocabulary from India. It means “from the nation” and is used to convey cultural connection with the country of origin. I assume that the concept of “Indianness” comes from a self-acknowledgement of the distinctiveness and recognition by “others” in the mainstream. In either case, it depicts the “other” in the mainstream milieu. Another study on Indian diasporic youth in North America is that of Khandelwal (2002), who argues that the experience of the young generation has varied significantly from that of their predecessors. Khandelwal shows that the Indian youth not only make sense of their individual identities but also redefine the Asian Indian community. In Montreal, most ethnic Indian associations have their respective youth wings. The youth in these associations relate among themselves based on the kind of school they attend, and their shared experiences provide the base of the second-generation networks. Their shared experiences also demarcate them from their parents’ generation.

Maira (2002) presents the results of an ethnographic study documenting the experiences of second-generation Indian American youth in New York City. She asks the following questions: "What are the meanings of this youth culture in the lives of Indian American youth? How do Indian American youth negotiate simultaneously the collective nostalgia for India (re) created by their parents and the coming-of-age rituals of American youth culture?" (ibid: 15-16). In her study, she focuses on popular culture as a tool that enables Indian American youth to negotiate and manage this tension between "nostalgia" and "cool" in their attempts to shape and assert their evolving identities. She identifies the role of popular culture like "*bhangra,"* which blends traditional Indian music with more modern elements from hip-hop. Maira shows how in this subculture, the youth actively

create the popular culture that they simultaneously consume and develop understandings of their gendered racial identities.

Many of these youth that Maira interviewed mentioned the different norms operating for men and women in this subculture. For example, men consider it important to flaunt their material power through brand-name clothing such as Nike. Maira uses the term "cultural nostalgia" to describe the range of activities in which the youth engage to explore the Indian side of their hybrid identity and feel more ethnically authentic. She writes,

> For many of the youth I spoke to, the notion of being 'truly' or 'really' Indian involved possession of certain knowledge or participation in certain activities. . . . The ideology of nostalgia . . . is the ethnicized flip side to a notion of subcultural 'cool' based on American youth culture (pp. 87-88).

Under "nostalgia" comes the values and cultural repertoire of India, while "coolness" is an improvisation that the Indian youth generate in their creative engagement with other cultures. I have observed that most Indian parents as well as the community at large despise what these youth assume as "cool." Needless to say, the experiences of the second or subsequent generations are different from the first generation. The second generations construct the homeland, and its cultures and values, in fragments from their parents and from their *desi* friends that serve as a backdrop, but their sphere of social interaction is the social milieu of the "`adopted" country.

Inferences

It is hard to conclude this chapter, especially when there is an ever-increasing number of scholarly works on the subject matter as well as diverse perspectives to look at various emerging issues in the Indian diaspora. These literatures shape my insight of the

Indian diasporic community in Montreal. At the same time my field study in Montreal has perceptibly changed my understanding of these literatures. I perceive my approach in this chapter beyond the traditional textual criticism to a dialectic approach where the emergent arguments are rigorous and transformative. Based on my field observation, I understand that the role of social networks and ethnic associations is important in order to understand the multifaceted role of the Indian diasporic community. Hobsbawm (1996:40) draws attention to a succinct fact that "men and women look for groups to which they can belong, certainly and forever, in a world in which all else is moving and shifting, in which nothing else is certain." People in diaspora experience rupture of various kinds and they "seek security in an insecure world" (Bauman, 2002) through community networks and ties.

Another important position that I have taken in this chapter is against the current approach on youth studies literature in sociology that sees young people's lives and experiences as problematized. There is a tendency to focus on problem behavior and on social construction of youth along vectors of race, ethnicity, social class, sexuality, use and abuse of life chances. I aim to proceed from a broad sociological perspective that conceptualizes youth as a relational process, framed with both structural issues of class, gender, race, ethnicity and sexuality, as well as agency that shapes identities and priorities. To do this, as shown in the contextual framework of the third chapter, it is important to understand the macro issues shaping the life experiences of Indian diasporic youth. For example, the pinnacle of capitalism, which had indentured laborers as its fuel, shapes the contemporary world. Youth in such times, therefore, cannot be seen without taking into consideration how larger processes of globalisation and transnationalism

affect their lives. At the same time, it is equally important to take into consideration the specific context, which in this research, is Montreal. I will present my analysis in chapter six in further detail where the emphasis will be on my field observation rather than on the literature on the subject matter. In the next chapter, however, I will address the methodological approach of this inquiry.

Chapter 5

SEARCH FOR A METHOD

The title of this chapter, drawn from one of Jean-Paul Sartre's works[21], is intended to delineate the link between my being (ontology) and my knowing (epistemology), as well as my attempt to emphasize the methodology for this research. Needless to say, the title allows me to highlight the methodological confusion, I felt, while studying diasporic experiences, and the difficulty of my attempt to establish the critical foundation of diasporic inquiry. I do not claim deep familiarity with Sartre's work, but in line with evolving criticality, I submit to philosophy as a "method of inquiry" in social sciences. Both philosophy and method of inquiry are modified because they are applied in changed social situations or with a renewed focus. My intent in this chapter is to engage - (1) with the changed global-transnational reality that shapes the lives of people in the diaspora[22] as well as (2) with the evolving discipline and practice of qualitative research (see Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

The first question entails how best to study people in the diaspora, especially when life experiences are marked in signifiers of "beyond?" Bhabha (2004:2) argues that

> …we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. For there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the "beyond" …

[21] Sartre, Jean-Paul 1963 *Search for a Method* (translated by Hazel E. Barnes) New York: Vintage Books.

[22] As discussed in chapter 3 (Mapping the Terrain) of this dissertation.

The time and space designated by "beyond" represents a state of powerlessness in the interrelated terrains of consciousness, social relationships, and body[23] (see Fiske, 1993) which is experienced through the subtleties of everyday experiences. These intricacies lead to "double consciousness" (Du Bois, 1903) where an individual on the one hand is nostalgic for homeland culture and values, and on the other they negotiate with the dominant cultural repertoire. Signposting the pivotal characteristics of being in the diaspora is the Greek mythological figure Janus, represented visually as a face looking simultaneously in two directions, back in nostalgia and ahead to the future. Beyond also suggests methodological orientations that are different from those conspicuously available to a young researcher trying to understand diasporic experience.

Try to imagine the life experience of a woman born in India, who migrated to Qatar (Middle East) with her parents at the age of five, attended university in the U.S., and is now working in Canada. This individual, in one lifetime, has been required to pay attention to cultural practices in more than one nation-state. Her experiences cannot be generalized as universal, but are at the same time, global. She might feel powerless in certain social situations, and be an oppressor in another, depending on the social categories of gender, religion, class, sexual preference, and other variables. Her situation might appear trivial to someone who understands the shaping of social practices in most nation-states under the imperial guise of globalisation. I agree that although neo-liberal forces, under corporate schemata, design policy from above, but longstanding cultural practices of different societies (read, nation-state) shape everyday life experience of people. Moreover, it is through the nation-state that the imperial designs of globalisation work.

[23] For examples see the section "process and predicaments" in this chapter.

The argument is in line with my conceptual framework (Chapter Three) where I posit that although the power and hold of the nation-state has diminished in the contemporary era, national culture still shapes its citizenry. The macro framework allows me to situate my methodological dilemma and yet as Fernando Pessoa, a Portuguese who spent his youth in South Africa (like Mahatma Gandhi) once remarked:

> To see the fields and the river
> It isn't enough to open the window
> To see the trees and the flowers
> It isn't enough not to be blind

Therefore, as Kincheloe (1993) acknowledges, research requires "deep thought structures" which are possible when bricolage is employed as methodological strategy. Kincheloe (2004) explains that bricolage has the potential to rise above positivistic reductionism and synergizes the research process within the post-formal methodological approach. This guides us to better understand the complexity of society with a critical stance and from multiple perspectives. Kincheloe (2004:6-7) writes,

> Bricolage's attention to discursive and contextual dimensions of knowledge production does not make one anti-empiricist or anti-qualitative. Instead, such concerns make the bricoleur more attentive to the various dynamics that shape what is called empirical knowledge.

I must confess that my engagement with my research participants has guided my understanding and has encouraged me to muddle further the diasporic context, methodological dilemmas, and politics of knowledge. But bricolage as an approach provides me with direction. I owe my deepest sense of gratitude to the participants for engaging in the research and helping me to make sense of their life experiences, their autobiographies, and their aspirations. The process of my inquiry, with participant-

observation and semi-structured interviews, and analysis with snippets and narratives constitute ethnography. I will detail the reasons for my stance later in this chapter. It must be mentioned at the beginning that my concern with the politics of knowledge production is set in opposition to the conventional reductionism still prevalent in academia. As I have mentioned earlier, ethnography was initially defined by Radcliffe-Brown (1952) as the "descriptive account of non-literate people." Nevertheless, contemporary ethnographic research foregrounds the agency involved in its interpretative practices and erodes the asymmetrical binary power relations.

Walcott (1999) argues that ethnography combines research design, fieldwork, and various methods of inquiry to produce historically, politically, and personally situated accounts – descriptions, interpretations, and representations of human lives. My connivance with ethnography is with the vigor of bricolage (Kincheloe and Berry, 2004) which allows me to understand notions of complexity and multilogicality that shape the life of people in the diaspora. As Kincheloe (2004) posits, bricolage facilitates an understanding of dominant forms of power, and the rigor thus generated avoids reductionism and positive determinism. Eclectic processes such as this aspire to highlight theoretical interdisciplinarity and epistemological innovation.

My "search for method," therefore, is guided by diasporic context, philosophy[24] as a method of inquiry, the post-formal research process, and bricolage as a map or guide. The intent is to move beyond "add-on criticality" and the lure of post-modernism, toward reflexivity and context illumination. In attempting to visualize my research, I use "crystallization of the study" following Richardson and Pierre (2005). Their point as I

[24] According to Dunayevskaya (2002) philosophy makes explicit what is generally implicit in everyday experience of history.

construe it is that like crystals, the inquiry reflects externalities and refracts within itself, generating extraordinary colors and patterns, and thereby synergizing the research process and understanding. I see crystallization of the study as an illustration of the bricolage process. The point of entry to this chapter involves a few vignettes of my participant-observation. As I try to understand field empiricism, I look at different ethnographic approaches and elucidate why I think transnational ethnography should be employed to study people in the diaspora. As a bricoleur, I allow myself to follow feedback loops, and in my attempt for "deep thought structure," I try to show the influence of different sources and approaches on my inquiry.

Process and Predicaments

I begin with four epigraphic narratives from my fieldwork. I must reiterate that all names of individuals and institutions have been changed for the purpose of anonymity. As befitting a bricoleur, I look at other sources to substantiate my participant-observation. (1) I met *Shreya* through another participant in my study. Her restlessness reminded me of my earlier self. In a way, my ontology is behind the selection of my research participant and also influences my inclusion of *Shreya*'s story. *Shreya* was born in India and came to Canada at the age of three when her parents migrated. Needless to say, the choice to migrate was not her own. *Shreya* is pursuing her undergraduate degree in commerce. Her father was proud of her until it came to his notice that she was in love with an Italian boy. He blames himself and his wife for not imparting correct values in their daughter. He thinks he has been pre-occupied in trying to make ends meet since the family's migration, at the expense of his involvement with his children. He is worried about his family's status among the Asian Indian community in Montreal and believes

this situation would not have happened if he had stayed back in India. His response justifies Said's (1994:3) argument that appeals to the past are among the most common strategies in the interpretation of the present. Although such appeals create a catalogue for cultural identification, the potential of such appeals to change the present is debatable.

Coming back to *Shreya*'s account, I also learned that her younger brother, who was born in Montreal, does not have any serious problem with *Shrey*a's choice of romantic partner. There can be several interpretations of this situation. Taking a lesson from critical hermeneutics, I look at the socio-cultural context and feel that while *Shreya* and her brother, who have grown up in Canada, value personal choice in mate selection, their parents have been socialized in Indian culture and fear the unknown. Their parents have lived in Canada for almost two decades, but they affix primacy to the "way of life" they learned in India. In the last eighteen years, *Shreya*'s family have visited India several times and have seen Indian socio-cultural changes, but the Indian values of *Shreya*'s parents are still the ones with which they grew up.

Personal choice in mate selection and the transnational dimension surfaces in the ongoing legal case of Jaswinder Kaur Sidhu (Jassi)'s murder. *Jassi*, a beautician of Punjabi descent in British Columbia, went with her parents to Punjab (India) to attend her cousin's wedding. There she fell in love; her romance proceeded with her elopement, and subsequent marriage. Her parents did not approve of this marriage and plotted against their own daughter. She was murdered by hired assassins in Punjab and her husband/lover is in prison on the strength of dubious claims by his dead wife's relatives. The case has gained glaring media attention and has been captured in a cinematic representation titled *Murder Unveiled*. My incentive to write about this incident comes

from my desire to highlight the extent to which parents and relatives can go if Indian diasporic youth choose their mate against parental wishes. While I have no first-hand information about *Jassi*, cases that are less extreme, like that of *Shreya,* come up regularly.

(2) As the next epigraph will show, two different cultural practices (for example, the home and host context) can condition consciousness in two different ways. They can also influence social relationships as I construe with my participant-observation with the *Jacobs*. When I contacted her over the phone, Mrs. *Jacob* asked me to visit them on the following Saturday as it was their daughter's birthday. I was hesitant but then Mrs. *Jacob* explained that it was a "community" (Malayali community) birthday party for their daughter (*Neena*). This was new to me and I was obviously excited. *Neena* has made a deal with her parents wherein she respects her parents' friends (who are mostly first generation immigrants), and her parents permit her to have get-togethers with her friends.

The experiences of such families need to be examined holistically and underlying complexities cannot be documented in numbers but rather in the meaning they entail. A few months later, I read Jhumpa Lahiri's novel *The Namesake* (2004) where I found the central character Gogol going through exactly the same kind of situation as *Neena*. Lahiri's novel *The Namesake* is about an Indian family in the U.S., where Lahiri delineates the experiences of the child of a family in the diaspora. Gogol, the central protagonist, tries to adjust with his peers in Boston and his family who moved to the U.S. from India. Like the parents of Gogol, Lahiri travels to India frequently. To what extent does frequent travel to the place of origin have an effect on life in the diaspora? This can be a topic of discussion elsewhere. Also, the validity of an ethnographic detail and the

imagination of a fiction writer should be discussed further. As a bricoleur, I recognize the ethnographic loop and the way Lahiri's fiction, based on her experience in the diaspora, adds valuable insights to my observation.

(3) Another participant-observation can be brought from a busy Sunday afternoon at a Hindu temple in Montreal. A spiritual leader had come from India and around four hundred people had gathered for the sermon. There I met and exchanged salutations with a few families I knew through my research. Among them were *Mohit* and *Pooja*, aged twenty and seventeen respectively, with their parents. They were dressed in ethnic Indian attire and most elders seemed affectionate towards them. Their dress and their salutation, using arm movement and a bob of the head, in fact the whole rhythm of their bodies, minimized their difference with others at the temple. There were not many Asian Indian youth at the temple but the discourse of religion across transnational borders or international labor migration was significant: professionals from India in Montreal gathered to listen to a spiritual *guru* from India.

An example of ethnographic study in a transnational context, which might further illuminate the above observation, is by Gamburd (2000). Her book *The Kitchen Spoon's Handle* is based on a common Sinhala proverb which humorously conveys the limitations of women in a patriarchal society. Gamburd's study highlights gender and class dimensions of Sri Lanka's migrant housemaids in the oil-rich Persian Gulf, and offers a counterpoint to social myth. My observations commit me to an understanding that in the present era of mass migration and emerging transculturality,

> One of the effects… has been the creation of radically new type of human being: of people who root themselves in ideas rather than places, in memories as much as in material things: people who have been obliged to define themselves-because they are so defined by others-by their

> otherness: people in whose deepest selves strange fusions occur, unprecedented unions between what they were and where they find themselves. (Rushdie, 1992:124)

With Rushdie I comprehend the "otherness" manifested in consciousness (*Shreya*'s parents), social relationship (*Jacob*), and body (*Mohit* and *Puja*). Based on participant-observation, qualitative research is generated by the critical constructivism of the researcher. (4) Mrs. *Kulkarni*, a participant in my inquiry, was always worried about her two sons growing up in Canada until she and her husband decided to enroll them in a prestigious English residential school in India. They visit their children every year in India and last summer the boys returned to Montreal for a visit. Mrs. *Kulkarni* believes that the residential school offers her sons both a rigourous formal education and an immersion in Indian culture and values. Alsop (2002) argues that the "foreign" (meaning the adopted "home" country) is amorphous and unstructured. According to him, the adopted home lacks the inner template that the place of origin seems to provide, and is just a mirage or projection.

Residential schools for non-resident Indian (NRI) youth have proliferated in India during the last few years. These schools charge exorbitant fees but they project themselves as providing engagement in Indian culture and values along with a rigourous education in the English language. I would like to analyze this case together with that of international graduate students in North American Universities, like myself. As I tried to make sense of Mrs. *Kulkarni*'s quest, I thought about my aspirations when I decided to come to McGill University for my doctoral studies. Life unfolds in different ways, creating contexts and aspirations that exist "beyond" the borders of nation-states, academic disciplines, or dreams.

These four epigraphs have divergent tangents to the similar contexts of being in the diaspora. In the first (*Shreya*), the location of "home" has shifted but the mooring of culture and values is still the place of origin, while the second (*Jacobs*) presents negotiations in cultural differences through different social practices. Both the third and fourth narratives show increasing choices for people in the diaspora through transnationalism. These narratives also suggest that people in the diaspora are not bound by borders and neither do they shift their loyalties between their country of origin and the country of settlement, but as Levitt (2001) argues, they create forms of participation and representation that defy these assumptions. These new ways of life create a transnational social space that gives people opportunities for selective assimilation in their country of settlement.

The transnational social space is inundated not only by people in the diaspora but also by associations and practices for social justice as manifested with "doctors without borders," "sociologists without borders", "activists without borders," "feminists without borders," "architects without borders," "lawyers without borders," "reporters without borders," and their like. While I construct people in the diaspora as oppressed by various "power blocs" of their adopted countries and the countries of their origin, I see the above-mentioned associations as fighting the power and oppression of nationalistic discourse. As I have written in a published book chapter (Raj, 2006), the diaspora is both an alternative and an intermediary at a time when the role of nation-state is being relegated to the wishes of neo-liberal agendas.

Any methodology to study the oppressed or those fighting oppression should involve a set of processes, procedures, and techniques for decolonizing the imagination

beyond the apartheid of western academic knowledge. Bricolage aids the post-formal approach and allows multiple epistemologies to intertwine, enabling interpretation within critical praxis. I will illustrate bricolage in practice within transnational context later in this chapter. Before that, as in the next section, I must outline the grounding of my research process within the qualitative and ethnographic approaches. Explaining the nuances of such approaches is not paramount, but I hope it will help moor the epigraphs mentioned earlier and help to further the discussion.

Qualitative Dimension and Ethnographic Approach

Since human conditions cannot be expressed with quantitative tools and, more so important, power discourse operates through multiple social categories, I believe that the contours and configuration of this research obligate a qualitative methodological orientation. Qualitative research crosscuts disciplines, fields, and subject matters and has a distinguished history in each discipline. As Denzin and Lincoln (2005) posit, contemporary qualitative research has produced sites for critical conversation about democracy, race, gender, class, nation-states, globalisation, freedom, and the community. According to Denzin and Lincoln, earlier moments of qualitative research are still operating in the present, either as legacy or as a set of practices that researchers continue to follow or argue against.

Kincheloe (2003) adds that an awareness of context, holism, aims, and appraisal helps researchers avoid transferring value-laden policy issues into technical questions with empirical answers. He further shows the multidimensionality and purpose of qualitative research at three levels, namely, the subject-matter being researched, the research process itself, and the researcher. Each dimension stresses the importance of

human agency and thereby attaches issues of social justice within the conversation for knowledge production. Researchers concerned with social justice, therefore, must base their inquiry at the disjunction of lived experiences and the official knowledge. It will, thus, open a "Pandora's Box" of power and knowledge that is further dominated by Cartesian parameters.

Ways of evaluating qualitative research are often debated, and positivist scholars question qualitative research design, analysis, and evidence. Suggestions abound for multi-site case study and triangulation, but again these suggestions pull critical ethnography back into positivistic designs. Therefore, I do not attach undue importance to evaluating qualitative research, and within the critical research paradigm I attach any/all validity to the synergism of post-formal research and social justice (Kincheloe, 2003, 2004). The open-ended nature of the qualitative research project provides ample scope for resistance against attempts to impose a single, umbrella like paradigm over the entire project. Synergizing ethnography with bricolage, one can interplay participant-observation with other loops. I have used fictional texts and glaring social incidents as shown briefly in the previous section of this chapter. This is how I feel I can evaluate my research.

Walcott (1999) places ethnography as a preferred label for a set of activities with the researcher present in person. Critics argue that all humans do what ethnographers do, but the critics fail to understand scope of rigor in qualitative research through ethnography. Rather than look at the ripples on the pond, ethnographers "get" inside and bring the detailed analysis by "being there" and reading the lives of people like a texts. In the present time, the life experience of people can be understood by accepting the context

that encompasses several ripples like that in a pond and includes transnational practices, spanning the borders of nation state and geographical communities. Transnational practices became obvious to me with each passing day in the field situation. Even my subjective "self" can be contextualized as transnational.

A researcher is always involved with society. The positivist paradigm compels us to mark a set period of time in which to engage for participant-observation or semi-structured interview. As Tedlock (2005) shows, ethnography involves an ongoing attempt to place specific encounters, events, and understanding into a fuller, more meaningful context. I must add that ethnography is not simply the production of new information, but rather the way in which such information can be put to meaningful use with critical hermeneutics. Earlier ethnography was mainly a tool of the "isolated" anthropologist but over a period of time scholars in other disciplines and applied areas have used it. Different styles of ethnography have arisen because the researcher can and does inscribe the same material in many different ways, using various formats, styles, and genres.

Fine (2003) points out that ethnography can have two dimensions: - the first is the extent to which field observations attempt to address central theoretical issues, as opposed to providing a substantive analysis of a particular phenomena; the second refers to the extent to which a rich and detailed account of the site being observed is presented, as opposed to the inclusion of a few instances of data to bolster one's analytical points. Fine also proposes "peopled ethnography" as distinct from personal and postulated ethnography. According to her, in peopled ethnography social text is neither descriptive narrative nor conceptual theory but rather the understanding of the setting and its theoretical implications that are grounded in a set of detailed vignettes, based on field

notes, interview extracts, and the texts that the group members produce. The detailed account coupled with the ability of the reader to generalize from the setting is at the heart of this methodological orientation. It is most effectively based on observations of an interacting group or a setting in which one can explore social behavior. In this methodological orientation, it is not the individuals being observed who direct our interest, but rather their position within a group or social system – the set of actors and their "peoples" – that guide the ethnographic analysis, interpretation and description.

Fine's arguments allow me to be vigilant as an ethnographer while making sense of different social categories and situations. One of the earliest and most popular narrative genres used by an ethnographer to write an interpretative account is the biography or the life history. Tedlock (2005) explains that although biography can be produced on the basis of interviews alone, the most frequent way it emerges is from the context of the fieldwork. The "representative" (individual or group) of such a study may or may not be selected beforehand; I believe the social situation should guide the selection of "representatives". "Memoir" is another type of document and, in this case, the ethnographer narrows the lens to delineate his/her life in the field. Overlapping the two is "narrative ethnography", created when qualitative researchers attempt to portray accurately the subjects of biographies, in addition to including their own experiences. My participant-observation is mainly expressed through biography and the life-course of the participants.

In educational research, as Antikainen and Komonen (2003) observe, life courses allow the establishment of the foundation of educative process. Most often the interpretation is mine but I have tried to follow the double hermeneutic nature of

sociology where the social phenomena is first interpreted by the participant and then by the researcher. The "fractured future" in qualitative and ethnographic research (Denzin and Lincolin, 2005) has given enough scope for new approaches. Snow, Morrill and Anderson (2003:181-200) propose what they call "analytic ethnography." They adapt Lofland's (1995) original idea and, in contrast to the traditional interpretative style that attempts to get at the crux of "what is going on," Snow et al move to a more formal approach that seeks to identify the cognitive rules underlying behaviour, and the more recent postmodern preoccupation with individual voices and experience. This methodological direction seeks to develop systematic and generic understandings and propositions about social processes. I locate Snow et al (2003) within my engagement with criticality as they stress an understanding of why social issues unfold as they do. Contrary to most ethnographic vignettes, Snow et al allow me to reduce the gap between observation and the analysis of positivistic advocacy.

It is not easy to move beyond positivistic schema although ethnography has, in recent years, moved to encompass accounts of global processes. The most striking feature of the present age, according to Molyneux (2001), is the increasing globalisation of civil society, strengthened by transnational networks and global media. In his quest to understand this transnational process, Burawoy (2000 & 2001) proposes "global ethnography" that defies the role of isolated ethnographer as conceived by most anthropologists and as context-blind by most sociologists. This illusion exists because ethnographers, in trying to pursue the classical anthropological or sociological approach, remain engrained in the pre-history of ethnography. Burawoy (2001:148) remarks that "global ethnography reacts not only to the illusions of the present but also to the

blindness of the past. It is driven from the standpoint of participants located at the interaction of the most remote forces, connections and imaginations."

Burawoy (2000) stands against institutional and isolated ethnography, but in trying to encompass everything using his "extended case method," he has gone a bit far and has diffused the context of ethnographic research. Based on my understanding of the diasporic context, I reason for the usage and importance of "transnational ethnography" in the following section, using my reflexive engagement with the different sites of my inquiry. If deconstruction is something that happens inside, transnational ethnography is an attempt to show deconstruction at work in an ethnographic approach to field research led by the tensions and contradictions experienced in the field. It is geared towards opening, expansion, exposure and gives a new twist beyond the confines of the boundary. Like deconstruction, transnational ethnography is set in motion by reflexivity and an attempt to address emergent issues, to respond to them and to be responsive.

Transnational Ethnography: Research and Reflexivity

I must reiterate, as do the four epigraphs and their corresponding anecdotes, that the "lives of people in the diaspora are not bound by borders" (Pessar, 1999) and neither do people shift their loyalties between country of origin and country of settlement. However, as Levitt (2001) argues, they create forms of participation and representation that defy these assumptions. Signposting these new ways of life creates transnational social space that gives people opportunities for selective assimilation in the country of settlement or commitment to the culture of the country of origin. Any comprehensive study of the diaspora, therefore, necessitates field commitment as well as the ability to link narratives (that highlight the transnational social space) with social theory. I must

add that this is necessitated as a result of socioeconomic and cultural formation of the last century which created the contemporary diasporic subjectivities encompassing transnational discourse. Due to the same, subjectivities have changed from nation-state, ethnic, multicultural to transnational.

To further illuminate my last point, I must mention the Indian version of Mattel's Barbie doll. During my last visit to India I came across dozens of *sari*-clad Barbies in a supermarket, female American bodies with red *bindi* on their foreheads. One side of the doll's box read, "Dressing in an all-seasons classic sari with exotic borders, Barbie is totally at home in India." This was not an Indian version nor an attempt at American cultural homogenization, but a transnational formation of the neo-liberal consumer culture. The Mattel Corporation had put Barbie "at home" in India with a marketing strategy in which the Euro-American female body had been given Indian "all season" attire. In the contemporary period, the power to shape culture through products and practices has been hijacked by transnational corporations like Mattel.

The power of transnational irony to profile the current cultural configuration arises when we find Asian Indians watching Bollywood films in their apartments in New York; or when Pakistani cab drivers in London listen on tapes to religious sermons delivered in mosques in Pakistan; or when Italians in Montreal are glued to large television screens to watch a soccer game between Germany and Italy. Transnationalism begins with defying marked borders, and it has deterritorialization as its base. Deterritorialized groups face the challenge of defending their interests in the global order, not just in the host society but also in the countries of their origin. This is possible due to

the fact that deterritorialization creates space that liberates people oppressed within the confines of the nation-state (Appadurai, 1991).

Appadurai (1999:196-197) convinces us "that a new style of ethnography can capture the impact of deterritorialization on the imagined resources of lived, local experiences." This new ethnographic practice should take into consideration the contemporary social context and must delve into understanding the *modus operandi* of power in such a framework. Although global forces, connections, and imaginations (Burawoy, 2000) shape diasporic subjectivity in the present age, the diaspora also includes people who migrated from their "homeland" during the colonial period. Indian labourers indentured to the plantation economy during British colonialism are a case in point. Other examples from the present times are the Indian H-1B visa holders in the U.S. who live away from their nation-state to make the most of life opportunities. Emigration under indentured contracts preceded the current global configuration, and their cultural practices are largely drawn from the country of their origin. The presence of the Creole language in Fiji or the celebrations of *Holi* in Trinidad are evidence of this point.

Transnational ethnography should be useful to understand diasporic networks, associations, trust, solidarity, and collaboration, as well as the configuration of power through consciousness, social relationship, and the body. One of the earliest usages of transnational ethnography was Thomas and Znaniecki's (1984) *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America.* It links, as most studies on migration do, the sending and receiving context of communities, as well as the intervening configurations. Other examples of research and publication include: (1) Levitt's (2001) *The Transnational Villagers,* which offers a detailed account of how ordinary people keep their feet in two worlds at the same

time and create communities that span borders; (2) Levitt's and Walcott's (eds.) (2002) *The Changing Face of Home*, which offers a rich amalgam of articles detailing the transnational lives of second generation immigrants; and (3) Grewal's (2005) *Transnational America*, which inspects the cultural flows and advocacy for democratic citizenship that allows "America" to be imagined differently.

As Froner (2003:17) argues, a growing number of scholars are "documenting transnational practices, ideologies, and social fields as a way to understand the migration experience." For example, a book series on "The New Americans: Recent Immigration and the American Society" is being edited by Carola Suarez-Orozco and Marcelo Suarez-Orozco. In 2004, I reviewed two books from this series for the *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*. These books by DeBiaggi (2002) and Baluja (2003) delineate the changes that have taken place in gender role attitudes and behaviors among immigrants from countries like Brazil and Bangladesh, although in both the cases the frame of reference was constituted by American norms and values. I would argue that DeBiaggi's (2002) and Baluja's (2003) studies can be good examples to measure the "reference group behaviour" but not immigrant life per se. Nevertheless they show the power of American culture that has pervaded the globe.

My attempt to highlight transnational ethnography should be seen as an attempt at deconstruction within the current ethnographic tradition. In simple terms, deconstruction is about the responsible breaking of the nutshell of fixed meanings and boundaries. For Derrida, deconstruction is set in motion by self-reflexivity and is an attempt to address emergent issues by responding to them. My argument for the importance of transnational ethnography developed with research reflexivity. In trying to highlight the importance of

using transnational ethnography to study the diaspora, I am not necessarily rejecting the overall value of other ethnographic approaches. However, I am pointing to their drawbacks when used for studying the emergent transnational social space.

The diaspora and ethnography are the offshoots of the colonialism that has shaped the present world. An ethnographic procedure to the study of people in the diaspora is therefore a corollary and a complement to those forces which have sowed the seeds of the contemporary world we live in. As colonialism has given way to the post-colonial and even post- postcolonial labyrinth, ethnography as portrayed using Denzin and Lincoln's schemata has grown and come out of the shadows of colonialism. The last point can be debated but it is generally accepted that ethnographic research has the potential to bring out the voice and subjectivity of the research participant.

Understanding the self is the first step in any ethnographic research, and as Meek (2003) maintains, unconscious mental processing is a necessary part of qualitative research and underpins what is called "reflexive processing." Yet, often, we do not recognize that our own disguised and personal information has crept into our research. As the lack of literature on "unconscious mental processing" shows, this is not a favoured topic of discussion in research circles, although it can serve several positive ends. I understand with Appadurai (1991) that the global has become ethnographic in both the experiences of people and in the production of the social mechanism of these experiences. As such, ethnographers need to take into account the transnational connections or the post-national imagination.

According to Jordan (2003:82-99), "critical ethnography engages with the concept of nation-state, chooses from a vast array of theoretical positions, analyzes power

relations, deals with reflexivity and has the pursuit for emancipation as its central tenant." With such schema in mind, transnational ethnography should also be considered as an attempt to use critical ethnography for the study of diasporic subjectivity. An ethnographer who examines the socio-cultural practice and its effects is in fact "reading" the society as a text. S/he observes, describes and interprets the text that s/he reads. The ethnographer then documents the interpretation as text that is read by others. Text is important in the life-long journey of an ethnographer but the context is essential too. Without the context, an ethnographer will not have a chance to read society as a text or produce text to be read. Therefore, the centrality of the ethnographer and the way s/he reads the social text (transnational for people in the diaspora) and writes manuscript text becomes important.

My involvement with my research field is manifested in the pages of the daily account that I wrote during the course of my fieldwork, and is supplemented by the transcribed interviews with several research participants. I met individuals and families at formal, informal and religious gatherings and the data collection snowballed from there. The printed telephone directory and South Asian newsletters also provided a resource for identifying and contacting people in Montreal. To understand the experience of youth of Indian origin as mediated by cyberspace, I also received consent and assistance to monitor the web activities of some of the youth, which was useful to gain an account of "informal learning, digital culture and everyday creativity" (Stefen-Green, 2004).This was further complemented by the use of documents from NACOI and *Bharat Bhavan* in Montreal.

I have been intrigued by the community network and constant pressure of the parents to guide the youth of the second and subsequent generations. I supplemented my "hunch" from the field with my recognition of gaps in the literature. The research sites have not only made me sit back and reflect on several issues but even the research subjects have guided my reflexivity[25]. I consider "construction of the ethnographer from the participant's standpoint" (Venkatesh, 2002) to be very vital. This is a critical moment in any observational study, and involves the construction and reconstruction of the status and identity of the researcher from the informants' point of view.

To Burawoy (1998), it may be an exercise in "reflexive science" and is based on the proposition that relations between fieldworker and the informants form a constitutive part of the ethnographic research. Venkatesh (2002:91-111) points out that this argument is based on an established history of reflection in participant-observation and qualitative methods (Stocking, 1992), mediation in ethnography (Willis, 2000) and is in line with informant-fieldworker relationship over the course of a field study (Johnson, 1975; Rabinow, 1977; Burawoy, 1998; Daniels, 1999). Most often, ethnographers do not attempt systematically to reconstruct the researcher's identity from the informants' point of view. It is common, however, for the informant-researcher interaction to appear in a brief discussion of the process of entering a fieldwork site and also as the researcher negotiates with informants to secure valid and reliable data (MacLeond, 1987). As Pollner and Emerson (1983:235) state, "it should not be surprising that processes of insider have tended to preoccupy fieldworkers" probably because bridging the distance

[25] Denzin 1997 argues that self-reflexivity is no longer a luxury of the researcher but is guided by how those whom we study want to be represented in our research.

between the researcher and the informants would help get the best reading of the "text" and understanding of the "context."

To my informants I am only partially part of their community. I am an Indian but not part of the Indian diasporic community. I grew up in India like most people of the first generation but "I am not that smart[26]" like the second-generation Indian origin youth in Montreal. I had an education and upbringing in India different to those of most of my young participant-informants. They can relate to me but with the prognosis that I cannot understand the dilemma of their "growing-up." The parents seem to be able to relate to me more than the youth. To some of the parents I am a "frame of reference[27]" for their children but to the youth I am "away from normal and accepted way of life[28]."

My reflexivity also compels me to ponder my personal identity in the field. At the surface level it may seem that I am an Indian trying to understand experiences in the diaspora. However, my experience of being an Indian among the Indian diaspora is quite interesting, and reveals several more layers. I am neither an insider nor an outsider to the field, but a nomad interested in the panorama of the daily practices of people in the diaspora. I try and read their "presentation of self in everyday life" (Goffman, 1959) and write my interpretation. While some view reflexivity as a response to the realization that researchers and their methods are entangled with the politics of the social world (Mason, 2002), I believe this engagement with my "subjective self" is a research guide and a process that helps me to engage myself with my field sites.

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[26] As referred to by one youth on January 25, 2004 at India's Republic Day Celebration at Concordia University.

[27] Word in quotation was actually used by one granny while comparing her grandson to me.

[28] As referred to me by a participant.

In addition to being an empirical engagement, reflexivity is an attempt to understand the theoretical moorings and methodological stance of my research praxis. The field sites range from online interactions to place-based negotiations. The negotiating locale is not just in Montreal, but is spread across several national boundaries, which in turn makes me aware of the multi-sited context needed to study the diaspora. Recognizing the way members of the Indian diasporic community make meaningful the varied worlds of their experience, one cannot help but make useful linkages to ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967). The rationale is to analyze the methods, or the procedures that people use to accomplish things in their day-to-day lives.

Coulon (1995) maintains that the importance of ethnomethodolgy lies in the radical break from traditional sociological modes of thinking. More than a constituted theory, it is a radical research perspective as it also tries to comprehend rather than just explain. With ethnomethodology we move from the Parsonian gaze of normative action to an interpretative approach useful in ethnography (Denzin, 1997). Major concepts of ethnomethodology central for my work are indexicality, reflexivity and accountability. While indexicality brings to light the contextual determination of the world of work, reflexivity refers to the practices that at once describe and constitute a social framework. Coulon (1995:23) argues that it is this feature of social action that presupposes the conditions of its production and at the same time makes the act an observable and recognizable action.

Zimmerman (1978) contends that ethnomethodologists "treat members" accounts of the social world as situated accomplishments, not as informants' inside view of what is really happening." It allows me to further move from Snow et al's (2003) description of

"what is really happening" to understand situated social occurrences. Here the general concern is the elucidation of how accounts or descriptions of an event, a relationship, or a thing are produced with interaction in such a way that they achieve some situated methodological position. The accountability is not given once and for all, as it is constituted in our practical accomplishments and in this case with the research participants. The focus of my research is to understand human agency, thus I need to seek an accountability of the structure of social action by deciphering its meanings.

To study the human agency aspect of diasporic practice, I am drawn to Giddens' structuration theory. According to Giddens (1984), structuration looks not at the structure or the human action but also at the social practices ordered over time and space. This conceptual schema, which Giddens uses for social theory, increases in value if it is used to illuminate empirical research and as a form of critique. The point of connection with structuration theory in my research deals with the logical implications of studying a "subject matter" of which I am already a part and with elucidating the substantive connotations of the core notions of action and structure. The emphasis is on the activities through which people in the (Indian) diaspora produce and use the social resource. As Giddens (1984) acknowledges, the notion of practical consciousness of social action is central to social action. In addition to this "rationalization of action" through which the actor is able to explain the reason for her/his action; "motivation of action," elucidate the intention of action. The motivation of action in my project refers to not just intentions but also to the capacity to create and use the resources available in the diaspora.

My perception of the "field" further helps make sense of Giddens' (1984) analysis of actor. According to Giddens, to "act" is the capacity to intervene in the world, or to

refrain from intervention with the intent to influence a specific process or state of affairs. This presumes that to be an agent is to be able to deploy a range of casual powers, including that of influencing those deployed by others. Action depends upon the capability of the individual to "make a difference" to a pre-existing state of affairs or "course of events" (Giddens, 1984:23), although interpretative ethnographers are more interested in the problems of cultural meanings than social action. My understanding of the permutation of lives in the Indian diaspora is their overwhelming zeal to make a difference in their lives and in the lives of their children. Lastly, the way I relate Giddens' structuration theory to my research is in studying the modes in which such systems, grounded in the conscious as well as subconscious activities of situated actors, draw upon rules and resources in the diversity of action contexts, and are produced and reproduced in interaction.

With the above grounding of transnational ethnography, as a bricoleur, I proceed to discuss the methods of my inquiry in the next section. Post-formal research and the bricolage approach are often assumed to be devoid of structure. Keeping the power dynamics of social context and knowledge production in mind, I discuss the methods of my research ranging from purposive sampling, participant observation, focus group, interviewing and ethnohistory.

Methods of Inquiry

As mentioned in the above section, I first prepared a "resource directory of people of Indian origin in Montreal." Although I had been navigating the terrain of my field for any information I could collect, I focused and chose my research participants for the semi-structured interviews with purposive sampling from this resource guide. Since the

probability of selection is known there is no subjective bias in this technique. This feature, as Schutt (2001) maintains, makes sampling desirable when the goal is to generalize from a sizeable population. I made the samples as representative of the Indian population (caste, region and religion) as well as of Montreal (different geographical locations and class backgrounds) as possible. The number of samples was fifty and thereafter I started contacting people over the telephone. I wanted to send the introductory letter and the consent form by mail but most respondents asked me to bring the consent form with me when I went to interview them in person.

As mentioned, participant-observation was another important method of inquiry. Observation is "the fundamental base of all research methods" (Alder and Alder, 1994:389). As an ethnographer, my role in participant observation was to further negotiate and understand the context and the diasporic practice. Schutt (2001:270-272) argues that participant observation is a method in which natural social processes are studied as they happen. In this research method, by observing people and interacting with them in the course of their normal activities, the researcher tries to avoid the artificiality of experimental designs and the unnatural structured questioning of survey research. This technique also encourages consideration of the context in which social interaction takes place, of the complex and interconnected nature of social relations, and of the sequencing of events.

I tried to keep my focus on observing the dyad of parents and the children in informal, community and religious milieu. Nonetheless, in order to promote better understanding, I also depended on a few case studies and focus groups. A focus group provides participants an opportunity to gain access to new information and develop new

ways of thinking (Mason, 2000). This did not involve representative samples or structured discussion, but the groups originated in the target population and provided a venue to examine issues pertinent to the research context. I was also allowed to read Internet discussions of two groups of youth of Indian origin, and these discussions acted as a valuable example "focus group" interaction. I received informal approval for the same. Although discussions on these two groups increased my understanding of Indian diasporic youth, I will refrain from reporting these observations as I did not have the University's formal consent.

I proceeded to conduct in-depth interviews with all the respondents, first, as dyads consisting of parents and their children and then each person individually. However, unlike the more structured interviewing that may be used in survey research, these were intensive or in-depth interviews with open-ended schedules. This was done with the presumption that a qualitative researcher is not supposed to know the range of answers that respondents might give, and should seek to hear the answers in the respondents' own words. Rather than asking standard questions in a fixed order, intensive interviewers allow the specific content and order of questions to vary from one interview to another (Schutt, 2001). The interviewing usually began with an outline of the topic, the gathering of background information, the building of rapport and then delving into "grand tour questions" (Miller and Crabtree, 1999) meant to elicit lengthy narratives. The interviews were conducted in a setting chosen by the respondents, and each respondent was given a "memento" as thanks for taking the time to participate in my project.

To make sense of the ethno-history of the respondents, I tried to encourage each to write a personal narrative but it did not work beyond a few cases. Thereafter I resorted

to collecting ethnic Indian newsletters such as *Indus Post* and *Pragati* in order to document news and views about the people of Indian origin in Montreal. While these newsletters are specific to Montreal, they also carry features about India in general.

Bricoleurs combine several lines of sight and, as Berg (2004) mentions, as researchers they obtain a better, more substantive picture of reality, a richer, more complete array of symbols and theoretical concepts, and a means of verifying many of these elements. Most researchers prefer to call it triangulation, estimating their work to be in the center of a triangle which helps situate as well as navigate the research. However, as Richardson (2005) points out, triangulation carries with it "fixed points," is two-dimensional and limits it to three corners of a triangle. Richardson suggests the use of "crystallization." She argues that contextualizing with the figurative central imaginary of crystal shows the dynamism of the research, its multidimensionality, and its variety of perspectives and approaches.

I find the above conceptual tool to be useful but, remembering Denzin's (2000) several "lines of action," I consider my work to draw from, use, and have a bearing upon four or more dimensions. My methods are four, namely: participant-observation, semi-structured interview, case study and documentation. In my methodology I draw from global, critical, interpretative and peopled ethnography. The theoretical formulations can also be placed at four nodes of a constantly budding matrix: diasporization, global-transnational, ethnomethodology and structuration. The fourth aspect is the location of the study, which lies at the intersection of consciousness, social relationship, body, as well as time and space. Multiple perspectives envisaged through crystallization allow me

to "get behind the facts" (Kincheloe, 2001) which construct knowledge production in academia.

The following diagram to some extent visually represents this inquiry. It was not possible for me to draw a crystal and represent the various influences (theory, methodology, locations, and methods), therefore I decided to represent the sides of the crystal as hanging and in relation to each other.

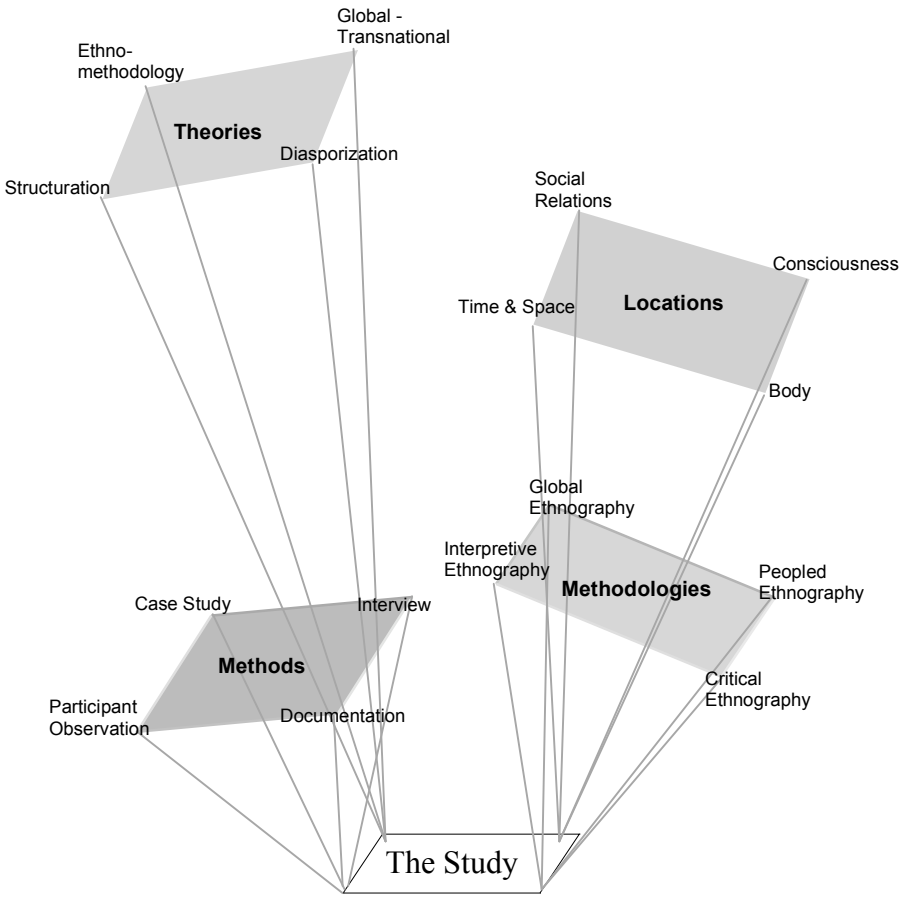

Figure 3. Crystallization of the study

Another Loop of the Bricolage

To add to the rigor of this research, a few components need to be further extended. As a bricoleur, I consider Bourdieu's (1977) "habitus" appropriate to help me to examine the diasporic practice. According to Bourdieu, habitus is historically patterned, yet open to adjustment in relation to the changing conditions of the social field. Drawing from Bourdieu, the notion of habitus can be summarized as a non-conscious set of dispositions and classificatory schemes, which people gain through experience, and that provide a kind of repertoire for situationally competent action, improvisation and the generation of new practices. The social milieu of the diaspora lies in the transnational web of relation, and it encompasses those in the host country and the home country, as well as with the diaspora in other countries. It is with improvisation that adjustment in the host society or transnational practices emerge.

In the diasporic habitus, social networks provide a venue for storytelling, showcasing, and they project an image that could be leveraged to create new knowledge as well as to sustain the old (see Granovetter, 1985). In addition to transnational networks and ties, diasporic associations also play a big part in diasporic habitus. If diasporic habitus is used in line with some of the variables that are used to consider the availability of social capital, we find it useful to understand the experiences in the diaspora.

Capital consists of accumulated or living labour, and social capital is defined by Bourdieu (1977: 46-51) as

> the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which is linked to possession of a durable networks of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintances and recognition and this provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital.

If to Bourdieu social capital is the resource, to Coleman it is access to the resource. Coleman (1988) maintains that social capital is the set of resources that inhere in the family relations and in community social organizations and that are useful for the cognitive of social development of a young person. He takes into account three forms pertinent to social capital, namely, obligations and expectations, information channels, and social norms. Coleman examines the effect of social capital within the family and in the community outside the family.

Social capital as a heuristic device allows me to interpret the power and agency of people in the diaspora, the power of the parents to shape youth, as well as the agency of youth to cope with the Indian community. Further, intergenerational closure helps diasporic community in general and parents in particular to socialize their children. It creates social zones that transmit the culture and values of the group while helping them to adjust in the larger society. Thus we see that intergenerational closure is important for the community.

This loop of the bricolage, where I mention habitus and social capital, is important to understand the subject matter being studied as well as for the research process. As a researcher I must also mention any issue, or rather any limitation, which is significant for researchers in Montreal. The English-French duality in Montreal encouraged me to learn some basic French with the assumption that it would help me in my inquiry. I felt it necessary because several second generation Indian diasporic youth are quite proficient in French, and I found them talking among themselves in French at

formal/informal community gatherings. I could not learn enough French, however, to be able to master such situations.

Application of bricolage provides limitless possibilities. As I move from this chapter to discuss its further application in the next chapter, I must provide a few concluding sentences. The tools (methodology) and techniques (methods) of this inquiry, like any other, can be better exercised with concern for social justice. Within my limitations, all the theoretical moorings that I draw from are used with the intent that they will help youth (Indian, in the diaspora, or anywhere else) in their quest to take advantage of life's limitless opportunities. My "search for a method" in order to study their experiences in the diaspora is an attempt in that direction.

Chapter 6

MONTREAL MIRROR: INDIAN YOUTH IN THE DIASPORA

In this chapter, as befitting a bricoleur, I delve into the lived experiences of Indian diasporic youth in Montreal using narrative themes (ethnography), description (phenomenology), interpretation[29], as well as content and discourse analysis. My background and circumstances are reflected in my analysis as the researcher analyses and understands from her/his perspective the subjectivity of the research participants. The questions of this inquiry, outlined in Chapter Two, guide the labyrinth of the analysis. However, in this particular chapter, tangential issues and themes cross-pollinate the description due to the complexity of the social world. This chapter can also be seen as my attempt to "know myself" better along with the 'research participants' who formed the kernel of my inquiry.

Questions of the "self" and its socio-psychological construction have often intrigued me. What concerns me at this stage is not only how we interpret the self but also the processes through which we take care of this activity of knowing 'the self'. In this connection, I am drawn to a determining seminar by Foucault in which he sheds light on the 'technologies of the self' within his larger scholarship of power and domination. The essay appears in an edited book (Martin et al, 1988: 18) in which Foucault writes,

> As a context, we must understand that there are four major types of these "technologies", each a matrix of practical reason: (1) technologies of production, which permit us to produce, transform, or manipulate things;

[29] Double hermeneutics-first interpreted by the participant and then by the researcher

> (2) technologies of sign systems, which permit us to use signs, meanings, symbols, or signification; (3) technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject; (4) technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.

As I see them, technologies of the self are one, but inter-related conceptualization among the various technologies that shape our being. Foucault's above mentioned contemplation on the "technology of the self," when seen in conjunction with Fiske (1993), allocates recognition of how the consciousness of an individual, her/his body, and social relations influence "the knowing" and thereby the consideration of the self. Other technologies, as deliberated by Foucault, operate to comprehend the "self" in the social context in which life is lived. I understand "technology of the self" as enunciated by Foucault, as practical acts in the process for actualization of the self. Further, the shaping of the consciousness, the body, and the social relations are influenced by the cultural practices in which individuals make meaning of lived experiences as well as the experiences of others as offered in textual or conversational forms. In a nutshell and in the vein of critical constructivism (Kincheloe, 2005), I re-affirm knowledge constructed by the "self" as permeated by the social and cultural context. Critical theory, as the primary tool in my analysis, allocates understanding of the self and context through the processes in which dominant power operates to manage knowledge.

My analysis is reflected through the social mirror of Montreal. I use the metaphor of mirror but I must clarify that a mirror is not a monitor, and that the image on the surface of the mirror is, at best, half the size of what is observed. Also, the image in the

mirror, in this case, varies with the changing dynamics of the society and the ensuing determining power dynamics. As discussed earlier in Chapter Three, I also recognize that the transnational dynamics of the "contemporary network society" (Castells, 1996) change the time and space dimensions and keep social structure of any society in constant flux. In such a scenario, therefore, I start from the most mundane experience of everyday life and build on from there.

Here and Now

I was cooking *khichri*, our Saturday afternoon delicacy, when the phone rang. On the other side was *Ruma*. I was drawn to all names that sounded Indian in the "Montreal telephone directory" and had left a voicemail message at her phone number. *Ruma* and her family had agreed to an informal interview. I was elated to receive the phone call but waited for the *Khichri* to simmer. *Khichri* is a tasty fluid admixture of half rice, quarter each of two different kinds of *dal* (lentil), double the quantity of water, along with few green peppers, a hint of coriander, some butter, and salt to taste. The choice of rice or *dal* may vary and so do the side dishes- *papad* (crispy bread flake)*, pickle*, and plain curd. It occurred to me that *Khichri* as a notion imbibes in itself the philosophy of post-modern identity, and the notion promotes not only the elucidation of consciousness of the subject but also the nature of the ingredients being cooked together. *Khichri*, the end product of this simple mix of ingredients, tastes different than each ingredient and still retains some flavor of them all.

I had met several youth of Indian origin prior- at *desi* grocery stores, temples, and during Bollywood shows in Montreal. Nevertheless, I had not conversed about my

research with any Indian origin youth until now. I kept imagining *Ruma* until I reached her parent's house at Dollard des Ormeaux (DDO, Montreal). I was not sure if she was born in India and came with her parents (1.5 generation) or whether she was born in Montreal (second generation). I made sure I was carrying my digital tape-recorder to record our conversation if *Ruma* and her parents consented to an interview. I ran over my scribbled notes desperately as I wanted to shape the direction of our conversation. When I reached the "site" of our dialogue, the first round of questions were focused on "me." The right pronunciation of my first name concerned *Ruma*; her father inquired about the region I originate from in India, while *Ruma*'s mother wanted to know my "caste."

I am aware of my difference from earlier immigrants but what interests me here is the way semantics converse to put order on agency. I remembered some films I had seen on Indian diaspora and the messages they confer about recent immigrants- their accent, their desperate attitude for survival in a new land, or their behavior towards women in general and white women in particular. In one film, called *American Chai,* the central character's cousin from India is shown as a rude-rural-rugged FOB (Fresh off the Boat). FOB is often a derogatory remark and verbalizes the discrimination and contempt within Indian diaspora for new members to their community. I seek recluse for such issues, as in Prasad's (2002) explanation, in the prejudiced tradition of the age old caste system in India.

The movie *American Chai* revolves around a youth whose parents, originally from India, want their son to pursue a career in medicine even though he loves music. His father reminds him that he will struggle to make ends meet as a singer. With his

experience in a foreign country, the father feels that he has his son's best interest in mind. Dewey (1963:25) writes, "the belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative." Dewey further notes that the educative experience depends upon the objective form deduced from previous experiences as well as the concurrent subjective disposition of the cognitive self. The past experience of the father in *American Chai* is not linked to the social operatives of contemporary times in which youth like his son live.

I could not help visualizing this film (*American Chai*) while talking to *Ruma* and her parents. *Ruma* was born in Cleveland (U.S.) where her father was an engineering graduate student. She was four when her parents moved to Montreal. *Ruma*'s father works for Hydro-Quebec while her mother has been a home-maker. *Ruma* and I agreed that she was a second generation Indian in North America but she could be considered 1.5 generation in Montreal. *Ruma*'s mother has been very involved with the Indian community and she pointed out that *Ruma* would accompany her to most community activities. Her mother feels that, compared to other Indian diasporic youth in Montreal, *Ruma* is more involved with the ethnic Indian community. *Ruma*, on the other hand, clarified that she is friends with youth of the Indian diasporic community in Montreal as well as youth of other ethnicities.

When I bring the above situation under the microworlds using double hermeneutic, I see the desire of the mother to show her daughter "in control" by influencing her to become involved in the ethnic community. *Ruma*'s experience, on the other hand, makes her point out that she is more than an Indian in Montreal. Her

experiences are that of her community of practice, and as *Ruma* mentioned, she interacts with her peers from other ethnic groups. *Ruma*'s zone of proximal development (ZPD), in Vygotskyian (1978) sense, is the social meadow of Montreal in which Indian culture is one among the multicultural repertoire available for learners.

Ruma had attended Indian dance lessons in the temple and she performs them at various formal and informal occasions. She is equally influenced by hip-hop. *Ruma*'s interest in classical Indian music and hip-hop confirm Maira's (2002) delineation of immigrant youth's lived experience between cultural nostalgia and "cool" cosmopolitan culture. The negotiation between nostalgia and "cool" is what constitute the basis of diasporic youth experience. *Ruma*'s parents are not from Punjab, nor does she have any friends of Punjabi background but she loves Punjabi folk dance- *bhangra*. As Handa (2002) writes, *Ruma* and other young girls in the diaspora negotiate their experiences across various domains of the host society's culture.

Like *khichri*, therefore, the subjectivity of youth in the diaspora is intermeshed in different nodes of cultural practices and social influences. Different socio-cultural practices of different ethnic communities in Montreal can be seen as the different ingredients of the *khichri*. This *khichri* formulation to locate the dynamic and complex subjectivity of youth in the diaspora can also be compared to Bourdieu's (1977) formulation of habitus. My intent in trying to compare the mundane *khichri* metaphor to seminal habitus is to understand the position of individual ingredients in the *khichri* and visualize how each retains its flavor even as they are changed in the final formulation. Habitus, as the structural component of any culture, locates the position of the subject

within the culture. Similarly, *khichri* or the "culture of practice" allocates the individual with different choices. Habitus is criticized for considering constrain to an agent in the social structure but it permits me to connect the process through which subjectivities of youth are formed in the social context and the power dynamics of the society in which they live.

In Bourdieu's formulation, it is practice that connects habitus to the social field, or the social field to the habitus. Similarly, it is the process of negotiation, with different cultural contexts and power nodes, which allows youth to understand their subjectivity. At this stage, I would like to reiterate, using Foucault (1988) and as discussed earlier, the different social-technological nodes which influence the "technology of self." *Ruma*'s father wants her to be career oriented unlike traditional Indian women. This requires that she take her formal schooling seriously and follow the career path with her peers. She cannot confine herself with her peers from the Indian community but, as her mother wishes, *Ruma* engages in cultural practices of the Indian community. *Ruma* confirmed her mother's point that she has learnt Indian dance, attends Indian community gatherings with her mother, and respects the community elders. *Ruma*'s willingness to act according to her perception is limited because she has to be an Indian girl as her mother wishes for her to be. At the same time, *Ruma* must pursue her career as her father wants her to do. *Ruma* argued that, initially, she felt pressured but soon all of this became part of who she is.

In trying to understand Indian youth like *Ruma* in Montreal, I am also drawn to Foucault's (1994) thesis of how "domains of knowledge are formed on the basis of social

practices." This will allow me to understand the way *Ruma* perceives her subjectivity as well as how "others" identify her. As Foucault has shown, "the subject of knowledge itself has a history" and specificities of truth or knowledge are formed in the social practices of control and supervision. *Ruma* lives her life within the gambit of control and supervision of her parents and the moors of the Indian culture. *Ruma* did not go to her prom after graduation. When I inquired if her parents did not permit her to attend the prom, she specified that she did not ask her parents in the first place. In fact, she mentioned that it was her choice and she did not mention it to her parents. When I substantiated my inquiry, *Ruma* was quick to point out that she had learnt from her peers in the Indian community that many Indian parents detested Indian youth attending proms. *Ruma*'s friends from other ethnicities did not find it strange when she did not attend the prom. I nodded my head in agreement when *Ruma* clarified that her friends understood that her parents were from India.

The perception of Indian diasporic youth based on their social practices is not fixed but fluid as control and supervision vary among families and along intra-community lines. As the present is fleeting, so are the social practices which shape who we are. *Mita*, another participant in my research, found my query about whether she has attended any prom or not- "weird." She reiterated that social practices of first generations from India in Montreal were different from subsequent generations. She asked me to visit her profile on "Facebook" (a popular youth social networking website) and see her prom photographs. She has uploaded her pictures for her friends in different cities to see and write their feedback. Soon I, a first generation in the diaspora, joined Facebook and became a part of different youth networks.

Learning and sense of self (identity) works in a continuum. What we learn provides us with added tools with which to perceive ourselves as seen by others. I see these new tools as a continuum in our life experiences- in my life as well as in the lives of my research participants. Keeping the learning experience and its effect on identity negotiation, in the next section I try to comprehend the tapestry of my field study in relation to theoretical insights of my discourse community.

Experiential Continuum

Dewey (1963: 41) writes "….experience is truly experience only when objective conditions are subordinated to what goes on within the individuals having the experience." I read and re-read the above quotation again and again to make sense of what Dewey must have meant. Dewey's words echoed to me when I was trying to understand my detailed conversation with the *Singh*'s. Mr. *Singh* came to Montreal from a small town in North India. Initially, he struggled to make ends meet and most of his social contacts in Montreal were within the Indian community. After his children started attending school, their social canvas expanded and they made friends with families from other cultural communities in Montreal. Earlier, Mr. *Singh* had done a basic course in French, and now he gets to practice French with his children. Mr. *Singh* elicited that this was necessary so that the changes he envisaged for himself and his family would help the children integrate in Quebec. Mr. *Singh*'s longing for what was Indian in him as well as his enthusiasm for Indian friends were given a back seat to his urge to acclimatize himself and his family for better life in Canada.

In the words of Kincheloe (2002:54), Mr. *Singh* was increasing his family's "cultural capital as the knowledge used for social mobility" in the adopted society. If I looked through a different lens at what Mr. *Singh* and his family were going through, I would be tempted to argue that Mr. *Singh* has consented to the Canadian culture for better life opportunities for the next generation. Mr. *Singh*'s urge for integration in Canadian society is his appropriation of the culture different from his own community. Hegemony works no better than winning the consent of individuals, families, and communities. Mr. *Singh*'s example is also one of the simple processes which Sociologists label "socialization." In the interaction of the subject with the society, the subject learns and unlearns the culture of the social milieu and how to live in it. Mr. *Singh*'s attempt, therefore, can also be seen as the socialization process of an immigrant family. I am convinced of calling this "re-socialization," because it involves discarding former behavior patterns and accepting new ones as part of a transition. The transition, in this case, is the integration in the Canadian society of a migrant family. Re-socialization can be a profound experience whereby individuals and families experience a break with their past.

Nonetheless, before moving the analysis of my ethnography study, improvised along the different loops of the bricolage, I must revisit Dewey's quotation, with which I began this section, or comprehend that an experience cannot always be "true experience" (refer to the quotation). The example of Mr. *Singh* suggests that his objective conditions have provided the stimulus for the kind of experience he and his family went through. The current configuration of the contemporary world, which is represented in the transnational milieu of those like the *Singh* family in Montreal, has added another

dimension to their experience. Mr. Singh's son *Jee*t pointed out that in their telephonic interaction with their kin in India or during a trip to India, they felt that they were the 'other'. Other members of the family, including their daughter *Neha* and Mrs. *Singh,* agreed with him. Their consciousness of "not belonging" was further aggravated by constant reference by their relatives in India that Mr. *Singh*'s children will lose Indian values.

Indian youth in the diaspora, like *Jeet* and *Neha,* have been left confused about what Indian culture is, and, at the same time, their parents seem more anxious to inculcate Indian values in their children. What concerns me further is whether youth in India or Indian youth in the diaspora are more acclimatized in Indian culture. I grew up in India and then spent a few years in Montreal but I had spent time with youth in India before coming to Montreal. In my attempt for "improvised ethnography" (Kincheloe, 2002), I went to New Delhi for three weeks as I wanted to compare the youth in India and in the diaspora from the standpoint of their adherence to Indian culture. I will address the same in the next section but, before I do so, I must point out that "what is Indian culture" can be highly debatable. My analysis is solely based on using certain culture signifiers which will highlight adherence to few Indian values.

My vigilance can also be understood through Chow (1993), who gesticulates that the experiences of people in the diaspora should not be understood in the either/or continuum. Similarly one of my respondents (anonymous) parlayed-

> *Our culture serves as a life jacket and keeps us afloat, and reminds us of who we are? But the culture I am talking about should not be confused with the traditional South Asian culture. We have grown*

> *up to learn and unlearn over time. Even things have changed a lot back home. We should not be considered either/or, but as negotiating our identities over various domains (11/8/2004).*

Among the issues which this excerpt raises, one is the importance of being located in one's culture. It also points to the fact that the respondent is eager to negotiate the locations of identification with a changing conception of what should be understood as "Indian." Popularized by media and supported by scratchy research, there is a conception that the identity of those in the diaspora is "fractured" (Varma and Seshan, 2003). These kinds of assumptions come from looking at diaspora from the nation-state plinth, where any identity discourse is seen as not worthy of association and therefore fractured.

While inquiring about and writing on diaspora, I recognize again, with Chow (1993), that the homeland culture and values are neither pure and pristine nor uniform throughout the land but have several variants. It is remarkably obvious that for 'multiple migrants' the socio-cultural practices of the homeland may be symbolic. Among the Indian diaspora in Montreal, there are several kinds of multiple migrants from India. As, for example, there are those who migrated from different parts of India to countries like Fiji and United Kingdom and later they came to Canada. Then, there are others who migrated to different cities within India and from there they have come to Montreal. There are, for example, those like the *Pravasi* (non-resident) Bengalis, originally with roots in Bengal (a province in eastern part of India) but who first migrated to places like Delhi and Mumbai and are now in Montreal.

Indian Youth in India and in the Diaspora

As a student of cultural pedagogy, I want to begin this section by briefly detailing the "culture of power" as well as the "power of culture." This is important when comparing subjectivities of cultural communities in the place of origin and the diasporic location. My premise is that the culture of power has significantly maneuvered the culture of homeland (for example, India) while it is the power of culture which is keeping the youth in diaspora rooted in the practices of their place of origin. Both, the culture of power as well as the power of culture, socialize individuals in ways which do not allow them to realize their subjectivities. It is here that Freire's (2005) "new awareness of the self" through transformative dialogue with the social reality becomes important. Freire's seminal premise is used more concurrently in the academic discourse of critical pedagogy, but the same is equally important to understand issues in identity negotiation through educative experiences. Freire provides a new language to critically understand the forces and contradictions that have become a part of the everyday life of people around the world. His analysis, which is based on lived experiences, is useful to unmask the culture of silence. It provides critical tools to reflect on, and understand, how our being is maneuvered to deprive us of our subjectivities.

"I am cool you know…I don't want to be stuck with… you know," replied *Chander*, a management graduate in Delhi, when I asked him how he saw himself. I nodded and requested that he explain what he meant by "being cool." *Chander* explained "being cool means being in trend…you know" (27/11/2004). What is being in trend? Who sets the trend? What kind of trend is being set in countries like India? My answer

comes through the reading of cultural signifiers like the burger and the beans by Kincheloe (2002). To sell products like burger, according to Kincheloe, capitalists act as cultural brokers by creating repertoires of identification for consumption of not only its products but also the philosophy of market. This production of identity as a consumer is consented to by youth in places like India because they want to get in 'trend' with the cultural practices that the capitalists set.

Therefore, the culture of power unleashed by transnational companies in countries under the neo-liberal policies consumes local folkways and mores by winning consent to its philosophy. The government machinery acts as a puppet under the dictates of transnational companies. In developing countries, these companies use local cultural context and sell their products and their philosophies under the veil of developmental agendas. The English education and lack of proper employment opportunities creates a pool of young laborers for these transnational companies in India. The boom in back office jobs in India is simply a case in point. The urge to be "cool" (and in "trend") de-contextualizes the subjectivities of youth as their identification repertoire is set by schema which uses their cultural context for its benefit.

Birendra, another participant in New Delhi, stated, "Life here has been transplanted from the first world" (27/11/2004). *Birendra* and I discussed the fact that Indian youth are leading a lifestyle clad in designer or branded clothes and accessories, and spending time and money in discos and fancy restaurants. Therefore, *Birendra* argued, there has been a "Westernization" or "Americanisation" of these youth as seen in their western consumption pattern. We agreed that youth in urban India are also great

consumers of U.S.-dominated popular culture industries- TV soaps, movies, and popular music. It is important to distinguish between conspicuous consumption and responsible consumption. While the former is primarily around displaying wealth and thereby social status, the latter is with a sense of conscientiousness. Moreover, I am not condemning cultural borrowing but, as Indian Sociologist Dipankar Gupta (2000) posits, these trends in India can better be conceptualized as "westoxication" rather than "westernization." The addiction comes with the benefaction of transnational companies and false consciousness of "becoming modern" or "in trend." True modernity, as Gupta argues, necessitates universal norms, individual rights, and accountability. Consumption patterns under westoxication situate youth under decontextualised identity.

Pilkington and Johnson (2003) argue that young people forge identities, not with reference to real communities, as rooted in class, locality, ethnicity, race, but instead according to taste communities or "lifestyle enclaves" in which consumption is practiced without any responsibility. In this situation, then, "lifestyle" can be understood as youth cultural practices as a vocabulary of self-expression. However, I want to emphasize that lifestyles do not constitute or substitute identity, but represent them. Indian diasporic youth in Montreal are expected by their parents and members of their ethnic community to represent lifestyle in consonance with Indian cultural practices. When gender variable is inserted in this analysis, it becomes apparent that, rather than boys, mainly girls are expected to be bearer of "homeland" values. Deepa Mehta's film *Bollywood-Hollywood* (Hamilton & Mehta, 2002), which is located at the intersection of two different sets of cultures and values, epitomizes the struggle between immigrant parents from India and their second-generation daughter in Canada. The father (Kulbushan Kharbanda) in the

film is disturbed by his daughter's (Lisa Ray) behavior and says, "you will be lost in lake Ontario, bobbling without the lifejacket of tradition."

I proceed with Mr. *Rajesh Patel,* who did not consider it important to get strict with his two elder sons when it came to adherence to Indian culture. In fact, as Mrs. *Patel* explained, they believed that "the boys will be better off learning the ways of life in Canada because they will grow up and settle here" (18/08/2004). This very perception of the couple changed when they had their third child who was a daughter. "After we had *Gargi*, our daughter, we started to socialize more with the other Gujarti families. We want *Gargi* to grow like an Indian girl and then settle down with a Gujarti boy," exclaimed Mrs. *Patel* in the follow up to our discussion. Emphasis on tradition for the socialization of their daughter in Canada changed the *Patel*s. Reinforcing traditions, I have noticed, among youth in diaspora is usually done through the ethnic community.

The above example makes me contemplate my discussion with *Ruma* once again, especially because *Gargi* mainly consented to what her parents told me about her, and I did not have her consent to talk to me separately. As discussed earlier in this chapter, *Ruma* was aware of the expectations of her parents. She adjusted herself so that she would not offend her parents by her lifestyle choices or behavior practices although she feels the pressure from the "normal" cultural practices of Canadian society. Her parents, on the other hand, are not adversaries but their belief is based on what they think will be good for their children. It is the power of culture mediated through different "cultural brokers" like the family, community, and school which socializes youth like *Ruma* or *Gargi* in the diaspora. Without going into the nuances of what the term cultural broker

entails, I perceive it as subjectivities which help translate as well as mediate cultural practices between two or more cultural entities.

The parents, siblings, and cousins in the family act as the first level of cultural brokers for youth in the diaspora. The second level is the diasporic community in which the youth are expected by their parents specifically to be involved because most parents feel that being rooted in ethnic culture will support academic achievement, as Mr. *Gulati* noted. In our recorded conversation he pointed out, "First of all, youth must know where they belong. Only then, they will be able to access where they want to go…" (20/08/2004). His daughter took dance lessons in *Bharat Natya* at *Kala Bharati*, a federally charted non-profit organization recognized for its activities in arts and culture in Montreal. Organizations such as *Kala Bharati* are another (read, third) level of cultural brokers. Other levels of cultural brokers include elders in the community, role models in the community, as well as educational institutions.

Needless to say, teachers and other students in school act as cultural brokers of not only the cultural practices but also the process through which knowledge of these practices are constructed by youth. Although being moored in the culture of the community is important to Indian origin parents, their major concern is competence through the acquirement of language tools and professional degrees. This comes with the confidence of parents that competence will allow youth access to opportunities for better careers and thereby better life. Mr. *Gulati* expressed,

> *We have always encouraged our children to place high value on education. I have reminded them of difficulties I faced when I first came here. They should use all the opportunities and make it for themselves. But, as I told you, we have been strict that they should not forget our Indian values*.

It is clear, therefore, that anchorage in ethnic culture is viewed as important for educational achievement. Mr. *Gulati'*s children attended reputed educational institutions in Montreal and are settled in different parts of North America. In the diaspora, the cultural brokers like the family and the community encourage diasporic youth to be moored in the culture of the community. At the same time, culture of power is brokered through governmental agencies and free market economy in India. Signposting with Foucault (1988), I believe that the "technologies of production" of transnational companies and use of "technologies of sign system" in the propagation of their market philosophy by using "technologies of power" shape the identity repertoire of youth in India, that is, the technology of self. In the diaspora, on the other hand, the same processes are guided by preservation of homeland culture with the belief that it helps in the educational achievement of youth.

The power of culture does not always make bridges but can create barriers for youth, especially when variables like gender and class are added to the analysis. It is with this assertion, and by signpost that social realities are very complex and therefore one cannot make one-dimensional statements, that I believe the next section is important for any furtherance of the episteme of knowledge, of community, of practice and culture in the diaspora.

Barriers and Bridges

Diasporic culture and the different threads along which it is sustained (for example, transnational networks) can make bridges or become barriers depending on the way they are used by the parents for the youth in the diaspora. Needless to say, it is important to keep in mind the social location of the parents' vis-à-vis their community of

practice in Montreal (host) and in India (home), as well as their social position in terms of access to resources. While checking for performance based arts by youth in the diaspora, I came across a CD (Compact Disc) by *Sunil* who is an emerging singer in one of the Indian languages. *Sunil* was born and brought up in Montreal but he has taken several trips to India with his parents during the summer to learn singing from a reputed music teacher. His parents facilitated his "learning" in India during his summer vacation in Canada by arranging for his travel and bearing all other costs incurred. While earlier his parents accompanied him to India, *Sunil* has been traveling alone recently. His families from both his mother's and father's sides take care of him when he is in India. With the help of his kin, *Sunil* has joined a network of singers from India. Recently, he helped organize a trip for some of the singers from India to different cities in North America.

It becomes apparent that the social capital of *Sunil*'s parents (and his parents' parents) has been a conduit in increasing his human capital as well as his cultural capital in the direction in which he is pursuing his career. This has occurred within the broader network and ties that transnational connections facilitate in the current age of globalisation. While social capital has been the linchpin that set in motion the other capitals by using the "social chits" of exchange, this capital should be imagined as the diasporic capital. Similarly, it is the diaspora context that has permitted the usage of weak ties (see Granovetter, 1973) from its presence at great geographical level into a resource of strength. Meanwhile, the parents' diasporic consciousness has been at the base in turning the Indian culture's function as both expressive and instrumental (refer to Chapter Two) - instrumental for *Sunil*'s career while expressive for his parents. These vigorous transnational social relations have allowed *Sunil* to follow his passion, while his parents

have renewed their contact with their cultural roots. At the same time, *Sunil*'s grandparents in India are glad that they could help their grandson. *Sunil*'s network of singers from India has found an opportunity to further their careers in North America. It is the power of culture, albeit in diasporic context, that help make bridges between different social entities and their aspirations.

Sunil is also at an interesting social node. As mentioned, he is facilitating his fellow colleagues by arranging for their "performance" in different cities in North America. The brokerage of Indian culture by *Sunil* adds to the diasporic capital. It must be noted that Indian culture in North America is the diasporic Indian culture and, in this case, *Sunil* is bringing a fresh set of cultural performances through his network of colleagues in North America. Nevertheless, it is the elite in the diaspora or the "mobilized diaspora" as Armstrong (1976) has noted, which acts as the cultural broker. This relatively advantaged group (refer to Chapter Three) translates homeland culture based on their specific needs. The disadvantaged, on the other hand, are more concerned about their immediate needs.

Bhanu is 21 years of age. He has not been to India even once. He mentioned that if he goes to India in the future, it will be as a tourist to see *Taj Mahal* and other such places of tourist interest. When *Bhanu* was young, his parents were pre-occupied with making ends meet. His father, who did not have a permanent job, was busy in search for better career opportunities and hence the situation kept *Bhanu* engaged in the socio-economic life of Montreal. *Bhanu*'s mother, on the other hand, has been a home-maker. Their kin had been critical of his father's decision to migrate to Canada and, therefore, they were not in good relations with each other. *Bhanu*'s father believes that his decision

to migrate to Canada was mainly to find better life opportunities for his family. "While we were struggling in Montreal, our extended family in India was cynical and at times abusive," mentioned *Bhanu*'s father (07/03/2005). I have brought *Bhanu*'s example here to suggest that transnational connections of the people in diaspora can create barriers as well. In contrast to *Sunil*, the diasporic capital for *Bhanu* seems negative. Nevertheless, this comparison takes into consideration only the transnational networks and connections.

The community of practice for the Indian diasporic community not only includes their transnational connections, but they also consists of their ethnic group (as for example, Indian), their sub-ethnic group (for example, Gujarati), and other minority groups (such as Taiwanese), as well as the local population. As mentioned earlier, the circumstances in Montreal become interesting with the French-English dynamics. *Bhanu*'s family does not have close ties with other Indians in Montreal. However, they are friends with several Caribbean, Italian, Filipino, and French Canadians in Montreal. *Bhanu*'s social capital, therefore, operates differently than that of *Sunil*.

It is my contention that diasporic capital, which is the resource of people in the diaspora, is affected by social, cultural, human, and economic capital. However, the defining parameters of diaspora such as social form, consciousness, and cultural practices may operate differently and thereby these diasporic characteristics affect these social, human, and cultural capitals differently. For example, *Sunil* has positively benefited from his parents' social capital that was actualized in the transnational social space using the diasporic consciousness that is the longing for the traditional Indian form of singing. This process has also facilitated realization of diasporic characteristic as a social form because the social relationships through which *Sunil* has been promoted are produced due to his

parents' migration from India to Canada. I also understand that Indian culture is being reproduced through *Sunil* in Montreal. His colleagues, performing in different cities of North America, are spreading the Indian culture in a "foreign" milieu.

The diasporic capital, therefore, will be different depending on the way the characteristics of being diaspora function. These nodes (of social, cultural, human, economic capital) operate in social spaces which are not only defined by transnational connections but also through various other networks and connections at the place of residence of those in the diaspora. *Sunil* has gained from the transnational connection compared to *Bhanu*. The latter, on the other hand, has several friends in Montreal who are from different ethnic backgrounds. *Bhanu* boasts of numerous friends whom he has helped (passed "social chit/social obligation") and who are always "there" for him (return the social chit/social obligation) in Montreal. He asked me to look him up on Facebook. The use of the Internet brings another interesting dimension to the analyses of barrier and bridges due to the network and ties of diasporic communities. Unlike *Bhanu*, *Sunil* uses Orkut (another social networking web-interface) where his contacts seem to be mostly friends of either Indian origin in Montreal or those in India. Other than the Internet, the social climate at the global, glocal, and local level varies (refer to Chapter Three) and will accordingly affect the usage of the diasporic capital.

The role of the community on the youth depends on the manner in which the diasporic capital is used by the parents. The diasporic capital can either help make bridges or barriers. As a concept, diasporic capital represents the complexity in which the life of Indian diasporic youth in Montreal is enmeshed. It also conveys the different nodes and social relationships that affect the lives Indian diasporic youth in Montreal. As

mentioned in Chapter Two, diaspora as a condition of marginality and having suffered multiple dislocations adds to the motivation of those in the diaspora to use the different nooks and crannies of the diasporic capital.

The analysis, using the example of *Sunil* and *Bhanu*, might give an impression that diasporic capital is different for the two Indian diasporic youth in Montreal because their social networks are differently located either among youth of Indian origin or with other ethnic communities in Montreal. I would argue that the social reality is more complex than a binary or linear comparison. I further describe my understanding of barriers and bridges using diasporic capital in the next section. Based on my research, I must indicate my assertion that diasporic capital is pivotal to the understanding of the role of the community on the identity negotiation and educational experience of Indian diasporic youth in Montreal or elsewhere. When I delve into how culture is operationalized by the community in the life of Indian diasporic youth, it becomes evident to me that the influence of such efforts will depend on the location of the youth (and their family) in the community which in turn determines their diasporic capital. Although this capital might seem similar to cultural capital, rather it is different than cultural capital in that it transforms cultural capital either in the positive direction or in the negative. Nevertheless, before discussing the analysis based on diasporic capital of the role diasporic community plays on the youth, it is befitting that I describe the Indian diasporic community in Montreal in some detail and discuss the culture of the community as well.

Community, Culture, and Capital

Although people from India in Montreal have a common heritage, they are different in terms of their regional, religious, class, and linguistic backgrounds. These differences further increase when social context of migration, time/period of migration, and the social climate of the "host" locale are added to the equation. Those who migrated during the 1970s to Montreal from the Indian sub-continent (India-Pakistan-Bangladesh-Sri Lanka) can be understood in terms of prominent linguistic communities. The major linguistic groups were Punjabi, Urdu/Hindi, Bengali, and Tamil. It is interesting to note that Bengalis from either India (West Bengal) or Bangladesh would have common grounds of communication with relatively close cuisine, language, and other cultural practices. Similarly, Punjabis from either India or Pakistan would have relatively more cultural commonality compared to Tamils or the Bengalis. The same holds true for the Tamils from either India (Tamil Nadu) or Sri Lanka. The question of border did not matter for the earlier immigrants- which goes on to confirm the importance of culture compared to international borders in the life experience of those in the diaspora.

"There were very few people from South Asia and most of us kept in touch after we got to know each other. When we met people who spoke our language we were more likely to keep in touch. We arranged get-together's like parties..," commented an anonymous youth's grandfather. The communities formed on the basis of "homeland" culture served the need for extended family from which their life was disrupted due to international migration. The next wave of immigration from India to Montreal included several professionals who etched their own communities based on their professional commitments or aspirations. Nonetheless, these professionals went together with their

sub-ethnic linguistic communities during cultural events, including religious festivals, in Montreal. As I see it, the professional commitment and cultural nostalgia of these professional elite necessitated that they have two or more cultural spaces. On occasions, I came across overlap- the linguistic and the professional community matched and therefore it did not necessitate two separate performative cultural spaces. An example in case would be the engineering and medical students from the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

There has been surge in migration since the 1990s from India to Montreal with an increasing number of professionals and the sponsored (parents or relatives) immigrants of those who immigrated earlier. Montreal, the site of my field study, also serves as an important global transit for international migration. Even when the parents chose Montreal as their home, their children have moved elsewhere for better life opportunities. The role of Montreal as the conduit for international migration has increased after 9/11, especially for Muslim migrants from India, because "screening" is far less in Canada compared to the U.S. All the participants of this research who explored this route of immigration asked me to maintain their anonymity from not just this issue but all other issues on which they commented. Suffice it to say that the "culture of fear" unleashed by the raging empire (read, the U.S.) does not remain confined to the part of the consciousness that deals with it but also permeates other domains of life. This example of what power does to consciousness is coupled for those in diaspora because they experience varying degree of loss.

Meanwhile, as argued in Chapter Two, dislocation and powerlessness are synonymous for people in diaspora. Diasporic try to overcome their unequal social

relations by drawing from their ethnic community ties and networks. In a way, the diasporic consciousness and imagination serve as the basis for communitarian practices. The homeland culture and values help this process of community building and subsistence. As mentioned in the framework of this dissertation, Indian cinema, cuisine, and cricket are the macro cultural signifiers while Indian values, such as respect for elders and so on, are the micro signifiers. The cultural conditioning and enforcing is mainly out of fear of the community. Another anonymous (participant) youth's father in Montreal expressed satisfaction with the fact that his daughter has friends from different ethnic communities. At the same time, her father insisted that nevertheless she would marry someone from not only the Indian community but the sub-ethnic group to which they belong. Her father further commented that if they do not find a suitable match for her in Montreal, they will search for a potential match elsewhere, including India. The example, to me, suggests that although the social contact of the Indian youth in this case is varied, but because her mate selection is limited to the sub-ethnic group her family resource is limited. When I tried to find the reason for the parents' decision, I was told that people in their community do not approve of inter-community marriages. Hence, it follows that the fear of social sanction and the "performance of Indianness" (Isler, 2005) are the ropes through which the community streamlines its youth in the socialization code which it considers "meaningful."

The performance of Indianness, to use Isler's term, is encouraged at community gatherings as well as at "sites" where Indian culture is showcased, like "India day" (events on significant dates of Indian history such as Mahatma Gandhi's birthday on October 2) or other "*desi*" events. These performative culture forms are usually a hybrid

with cultural elements from various catalogues like rap and *bhangra*. However, there is a visible correspondence between ethnicity and class. As outlined in Chapter Four, it is my understanding that the Indian cultural elements promoted are skewed and do not represent most Indian cultural practices. Further, the cultural elements showcased are those in which the professional elite create status epithets. Nonetheless, the pivotal question is how the Indian diasporic youth react to this status cultural appellation? Most youth follow the epithets, especially when they are young. Some began to like them though many try to avoid them. Those who avoid these cultural performances "give an excuse that they are busy," as *Manish* lamented. *Uma* always told her parents that she had work from school. She did not feel that she belonged in several Indian diasporic community gatherings. *Uma*'s parents are from the South Indian state of Karnataka. She elaborated that "what is represented as Indian culture is either Punjabi or Gujarati in the Bollywood style."

Before exploring the reason in which certain cultural variants become more representative, I need to outline the choice of Montreal as discussed by the research participants. *Bhanu*'s father expressed that "Montreal offers relatively less expensive housing, better health care facilities and therefore people like me chose to stay here." Needless to say, the social climate of Montreal creates conditions for people from India to settle down here. In my attempt for double hermeneutics, I tried to find the answer from the participants themselves. *Bhanu*'s father, in this case, articulated that "probably the two referenda in Quebec were the reason. I don't know. I am happy with the social policy here. My children had to learn French but if you will see even English is not our mother tongue." Although the above participant considered himself naïve in trying to

understand the reason for the social climate of Montreal, but available statistics on the subject suggest that his modest answers were far from wrong. It is the insight of people of their reality and their social context that allows me to corroborate my theoretical understanding, as discussed in the previous chapters, to describe my understanding. I must also reiterate that all names have been changed to keep the participants from any uncomfortable situations. I do not mention any names when the participant has specifically asked me to maintain their anonymity.

I have been interested in understanding how the English- French duality has played its part among the Indian diasporic in Montreal. It seems, as *Bhanu*'s father mentioned, that both English and French are "foreign" for people from India in Montreal and therefore immersing in either of the two or in both is not such an important issue for several people in the Indian diasporic community in Montreal. An exception to the case arises with the professionals who have availed the English medium education in India and found it a distraction to learn another language. This group also considers that being educated in French would limit the career opportunities of their children. The youth, on the other hand, find it a challenge to embrace French even when they understand that they might have better career opportunities elsewhere. *Ruma* studied in English medium schools. She recognized that her parents were worried after "Bill 101[30]" (also called the Charter of the French language) that she might have to attend French medium school. *Ruma* pondered that she was too young to understand her parents' dilemma then. Later,

[30] In Bill 101, on the education front, English was to be restricted mostly to those already in the system, their siblings, those temporarily posted in Quebec, or children whose parents had received an English elementary education in the province. Later that regulation was relaxed to allow children of people educated in English in Canada access to English schools.

she learnt French because she felt that it was important for her to know French as a Quebecer.

Maclure's (2003) critical reflection on Quebec identity shows that neither Quebec sovereignty nor Canadian federalism is appropriate to understand the identity negotiation processes of Quebecers. On the other hand, as articulated by the participants of this research, cultural diversity and civic participation express the aspirations of the Quebecers like *Ruma*. It is my contention that this should not be classified as the third alternative as enunciated by propagators of "third space" (Bhava, 2004) but as a matrix of aspirations and negotiations of those who have chosen Quebec as their "home." The bracketing of any ethnicity other than French and English as Allophone is an adherence to the "third space" classification. Moreover, Montreal with its multicultural social milieu reflects more than either (Francophone) or (Anglophone or Allophone) social aspirations. Ethnic and sub-ethnic aspirations represent the different fragments of the body social in multicultural milieu like Montreal. A Trinidadian with parents originally from India living with an Italian partner whose neighbors are French-speaking Canadian is an example of how the myriad ethnic backgrounds are enmeshed.

Another observation, of which I am constantly reminded (and which makes my analysis further complex), is that the cultural elements - accent or attire; food or fashion; which become representative of an ethnic group (for example, Indian diaspora in Montreal) are ones which are showcased by the "elite" in the diaspora according to their social position and aspiration.[31] I am drawn to Thompson (1990) to further link the above point. Thompson posits that social position and entitlements associated with

[31] It occurs to me that I have been using the word "aspiration" more often. As I try to look for a better alternative word, I tend to miss the desire of people in the diaspora to define themselves in their own way.

location allow individuals with varying degrees of power to realize their interests. I want to stress that the interests of those in power may be myopic in vision, scope, or blurred due to their ignorance. It is the narratives of the elite and the ideology created using images or texts that become representative of the culture of the community.

In retrospect, the Indian community is diverse and the culture of the Indian diasporic community may not be representative of the aspirations of all sections of the community. The diasporic capital, therefore, should be understood as different for different subjectivities depending on their provincial, linguistic, and migratory period, or other social constructions such as gender, class, and sexual orientation. Although I have discussed diasporic capital in the previous section with reference to the participants of this study, I want to present a visual representation of the same adding a few more characteristics which I think are important. The understanding of diasporic capital is important because it is the diasporic capital which acts as the channel through which the (Indian) diasporic community expresses itself- approval, sanction, authority, endorsement, or rejection. The figure below is more of a sketch in process.

The intent is not on any final derivative but a nuanced understanding of how life experiences of (Indian) diasporic youth vary with reference to their social location and their agency.

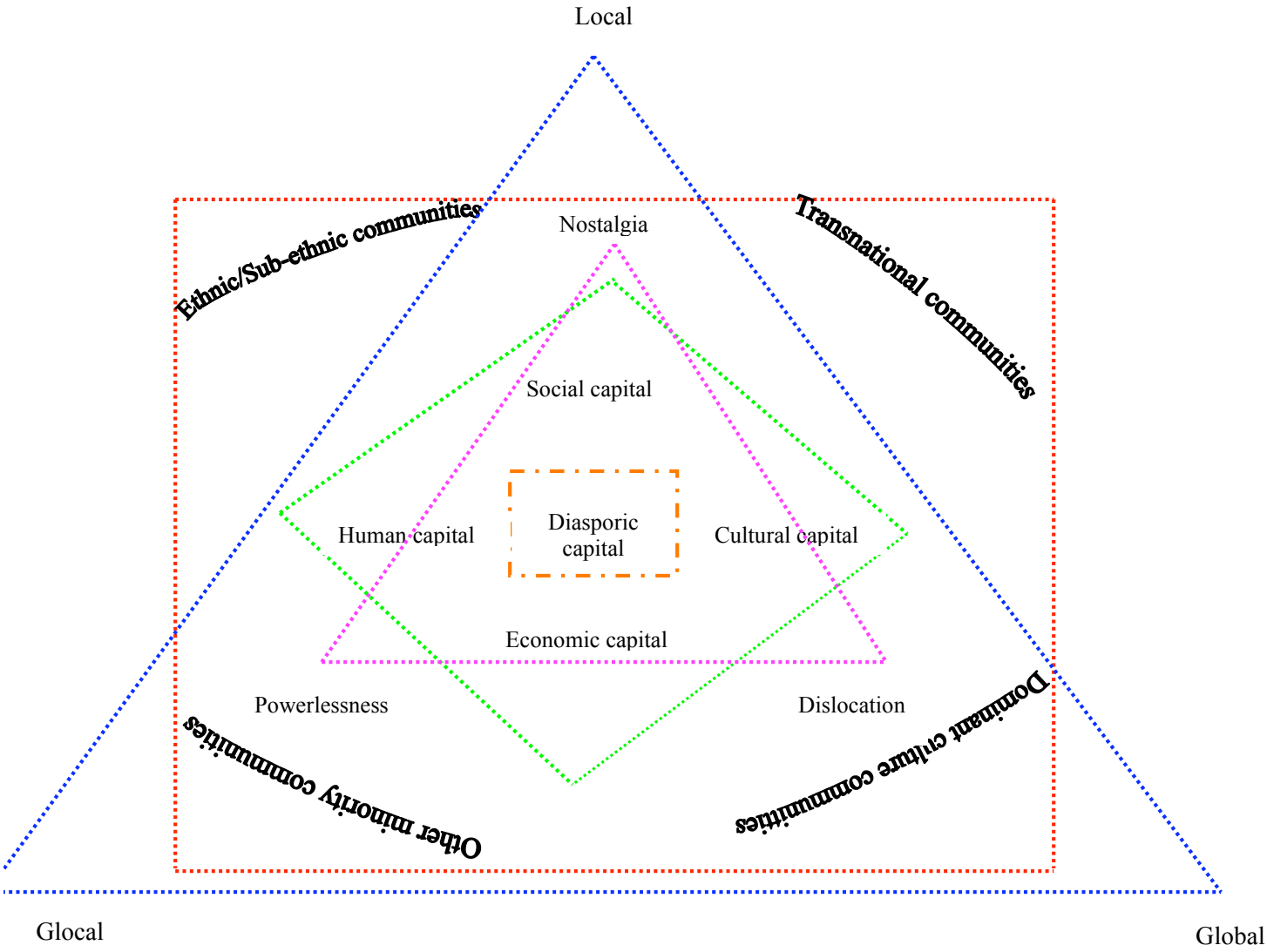

Figure 4. Diasporic Capital: An Evolving Concept

Diasporic capital should also be seen as the conduit through which social structure and agency operate. While the structure formed as a result of the different social relations, as well as various nooks and crannies, can be constraining, the same social situation provides agency the social resource by which to resist the limits defined by the social structure and the inherent oppression.

Indian Diasporic Youth and Diasporic capital

On September 13, 2006 (Thursday), violence erupted at Dawson College, an English CEGEP, just west of downtown Montreal. The perpetrator was Kimveer Gill- a second-generation youth whose parents migrated to Montreal from India. Kimveer began shooting outside the Maisonneuve Boulevard entrance to the school, and moved towards the atrium by the school cafeteria on the main floor. One victim died instantly while nineteen others were injured, eight of whom were in critical condition with six requiring surgery. After being shot in the arm by the police, Kimveer later committed suicide by shooting himself in the head. A seemingly normal day resulted in a soul-searching pathological situation. Kimveer had graduated from Rosemere High School. Kimveer wrote on his profile at the Vampirefreaks.com, "….Society disgusts me. It's everyone's fault for being so apathetic ….." Later, Montreal police stated: "We know he was angry against the world, so it was a kind of vengeance…There is no explanation why Dawson. It could be Dawson. It could be some another place." More explanations started pouring in as I kept myself abreast of the incident. Jan Wong, in her article that appeared in *The Globe and Mail,* linked the shooting incident to the alleged alienation brought by the linguistic struggle in Quebec. Wong's point of view faced condemnation from several quarters. I consider Wong's explanation myopic because Kimveer himself had written in his internet blog that Quebec was a "good place to live in."

The photograph below presents a visual representation of the incident. I followed the shooting and the various explanations offered. I also discussed the same with my colleagues and academic advisor at length.

Figure 5. Dawson College (Montreal) Shooting[32]

Kimveer, according to his own explanation, felt alienated and thereby disgusted. He found people indifferent to the course of contemporary society. Giroux (2003) brings to focus the situation of these "abandoned generations" within the circle of the neo-liberal state, aggressive capitalism, and consumer citizenship. The confusion and alienation experienced by today's youth leaves community as a cover and as an agent to protect and promote marginalized youth. The Indian diasporic community, with motivation and pedagogy around "culture of the community" (Sen, 2006), aspires to protect its youth from the alienation and the ensuing confusion. However, as the participants of this study revealed, the Indian diasporic community becomes oppressive when their agenda of disciplining with cultural reproduction is not rationalized according to the need in changing time and milieu. Nevertheless, as Bauman (2002) argues, the community gives

[32] Photograph: Peter McCabe/Canadian Press: Source: http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2006/09/13/shots-dawson.html

a good feeling and a sense of security, *especially at a time when the contemporary post-modern society is ridden with hyper- reality and increasing alienation* (emphasis added)

The role of the Indian diasporic community can also be understood through Wexler (2000:94) who argues for the revitalization process by reawakening imagination, and the reintegration of self, community, and cosmos. As Wexler shows, the above process functions as a "decentered social curriculum of education for being." The parental involvement in the life experience of Indian diasporic youth in Montreal is an emotional involvement that keeps the culture of the diasporic community as the yardstick. During my field study, I got involved with a youth group that started with the support of the elders of their community but functions as a self-help group within the network of the sub-ethnic Indian diasporic community. The youngest members of the group are fifteen years of age, and the senior youth guide the younger ones in their choice of educational institution, career opportunity, as well as leisure activities. Therefore, the youth group serves as site for life experience negotiation. One of the participants of this study, who is also an active member of this youth group, expressed that "although the elders brought us together but first thing we talk about among ourselves is to narrow the gap between the perception of the elders of our community and how we want ourselves to be seen… (12/07/2005)"

This circle of friends from a particular sub-ethnic group acts as a valve and a negotiating space for their desires and dreams. The following photograph was taken during one of their get-togethers at Mont-Royal in the summer of 2005. It shows an informal atmosphere that provides an opportunity to know each other as well as learn from each other.

Figure 6. A Youth Group Informal Meeting

I contend that it is the diasporic capital that synergizes the youth. During cultural events, members of this youth group organized cultural "fairs" to increase awareness among the participants about India's history, polity, religion, economy, and society. Therefore, they not only draw from the diasporic capital but also contribute to it in one way or the other. By increasing awareness about India, they increase the cultural capital of not only the Indian diasporic community but also of other interested people in Montreal. Thereby, they increase the overall diasporic capital. Once again, I contemplate the lack of awareness (or, ignorance) behind most of the prejudices that we face in society. The stigma of being the "other" is more pronounced for the first-generation diasporics compared to the second-generation. The second generation, by virtue of their socialization, adopts cultural traits that help them to walk various social ropes needed to define their subjectivity. The youth can either negotiate their identity based on their social education, as these youth group members do, or withdraw from the milieu, like Kimveer Gill. Even when one withdraws from the larger society there are chances that one will become a "loner[33]" or have one's family and community to provide them the social energy to resist coercion.

[33] Term used by the media for Kimveer Gill.

The role of the diasporic community can also be conceptualized through what Wexler suggests as a "transition from postmodernism into a new resacralism." The role of the community, therefore, in the lived experience of Indian diasporic youth becomes important for more than one reason. At the same time, the process through which the role of the community is realized is manifold. My familiarity with literature on role theory or community studies is not limited to what I have discussed in my analysis. I maintain, as I have written elsewhere (Raj, 2006), "social theories are our explanation to our relations with the world. Theories are our tools that help us understand society, analyze, and interpret. They guide the practical concern of the research as well as our orientation in the research process." I must reiterate that my theoretical understanding around "role" is not assumed to portray the structured vision of the world but to advocate looking at social interaction in the interplay between structure and agency.

Indian diasporic youth also increase the diasporic capital with their involvement in the development of India. It is my argument that the first generation youth are more involved than second or subsequent generation. Nevertheless, the very processes of involvement in India's equitable development resist the different guises of corporate capitalism that are so pervasive. In the next section, I analyze the interplay between Indian diasporic youth, diasporic capital, and India's development.

Diasporic Youth, Diasporic Capital, and India's Development

This section of my analysis also reflects the crescendo of my research and probably the apex of my research concern, which took me into the domain of practice. In my interaction with my research participants, the "changing face of India[34]," (Rajesh,

[34] Read, social change in India.

12/08/2005) came up frequently. The India that the parents of most of the participating youth had left behind, and the India which these youth witnessed either by traveling to India or through their understanding of what they saw in different mass media, presented two different panoramic representations. The "changing India," as one of the youth often stressed, or the India of their dreams, as few others stressed are at two levels. While prosperity is increasing unboundedly at one level, underdevelopment is present at another and when seen together they represent the two faces of the Janus. The India of which the participating youth dreamed, is the India that would have sustainable development, where different castes and communities have equal participation in the everyday life and avail of just and equitable access to the resources and civic life. I was often left in a precarious situation to explain the "state of affairs" (Nina, 12/12/2004) and the possibilities of change in the direction of equitable and just development in India.

My social activism got entangled with the aspirations of my research participants. Before I realized it, I became more active with some of the non-governmental associations, among which the Association for India's Development (AID) was prominent. AID is a volunteer movement committed to promoting sustainable, equitable, and just development. More details about AID can be found at their website: www.aidindia.org. As the webpage mentions, AID is in solidarity with non-violent people's struggles and supports grassroots organizations in India as well as initiates efforts in various interconnected spheres, such as education, livelihood, natural resources, health, women's empowerment and social justice.

Several graduate students at the University of Maryland founded AID in 1991. Now it has more than thirty-six chapters in the U.S., six in India, as well as in different

countries of the world. According to Jayaram's (2004) pattern of understanding the post-colonial emigrants from India, the main category of Indian diasporic population involved with AID are those who migrated as professionals and semi-professionals to industrially advantaged countries like the U.S., Canada, Australia, and England. As the numbers of chapters are increasing, AID has also registered its presence in West Asia. The AID chapter in Muscat (Oman) is the latest entrant to the AID global family. Despite its growing global presence, AID is mainly thriving in the U.S. with concerned professionals from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT). These alumni from IIT and other volunteers have been "working towards a more equitable society, using natural resources in a sustainable manner and envisaging a mode of development that does not exploit the poor and the marginalized.[35]"

AID in Canada did not have much of a presence with chapters only in Calgary, Toronto, and Windsor. The chapter in Calgary had some vibrancy and, as I am revising my dissertation, the one in Windsor has been closed due to lack of volunteering there. I initiated the chapter in Montreal, which finally became fruitful in December of 2006. The inspiration naturally came from the kind of work in which AID volunteers are involved. AID's vision that "problems are interconnected, so must be the solutions" appealed to Indian diasporic youth in Montreal. My research, integrated with the urge of my research participants, has further led me in the direction of activism. Several Indian diasporic youth in Montreal joined AID-Montreal (Association for India's Development, Montreal chapter) and few have become active volunteers. Our combined efforts also appealed to

[35] Kuchimanchi, R. @ ***http://aidindia.org/main/content/view/16/67/*** . (Retrieved August 1, 2007)

different sections of the Indian diasporic community in Montreal. I was invited by the CHTV[36] for an interview on "Indo-Montreal Magazine" and "Bangla TV[37]" to elucidate the vision of AID, and our motivation to start the local chapter in Montreal. Several participants of this study who had become volunteers of AID-Montreal have used their social network to reach out to the local Indian diasporic community as well as to all those who are interested in just and sustainable development all around the world. An Italian-Canadian pursuing her undergraduate degree has subsequently become one of the most active volunteers. She has committed herself as the treasurer of our local AID chapter in Montreal, and in her dedication for "development from below" she is currently volunteering with a rural community in Central India.

While mapping the terrain of this dissertation (Chapter Three), I highlighted that the process of globalisation that is most celebrated by leaders of the world's rich nations, big corporate executives, and the economic bandwagon is actually globalisation from above. This process of socio-economic plundering has created several socio-cultural ills and has provoked a worldwide movement of resistance wherein people have risen to counter the vices of this enlarged system of economic governance. Now, since the global dimension of social relations has linked people across the length and breadth of the planet, people all over the world are coming together to co-operate in standing against the menace. I see AID as creating a space to fight the menace of globalisation. It is within this space that Indian diasporic youth in Montreal have been able to volunteer for

[36] CH Montréal is Montreal's only multicultural television station delivering a sensational variety of diverse, local and internationally produced programming.
9.Available at >
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jeFgGuZ3dYc&eurl=http%3A%2F%2Faidindia%2Eorg%2Fmain%2Fcontent%2Fview%2F444%2F182%2F

sustainable development in India. Most often, educated people moving out from India are seen as creating "brain drain" or loss of human capital (see, Khadaria, 1999). The volunteering under AID by Indian diasporic youth should be conceptualized as starting phenomena that can be called "brain gain." This process not only overcomes the loss of human capital but galvanizes further social energy to overcome the overarching danger of corporate globalisation. Sending remittances to the "locale" of origin (read, homeland) is one case of diaspora and development and it has been highlighted by mass media. Let us not forget the meager effort of writing petitions against the hazard of globalisation from above. These may seem like petty efforts, as practiced by the volunteers of AID, but they are the voices of people and harbingers of the change that oppressed sections of Indian society need. Therefore, the brain drain has become the brain chain and brain gain. Not just Indian diasporic youth but other concerned citizens of the world of different ethnicities join hands through globalisation from below.

During the last eight months, AID-Montreal has organized several fundraising events using the Indian diasporic cultural signifiers such as leisure pursuit through Bollywood cinema. *Water* was screened in McGill University while *Monsoon Wedding* at Concordia University to generate funds to support developmental projects in rural India. The commitment of these Indian diasporic youth in Montreal can also be gauged through another lens. While they support AID's vision, they also support other charitable associations committed to social justice. AID-Montreal's participation in "Global Day for Darfur" is a case in point. In the transnational context, the youth increase the diasporic capital through their efforts at the local as well as the global level. It is the diasporic consciousness that relates them to their origin in India. As suggested while delineating

my understanding of diasporic capital earlier in this chapter, I have noted that the drive for commitment in India's development comes from the diasporic condition of marginalization. The social education of the Indian diasporic youth, and their attempt to define themselves around the cultural pedagogy of "being" an Indian in Montreal, acts as the pivot of their drive. While the Indian diasporic community's pedagogy is for better survival in the "adopted" landscape, it forms the basis of attachment to the "roots." The desire to belong in this fast paced post-modern world convulses the mundane everyday experience for social justice in all cultural spheres- near as well as far.

Before moving on to the concluding remarks for this chapter, I submit to the importance of diasporic context by bringing in Mahatma Gandhi's early life experiences in Britain and South Africa (Gandhi, 1954). It was his diasporic being, where he faced ignorance about Indians and prejudice, which strengthened his resolve to define himself as befitting an Indian at that time. His experiments with his "truths" of the then socio-political structure and the methods he devised to fight them have withstood the test of time. It is the same Gandhian principles of non-violence to which AID, and its volunteers like the Indian diasporic youth in Montreal, are committed. The results of Gandhi's experiments provide the Indian diasporic community the basis to operate its roles and its responsibilities.

Reverberation

When sound is produced in a space, larger numbers of echoes build up but they slowly fade as the sound is absorbed by the adjoining medium. This process of reverberation fascinates me because, when I initiated this study, I used several channels to reach the conduits of my analysis. My subjectivity while deciding the focus of this

inquiry, the nature of the Indian diasporic community in Montreal, research participants in general and the youth in particular, have all added to the process of this investigation like the different echoes of the initial sound wave that I created. As it appears, I am comparing this research process to a reverberation. In trying to use metaphors from "hard" sciences, I am bridging the gap that exists between the aspirations in social science research for social justice and the positivistic nature of borrowing from "hard" sciences that is devoid of context. On the contrary, my research builds the bridge differently by drawing from post-formal (Kincheloe et al, 1999) research philosophy.

I have stressed the processes through which I learnt and tried to understand "the role of the Indian diasporic community in Montreal in the life experiences and identity negotiation of the Indian diasporic youth." Even while delineating my understanding of diasporic capital, I have relied on the process and not on the end product of this inquiry. I did not get up one morning to realize that diasporic capital was the conduit through which the community realized its role. Similarly, the participating youth of this research and I did not decide to commit ourselves to AID all of a sudden. Rather, it involved a route where our concerns for social justice kept us going. Akin to this, the identity negotiation and educational experiences of the Indian diasporic youth is an ongoing itinerary and it is influenced by their personal contexts.

Since I have invested myself in this research for so long, I have plenty of recorded interviews and their transcripts. I have used only those that have allowed me to construct the most pertinent points of this analysis from my subjective lens. My intent has been to highlight social education as manifested in society, social relations, and the socio-psychological dimensions from the perspective of youth in diaspora. Although I have not

highlighted citizenship education, but the thread along which I weave my analysis should give an impression of my adherence to it. Nevertheless, citizenship to me is not co-terminus with nationality as it is possible to boast a nationality without being a citizen. Moreover, one can have citizenship from one country while confirming nationality in another. The diaspora discourse, therefore, becomes important at this juncture of transnational society. While the research terrain mapped, and methodological quest delineated earlier in this dissertation works as a guide, I bring in theoretical insights to further groom my analysis that I have presented in this chapter. The initial sound produced fades in reverberations but when another sound is produced another reverberation takes place. Therefore, when further research is initiated, another process of understanding and analysis will appear.

The next chapter suggests "new directions" using perceptible gaps in this inquiry as well as etching an approach conversant with a dream for social justice for youth, including Indian diasporic youth in Montreal.

Chapter 7

NEW DIRECTIONS

The fact that I have written my dissertation in English reflects the subject position of a postcolonial being. It is imperative, as I have followed in this dissertation, to outline one's subjective predispositions as part of the research process so that it allows the readers to comprehend the result of the research. Critical ontology, which advocates understanding subjectivity in order to transform it, is as important as the urge to contribute to the episteme of one's academic discourse community or commitment to praxis and social justice. Kincheloe (2006) highlights an important dimension of critical ontology when he writes that it "involves freeing ourselves from the machine metaphors of Cartesianism (p182)" that promotes a "detached, objective, depersonalized observer (p183)." Needless to say, my subjectivity is rooted even in the choice of literature and focus in the academic discourse, as well as the locus of my inquiry. Therefore, I strongly believe that critical ontology should form the springboard of social research especially when the researcher does not represent the mainstream social axis of race, class, gender, or sexuality. It will allow the readers to gauge the perspective of the researcher and his processes and predicaments.

Alongside critical ontology, I acknowledge that critical pedagogy, which as McLaren (2007:11) writes, "is a politics of understanding and action, an act of knowing that attempts to situate everyday life in a larger geo-political context, with goal of fostering regional collective self-responsibility, large scale ecumene, and international worker solidarity," is important for understanding education experience and identity negotiation even in the context of the diaspora. I do not inject critical pedagogy while

mapping the terrain of this inquiry in Chapter Three, but I have followed the central tenants as enunciated by the leading scholars of critical pedagogy in connecting this inquiry around educational experience and identity negotiation of the Indian diasporic youth in Montreal with larger social forces and relations of the geo-political world. The social forces and relations of the contemporary world under neo-imperialism are infested with the tentacles of globalisation and transnationalism from above. Nevertheless, one cannot underestimate the capacity of individual agents in ushering resistance through social solidarity from below. The volunteer movement called AID is a case in point. AID resists the ills of corporate globalisation in India by supporting people's rights and dignity. Rapidly changing everyday realities and the alienation inherent in corporate capitalism makes it difficult for today's youth to adhere to their innate powers. The diaspora context compounds youth's alienation further. Needless to say, the question of the "self" as the locus through which we educate ourselves becomes more important than ever.

It is not only one's social location but its accompanying power relations which make the whole issue complex and require investigation that should go beyond the facts visible at the surface level. Capitalism's demand for cheap labour (pull) and the lack of opportunities (push) in societies in transition (like India) give free will to the dictates of corporate capitalism. People are either displaced from the local communities in search for better opportunities, or the local communities are set in transition from above by the power of capitalism. It needs to be understood that this is not simply an issue of leaving one's country/society and immigrating to new country/society, but the powerlessness that accompanies the loss of social relations. Critical pedagogical insights endow looking at

mundane everyday surface level realities within the intermeshed complexity of the world. Kincheloe (2004:45) argues that critical pedagogy involves "the concern with transforming oppressive relations of power in a variety of domains that lead to human oppression." To unmask the differential power equations in the diaspora context, it is imperative to abide with the principle guidelines of critical pedagogy.

Logically, any research with the Indian diasporic youth- either in Montreal or elsewhere- can be enriched using both critical ontology and critical pedagogy. My current research has perceptive gaps which can be addressed in future research projects alongside synergistic relations with critical ontology and critical pedagogy.

Perceptive Gaps in the Research

During the initial phase of my research, I wanted to locate this study within select schools (educational institutions) - preferably a French and two English schools in Montreal. However, I found it hard to go through the formal ethical approval from the schools I approached. My lack of familiarity with the school system in Montreal was the basic reason. I tried to overcome my obvious limitations by turning my focus to the community. Schools function for cultural distribution and socialization, among other things. Community performs the same roles, mostly informally, by organizing events and cultural fairs. Nevertheless, ideological dominance of the middle class is more streamlined in schools. On the contrary, community provides negotiating spaces against such mainstream cultural dominance. Moreover, my acquaintance with members of the Indian diasporic community made it easier for me to study the educational experience and identity negotiation of the Indian diasporic youth from the community standpoint. As McLaren notes, in the above cited comment, critical pedagogy is not specific to schooling

only and the framework of critical pedagogy allows one to situate inquiry within the larger forces and relations that shape life experiences.

Nevertheless, future research using the same framework I have used in this inquiry could use school premises as the research site and provide different answers. I acknowledge this gap in my research. I think that later, when I get an opportunity, I will carry out detailed inquiry using the framework explained in this dissertation within the school premises. It will allow me to concentrate on the form and content of the curriculum as well as the pedagogy from the perspectives of youth in the diaspora. I sincerely believe that the increasing number of diasporic youth from non-traditional source societies in Canada makes it imperative to look at their educational experiences and identity negotiation in schools. In the context of critical pedagogy, I concur that it is important to see how curriculum and pedagogy in schools affect larger social forces and relations. Similarly, it is essential that changes in the socio-cultural configurations bring changes in schools. I am making a very ordinary statement, especially for a student in integrated studies of education, when I write that "what is taught in schools has the potential to change the way students will perceive the contemporary society." The manner in which youth in schools will become agents and partners of social change is dependent on what they learn in the various processes we call education. While schools, by the virtue of being formal socialization institutions, become the pivot of ushering social change, diasporic community stands at a significant node in contemporary times.

A diasporic community can be rooted in tradition or be progressive. My engagement with the Indian diasporic community in Montreal informs me of their progressive outlook. I am aware, through media and several leading scholars (see,

Chapter One), about the support that right-wing political outfits in India get from Indians in the diaspora. This needs to be further investigated. It is my preliminary stance that, compared to Canada, "vulnerability of the diaspora to long distance nationalism" (Kapur, 2004) is more pronounced in the U.S. The comparison needs to be probed further to understand the reason for the same. I adhere that transnational ethnography will assist in this investigation as it involves different nodes through which the resources of the people in the diaspora are utilized for progressive or xenophobic means.

While I deduce the diasporic capital as a summation of social, cultural, human, and economic capital, I believe that when various axes of power dynamics like race, class, gender, and sexuality are further problematized the perception of the diasporic capital will shed more conceptual clarification. At a time when class is akin to capital because class position bestows cultural capital, and when labour power is analogous to human capital, the quandary of the diasporic capital needs more conceptual clarification. My explanation of the diasporic capital is born out of the necessity to understand the social resource of the people in the diasporic community. While consciousness and imagination form the kernel of diaspora definition (Vertovec, 1999), I would argue that the same consciousness and imagination can be used differently. Imagination is the ability to conceptualize a totally new world inside the mind. It enables an agent to mentally explore the past and conceive of a better tomorrow as critical ontology suggests. Similarly, transformative consciousness is the guiding principle under which critical pedagogy grooms youth. The diasporic consciousness and imagination is rooted in the past. This side of the Janus-face of diaspora needs to change for a better tomorrow. The quest for social justice by imagining an equitable world and an attempt for transformative

consciousness should alter the rear-looking mentality of people in the diaspora. It is probably because of the reliance on the past that the diaspora concept is coloured with anti-progressiveness or xenophobia. Let me restate the support for the right-wing political party in India by the Indian diaspora in the U.S. as an example of xenophobic activity by people in the diaspora.

There are several Indian diasporic associations and organizations which earnestly promote progressive social movement in the homeland. As delineated, I, and several of my research participants in Montreal, have been actively involved with AID. AID, as mentioned in the previous chapter, promotes sustainable and grassroots development in India. AID volunteers, mainly based in the U.S., raise awareness about lop-sided development in India. They contribute from their income and raise funds to support developmental projects in rural India. AID volunteers also initiate petitions against the corrupt "power blocks" in India. Nevertheless, it will be exciting to compare AID with other associations of the Indian diaspora in North America, like the National Association of Canadians of Origin in India (NACOI), especially to illuminate the organizational structure of AID. Non-governmental organizations, as Kamat (2002) informs us, can become another hegemonic structure and thwart genuine development. Inquiry from such a standpoint may not be a dismissal of non-governmental organizations but rather a call for a more materialist analysis of the dominant discursive system and politico-economic relations that represent their practice.

Despite several perceptible gaps, there are significant contributions in this research. I have highlighted them as part of my research process. The following are the original contributions of this research: - the terrain of the diaspora studies (Chapter

Three), in search of a method (Chapter Five), the diasporic capital (Chapter Six), and diaspora and development (Chapter Six). Existing perspectives, theories, and methodologies allow us to moor our inquiry, but they must be seen as novel contributions of the time when they were creatively constructed. With passage of time and changing social dynamics, they need revision or location with new lexicons of the contemporary time. My contribution, as well as the contributions of all the scholars on whom I base this inquiry, should be seen in similar light.

Important Contributions

I cannot foresee the study of contemporary diasporic communities without locating them within the matrix of globalisation and transnationalism. Globalisation discourse is a recurrent preoccupation of our time. It cuts across academic disciplines and sets in motion examinations and explanations rarely imagined earlier. Globalisation has become a grand context and enables conflicting claims to co-exist and co-evolve. Nevertheless, it is essential to locate the diasporic community whose life is integral to the very process of globalisation. While it is globalisation from above that forms diasporic communities but at the same time globalisation from below provides an opportunity for people in the diaspora to stand up against the menace of globalisation from above (Raj, 2006). Transnationalism begins with defying marked borders and involves people, culture, and commodities changing locations and social configurations. Multi-dimensional global flow of people and way of life has increased with transnationalism. Therefore, as discussed in Chapter Three, I perceive diaspora as the defining vector of contemporary times with historical mooring, as a guide to studying post-modern culture, as a post-colonial episteme, and a process to understand the power discourse.

Appadurai (1999) advocates a new kind of ethnography to study people and culture in mobility. My research suggests that this new kind of ethnography should be drawn from post-formalism (Kincheloe, 1999) and be synergized by the different loops of research bricolage (Kincheloe, 2004). My search for an appropriate way to study diaspora convinces me of transnational ethnography that I have discussed in Chapter Five. Transnational ethnography as a research philosophy and guide will allow the considering of different nooks and crannies of the social forces and relations that shape life in the current epoch (Raj, 2005). Established methodologies and theories guide contemporary research but I must reiterate that when they become unable to adapt themselves to the changing social reality, they need to be improvised upon. Kincheloe (2004) also argues that "critical pedagogy means different things to different people." I comprehend critical pedagogy as a process which allows me to understand human subjectivities as formed by different stages of their life journeys and as an attempt to understand this through their perspectives. The quest for social justice that is pivotal to critical pedagogy (Kincheloe, 2004) will be missing if we fail to take into consideration the context of the people on whom we base our research.

Again, it is the context of people in the diaspora and the way they allow different capital/resources to come into play that makes me visualize the diasporic capital as an essential tool to understand the everyday life in the diaspora. I draw on evidence from my field engagement to propose diasporic capital. At the same time, I acknowledge the necessity to develop the concept further for future research. I want to suggest that the diasporic capital is the conduit through which the diasporic community realizes its different roles, either socializing the youth of the community, combating discrimination,

or promoting homeland development. Though attractive phrases like transnational ethnography and diasporic capital are being used in web-medium, but they have not been conceptualized and defined appropriately. Most often the catch phrase, like the diasporic capital, is used to advocate a feeling of philanthropy in the homeland. However, often, such usage is entangled with either right-wing xenophobic rhetoric or is flying on the wings of neo-liberalism to further the agenda of corporations.

My notion of the diasporic capital is to understand it as a social resource but not as a limited social resource drawn from practices that use diasporic consciousness and imagination to look back at the past. On the contrary, my field study with Indian diasporic community in Montreal suggests that the diasporic capital, like the social reality, is very complex. It involves other capitals like social, human, cultural, and economic; wide ranging social networks; involvement with different communities such as transnational, local, ethnic, and sub-ethnic; policies at local and global level; as well as the defining metaphors of diasporic consciousness, imagination, and nostalgia. As I acknowledged while writing about the limitations of this study, when social categories like class and gender are added, the conception of the diasporic capital will be further illuminated.

Another noteworthy contribution of my research is the focus on diaspora and development that emerged during my field study. In my published book chapter entitled *Globalisation from Below and the Global Indian Diaspora* (Raj, 2006), I have illustrated that globalisation from below provides hope for resistance against mega corporations perpetuating hazards to communities in countries like India and thereby provides hope for just and equitable development. The emergent "network society" (Castells, 1996)

provides leverage to further connectivity and solidarity for standing up against the ills perpetuated under the neo-liberal agendas of corporate capitalism. I want to suggest that with resistance from below diaspora becomes both an alternative and intermediary at a time when the role of the nation-state is being relegated by neo-liberal policies. People in the Indian diaspora can and do act a catalyst of change in India as well as across the globe.

I envision that the essence of research lies with its implications. Besides the above original contributions, there are other tangential but significant contributions of my research. I have extended the cultural studies of education by considering culture in general and diasporic culture in particular as a multidimensional site of struggle (Raj, 2007). I believe that scholars and advocates in cultural pedagogy should join the collaborative contexts with people to further interrogate and illuminate the struggle on the cultural terrain. As I argued in the published book-chapter, *Bollywood Cinema and Indian Diaspora*, production, application, or transmission of knowledge either in educational institutions or in society at large cannot be complete without addressing the multiple ways media culture shapes people's everyday lives. Within this broader contour, I discussed the growing links between Bollywood cinema and the Indian diaspora establishing the two-way cultural exchange and elucidating the power dynamics of culture.

As I posit, technological changes of the last century have significantly altered the production and consumption of information in India and its diaspora because of satellite television, transnational travel and tourism, Internet communication, and global consumerism. Sky Entertainment in Fiji, Sahara TV in the United Emirates, or ATN cable in Canada have been "crucial in bringing the homeland into the diaspora" (Mishra,

2002: 237). In fact, the ATN cable in Canada broadcasts directly from *Doordarshan* (national television channel) and is an example of the increasing transnational dimension of Indian media due to the demand by the Indian diaspora

Nevertheless, it is interesting to consider the way in which Gurinder Chadda packages and constructs the playing of *dandia* (from Gujarat played with two sticks) in Amritsar (Punjab) and how it is depicted in the film *Bride and Prejudice* (Chadha, Nayar & Chadha, 2005). It is like mixing cultural traits through Punjab to showcase India. Besides, the locale and constant reference to Punjab in Hindi films indicates the dominance of Punjabis in the Indian diaspora. More specifically, Baldev Singh in *Dilwale Dulhani Le Gayage* (Chopra & Chopra, 1995) lives in London, but his heart belongs to the "greenery" of Punjab. Needless to say, there is regional dominance in cultural representation of India in the diaspora.

There is, however, a growing link between Indian and Bollwyood cinema- two way cultural exchanges. First, there is an increasing trend in Bollywood to shoot films in foreign locales such as Switzerland, Mauritius, New Zealand, Australia, North America, or Europe. Several recent films are based on Indians living in these countries, e.g., *Dilwale Dulhania Le Gayage, Pardes* (Ghai & Ghai,1997) *Kal Ho Na Ho* (Hossain et al & Advani, 2003), and others. Moreover, in *Dil Chahta Hai* (Sidhwani & Akhtar, 2002) and *Krish* (Roshan & Roshan, 2006), the central characters realize their innate nature away from India in their respective diasporic locale. Akash (Amir Khan) and Shalini (Preety Zeinta) in *Dil Chahta Hai* go to Sydney to take care of his father's business and to meet her uncle respectively. It is in Sydney that they fall in love. The supernatural power of *Krish* (Hritik Roshan) is realized in Singapore. Moreover, lack of discipline and

abnormality are also seen in foreign locales as manifested in the recent *Kabhie Alvida Na Kahna* (Johar & Johar, 2006), directed by Karan Johar, which is about Indian families in the United States.

The most important issue is the impact of Bollywood cinema on the Indian diasporic youth. While understanding the identity negotiation process of the Indian diasporic youth in Montreal, the process through which youth negotiated their identity touched on Bollywood several times. Since I was keen to focus on the role of the community for my dissertation, I have not brought the significance of Bollywood cinema on the Indian diasporic youth identity and identification into this dissertation. Nevertheless, as I have outlined earlier, youth forge identities not with reference to real communities but instead according to taste communities or "lifestyle systems," in which consumption is practiced in the absence of community regulation. Therefore, youth lifestyles can be seen as vocabularies of self-expression with cultural regulation from Bollywood cinema. Indian youths in the diaspora follow the cultural prescriptions that Bollywood cinema has established, as is evident in the young people's clothes, their wedding preparations, salutation style, and mating desire. The stars' attire, their relationships, and their actions have a profound impact on the Indian diasporic youth. The panoramic narrative appeals to the nostalgia for Indian culture, desire, and reality. In recent years, the depictions of diasporic identities and cultural production have been the language of Bollywood cinema (see Desai, 2004).

I also believe that, for first generation in the diaspora, homeland is pure like the river Ganga in *Pardes*, where Kishori Lal (Amrish Puri) expresses his emotions melodiously as "I love my India" over and over again. To a young girl like Simran

(Kajol), in *Dilwale Dulhani Le Gayage,* Indian culture, as reflected in her father extending his hand to prevent her from going with her lover, is constraining. During social events in the diaspora, Bollywood songs (*sangeet*) are usually played and the cultural space is assumed heterosexual. Participants wear Indian attire, thus reviving ethnic Indian culture. To the second generation in a ghetto, Bollywood is leisure as well as aspiration for change from the mundane everyday life, which is racist, sexist, homophobic, and oppressive. The construction of identity through leisure time activity is another topic that needs to be probed further, especially when such activities have cultural traits from India, like Bollywood cinema.

I have also initiated a paper entitled, *Role of Network and Associations among Indian Diaspora in North America* based on my field study. According to Kurien (2003), it is assumed that social networks and associations in the case of diaspora operate at three levels—the household, the local ethnic community, and the global Indian culture—and serve as resources for the diasporic community, helping in their segmented integration, identity negotiation, social mobility, and homeland advocacy. It is my contention that the more an individual or group is connected to others through new information technologies, the more there is a chance of defying the geographical landscape and operating in the transnational sphere. Most social networks at the household level are focused around the places of worship, ethnic stores, family gatherings, and other social occasions. At the next level, as in the case of community, for example, associations are formed on the basis of certain similar interest or background. At this stage, the network operates as some sort of group association and becomes part of other associations with a larger canvas. New information and communication technologies have made networking at these two levels

easier and have greatly facilitated the third one—the pan-Indian associations that represent the public image of India and her people.

In *The Rise of the Network Society*, Castells (1996) quotes Barglow on understanding the "self" of the present world: "Image of a head… and behind it is suspended a computer keyboard…I'm this programmed head!" (p. 23). This metaphor is central to Castells' argument about a society undergoing momentous changes aided and driven by information technology: a society in which social relations are going through a disjuncture and differentiation, and in which a constant search for identity around religion, ethnicity, territory, and nation is prevalent. Metaphors are used and meanings are negotiated, not around what we do, but on the basis of who we are, or who we believe ourselves to be. This process of negotiating the "self" is more often being enacted through new information technologies like telephone and the Internet, justifying the argument that current patterns of the negotiations of the "self" operate largely through the information networks of the present society.

Castells (1996) further suggests that the architecture of the relationships between networks configures the dominant processes and functions in our society. A "network" is a set of interconnected nodes, and the nature of the nodes depends on the context of the social situation. The typology defined by networks determines that the distance (or intensity and frequency of interaction) between two points (or social positions) is shorter (or more frequent, or more intense) if both are nodes in a network than if they do not belong to the same network. The network morphology is a source for the dramatic reorganization of power relationships. Individuals and collectives that can influence the nodal points in the networks exercise influence to determine social processes. Similarly,

Vertovec (2001) highlights the usefulness of social networks in his explanation that interpersonal relationships cut across boundaries like neighborhood, kinship, and class, both at the individual and the collective level. He points out that, for diaspora, social networks are crucial for finding jobs and accommodations, circulating goods and services, for psychological support, information, and *socio-cultural reproduction*.

The Indian diaspora across the globe have created different kinds of networks, which have increased during the information age, and serve multiple functions. Most of the networks operate online, or are working to "catch up" with internet technology. Social relations on and through cyberspace are no less valid than "real" life in maintaining links with the community. In fact, people feel a sense of belonging through these networks and associations. As I have pointed out in Chapter Six, social networking web-interface like Facebook and Orkut has become very popular among Indian youth. Their usefulness and impact need to be investigated. It must be pointed out that the Indian diaspora experience varying degrees of rupture and, therefore, networks that help re-negotiate life assume importance. Social networks characterized by ties with Indians in India and in the diaspora provide emotional and practical support for people but, on the other hand, they also decrease their chances to benefit from other networks in their country of residence.

Erickson (2003) argues that it is not just what you know, but who you know that matters in society. Erickson has pointed out that people living in North America find their jobs with the help of a contact roughly half of the time. Besides employment opportunities, networks also help to improve one's quality of life through better information about educational and health services. However, the diversity of the

networks accessed is more significant than the mere number of networks. The needs of people in the diaspora vary according to their stage of experience in their adopted milieu. Those who have just arrived look for the basic connections to help them feel less alienated. Later, they diversify their social network to include co-ethnics and other people. The associational activities form a milieu between the state and the market, and provide a medium to negotiate the "self" and the homeland culture in the midst of corporate global culture.

Two perspectives regarding associational activities can be borrowed from Riley's (2005) work. Associations provide people with the means to act without invoking the state and, moreover, balance state authority by creating alternate power centers. Associations are not necessarily opposed to the state, and, on the other hand, can be absorbed by the state, or be an extension of it. According to this lens, the sphere of associations is a ground for hegemony and produces technologies of political rule. I contend that while associational activities provide individuals with an organizational balancing act at the level of the local ethnic community, they function as constraints at the pan-Indian level, since they are more concerned with presenting a particular image (see Kurien, 2003). Nevertheless, these associations act as the fertile ground for the Indian diasporic community to etch its social networks. The social networks serve to augment the diasporic capital mainly using social capital in this case.

Portes (1998) argues that the novelty and heuristic power of social capital come from two sources. First, the concept focuses attention on the positive consequence of sociability while putting aside its less attractive features. Second, it places those positive consequences in the framework of a broader discussion of capital and calls attention to

the way in which such social activity can be source of power, influence, and give leverage to developmental activities. Therefore, the influence of social capital on the diasporic capital should be understood here.

The resultant diasporic capital increases the capacity of people in the Indian diaspora to embed themselves in their culture and values and this, in turn, helps them in their identity negotiation. Those who interact with the larger associations are more transnational in their social interactions and continue to draw both from the country of origin and the geographical locale of residence. Those involved only at the local level are assumed to be with low income and educational background. Probably it also suggests their inability to further their network and connections and drive home the advantage from such transnational networks. However, the emergent diasporic capital available through these networks and associations has several disadvantages. They assist in perpetuating status quo and, at times, become constraining for those, including women, aspiring to change.

Implications for Social Policies

This research has several noteworthy guidelines for social policies. I draw on evidence to suggest that the Indian diasporic community is not as homogeneous as it is assumed to be. The levels of heterogeneity and difference are manifested at various levels including but not limited to time/period of immigration, as well as regional, linguistic, class, and religious background. The lack of understanding of different sub-ethnic communities increases the level of ignorance and thereby bias towards the Indian diasporic community in general. Participation among different diasporic communities as well as with dominant groups should be encouraged to reduce the lack of understanding

of cultural differences. Increased social interaction among different cultural communities will allow the Canadian official multicultural policy to become operative at the ground level.

Also, the elite of the Indian diasporic community do not represent the aspirations of different sections of the community. The community at large feels excluded as they feel that what is represented in the name of the Indian diasporic community is actually the yearning of the elite. It is necessary, therefore, to reach out to the voices of the community to envisage any inclusive socio-cultural policy. For example, during my field work, members of the Indian diasporic community asked me about the "Heritage Language Programme" that was supported by the Government of Canada. "Heritage language" indicates a language learned at home as a part of being the member of a cultural community different from the dominant community. Fluency is not desired in such languages but their understanding is desired as a part of cultural heritage. Funding for teaching of heritage languages by the government has stopped now. Teaching of such language is usually borne by the communities interested in preserving them. I think funding from the government should be resumed to promote heritage languages in multilingual society like Canada. I trust that language is an important component of ethnic identity. I wrote in a co-authored journal article (Raj & Raj, 2004) that, in the age of resurgent urbanization and globalisation, retaining ethnic languages has become a difficult task. Several languages are dying and, during the next century, half of the world's languages will vanish into oblivion. If a language fades away, aspects of culture, including a pool of diverse ideas, disappear with it. Therefore, the heritage languages need support from the Government of Canada as well as from the "homeland"

government, especially for the youth of the diasporic community to at least know the heritage.

The Government of India (read, homeland) has initiated several programs based on the Singhvi Report. There is a section for Canada (Chapter Fourteen in the Singhvi Report) but it mainly profiles the characteristics of the Indian diaspora in Canada on the socio-historical basis. The other concern of this report entails collaboration with the Indian diaspora in Canada for India's development. The nature of development foreseen through the report is seemingly to encourage investment in India by the Indian diaspora entrepreneurs. The efforts by the Indian diasporic entrepreneurs usually follow the prescription of development from above under the neo-liberal agenda. Moreover, the report does not involve different sections of the Indian diaspora community and basically codifies any individual efforts for philanthropy. The initiative to encourage youth is more to showcase rather than to support their identity negotiation process in the "host" society or their educational experiences. I sincerely believe that the Government of India should have more inclusive policies for the Indian diaspora youth, in particular, and the Indian diaspora community in general.

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Motion Pictures

Chadha, G. & Nayar, D (Producer), & Chadha, G. (Director) 2005 *Bride and Prejudice* United States: Miramax

Chopra, Y. (Producer), & Chopra, A. (Director) 1995 *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* India: Yash Raj Films

Ghai, S. (Producer), & Ghai, S. (Director) 1997 *Pardes* India: Mukta Arts

Hamilton, D. (Producer), & Mehta, D. (Director) 2002 *Bollywood-Hollywood* Canada:iDream Productions

Hossain, A., Johar, H, Johar, K., Johar,Y. (Producer), & Advani, N. (Director) 2003 *Kal Ho Naa Ho* India: Dharma Productions

Johar, H. (Producer), & Johar, K. (Director) 2006 *Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna* India: Dharma Productions

MacCrae, T (producer), & Mehta, A. (Director) 2002 *American Chai* U.S.: Dream Merchants

Roshan, R. (Producer), & Roshan, R. (Director) 2006 *Krrish* India: Yash Raj Films

Sidhwani, R. (Producer). & Akhtar, F. (Director) *Dil Chahta Hai* India: Excel Entertainment.

Appendix 1. List of Figures, Table and Graph

List of Figures

List of Table and Graph

Received

APR 30 2004

McGill University
Faculty of Education
Associate Dean (Academic Programs, Graduate Studies and Research)

MCGILL UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY FOR FUNDED AND NON FUNDED RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMANS

The Faculty of Education Ethics Review Committee consists of 6 members appointed by the Faculty of Education Nominating Committee, an appointed member from the community and the Associate Dean (Academic Programs, Graduate Studies and Research) who is the Chair of this Ethics Review Board.

The undersigned considered the application for certification of the ethical acceptability of the project entitled: Ethnographi Study of the Creation and Usage of 'Diasporic Capital' for Education and Identity Constructi as proposed by: of Indian Diasporic Youth in Montreal

Applicant's Name ADITYA RAJ — Supervisor's Name RATNA GHOSH

Applicant's Signature/Date Aditya Raj (13th Apr 2004) — Supervisor's Signature Ratna Ghosh

Degree / Program / Course Ph.D — Granting Agency _____

Grant Title (s) _____

The application is considered to be:
A Full Review _____ — An Expedited Review ✓

A Renewal for an Approved Project _____ — A Departmental Level Review _____
Signature of Chair / Designate

The review committee considers the research procedures and practices as explained by the applicant in this application, to be acceptable on ethical grounds.

1. Prof. René Turcotte
Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education
René May 5/04
Signature / date

2. Prof. Ron Morris
Department of Integrated Studies in Education
_____
Signature / date

3. Prof. Ron Stringer
Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology
May 19/04
Signature / date

4. Prof. Joan Russell
Department of Integrated Studies in Education
Joan Russell May 14-04
Signature / date

5. Prof. Helen Amoriggi
Department of Integrated Studies in Education
_____
Signature / date

6. Prof. Ada Sinacore
Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology
_____
Signature / date

7. Member of the Community
_____
Signature / date

Mary H. Maguire Ph. D.
Chair of the Faculty of Education Ethics Review Committee
Associate Dean (Academic Programs, Graduate Studies and Research)
Faculty of Education, Room 230
Tels: (514) 398-7039/398-2183 Fax: (514) 398-1527

Mary H Maguire May 20, 2004
Signature / date

Office Use Only
REB #: 420-0504 **APPROVAL PERIOD:** MAY 20, 2004 to MAY 20, 2005
(Updated September 2003)

McGill University – Faculty of Education
ETHICS REVIEW
ANNUAL STATUS REPORT/RENEWAL REQUEST/FINAL REPORT

Continuing review of human subjects research requires, at a minimum, the submission of an annual status report to the REB. This form must be completed to request renewal of ethics approval. If a renewal is not received before the expiry date, the project is considered no longer approved and no further research activity may be conducted. When a project has been completed, this form can also be used as a Final Report, which is required to properly close a file. To avoid expired approvals and, in the case of funded projects, the freezing of funds, this form should be returned at least **1 month** before the current approval expires.

REB File #: 420-0504

Project Title: Ethnographic Study of the Creation and Usage of 'Diasporic Capital' for Education and Identity Construction of Indian Diasporic 'youths' in Montreal

Principal Investigator: Aditya Raj

Department/Phone/Email: DISE/ (514) 867-5202/aditya.raj@mail.mcgill.ca

Faculty Supervisor (for student PI): Prof. Ratna Ghosh

1. Were there any significant changes made to this research project that have any ethical implications? ___Yes. ✓No
   If yes, describe these changes and append any relevant documents that have been revised.

2. Are there any ethical concerns that arose during the course of this research? ✓Yes ___ No. If yes, please describe.
   During the field work process, I have realized that photographs will be further substantiate the field information. To do so, informed consent will be take from the individual or group who will be in the photograph or will help in taking the photograph. The informed consent form (no.8 for this issue) is attached with the application.

3. Have any subjects experienced any adverse events in connection with this research project? ___ Yes ✓No
   If yes, please describe.

4. ✓ This is a request for renewal of ethics approval.

5. X This project is no longer active and ethics approval is no longer required.

6. List all current funding sources for this project and the corresponding project titles **if not exactly the same** as the project title above. Indicate the Principal Investigator of the award if not yourself.

Principal Investigator Signature: Aditya Raj Date: 9th May 2005

Faculty Supervisor Signature: Ratna Ghosh /cH Date:
(for student PI)

___ The closing report of this terminated project has been reviewed and accepted

✓ The continuing review for this project has been reviewed and approved

✓ Expedited Review ___ Full Review

Signature of REB Chair or designate: R Lypton Date: May 9/05

Approval Period: May 9/05 to May 9/06

Submit to Carole Grossman, Education Ethics Coordinator, Education Bldg., rm 230, fax: 398-1527 tel:398-7039

5/9/05