

Ishita Sinha Roy

Manufacturing Indianness

Nation-Branding
and Postcolonial Identity



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For my parents Arrow & Bharati, and my brother Ranabir. Home is where you are.

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INTRODUCTION

Text and Context

Postcolonial Media Studies and the Fetishization of the Neoliberal Nation

Long before it adopted the garb of the modernist nation, “India” first appeared on the Western world map as the fabled space of imperial desire. Imperialism, after all, is the spatial ideology par excellence. Predicated on the ability to fuse abstract spaces and concrete places into a political agenda, it is born (in the words of Edward Said) “[a]t the moment when a coincidence occurs between real control and power, the idea of what a given place was (could be, might become), and an actual place”

—Satish Deshpande, 1993, p. 78¹

Sometimes when a word is born, a world is born with it. And “post-truth” may be one such word, symbolising the birth of a politics that returns to the primitive, the primordial and the irrational.

—Shiv Visvanathan, 2016a²

For us, image of the nation is more important than the image of the Government.

—Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Independence Day speech, 2016.³

In his piece from *The Telegraph* (U.K.), former South Asia Editor Dean Nelson (2013)⁴ raised the issue of the debate over Britain’s “postcolonial guilt”:

The problem is that Britons and Indians see the “shared history” differently. To this country [the U.K.], India is the world’s largest democracy, which we left behind on Independence Day in 1947; because of our historic relationship, India shares with us an independent judiciary, a free press, the English language, and our love of cricket. There’s a legacy of colonial architecture and Merchant Ivory scenes of sahibs and memsahibs of the Raj clinking sundowners on their bungalow verandahs.

[...] For many, the Anglo-Indian relationship is summed up in icons such as chicken tikka masala, now regarded by some as our national dish, a pint of *Kingfisher*, *The Kumars at Number 42*. And our diplomats take comfort in the fact that more than one million people in Britain are of Indian descent. (Nelson, 2013)

But, Nelson (2013) acknowledges that for Indians, this historical memory may be very different, recalled instead in terms of “humiliation: bloody massacres, mass arrests, the suppression of democratic political movements and the supplanting of its indigenous cultures to create a servile, anglicised elite.” Moreover, this dissonance in the remembering by the two nations often results in diplomatic tangles, as with the recent controversy over whether the United Kingdom should return the Kohinoor diamond to India. Historically, the British colonists acquired the diamond as part of an amendment to the Treaty of Lahore that Duleep Singh, the ten-year old heir to the Punjab throne, was made to sign in 1849, after the death of his father and the imprisonment of his mother. The young royal forfeited the diamond and his sovereignty under duress, and the Kohinoor literally became the jewel in the crown. Historian William Dalrymple presents the ethical problem at stake here: “If you ask anybody what should happen to Jewish art stolen by the Nazis, everyone would say of course they’ve got to be given back to their owners. And yet,” he puzzles, “we’ve come to *not* say the same thing about Indian loot taken hundreds of years earlier, also at the point of a gun. What is the moral distinction between stuff taken by force in colonial times?” (qtd. in Boissoneault, 2017, emphasis mine).⁵ Historian Anita Anand offers that even if the diamond isn’t returned, an ethical solution would be “for there to be a really clear sign by the [Tower of London] exhibit. People are taught this was a gift from India to Britain,” she explains, “I would like the correct history to be put by the diamond” (qtd. in Boissoneault, 2017). The matter is historically fraught though. In 2010, during a visit to the Indian state of Punjab, U.K.’s former Prime Minister David Cameron was asked by local journalists whether “Britain could begin to atone for its exploitation of India during the Raj” by returning the gem to India. Prompted probably by a consideration of other colonially acquired treasures (the Rosetta Stone and the Elgin Marbles, for instance), Cameron backed away from settling this historical score. “If you say yes to one you suddenly find the British Museum would be empty,” was his telling response (in Dalrymple & Anand, 2018, p. 277). While there are many British who feel that they shouldn’t be atoning for historical crimes from the past that happened before they were born, “[t]here are more than eight million people alive today who were at least 15 years old at the time of independence—and for many, the cruelties of the British *Raj* [British Indian Empire] are not ancient history but living memory” (Nelson, 2013).

Postcolonialism involves opening up history with this “living memory,” and confronting the past by bringing into the light what has been placed under erasure in celebratory accounts of Empire. Scottish historian William Dalrymple supports this idea that colonial atrocities under the British rule in India should be taught in English schools as much as Tudor history or the Jewish Holocaust. In his words, “Millions of people were killed, it [colonial rule] rested on a mountain of skulls, and people need to know that” (qtd. in Nelson, 2013).⁶ Raj chronicler Charles Allen espouses a different point of view, asking:

Why is the conquest of Mysore by the East India Company different from Haidar Ali’s conquest of Mysore, or the Marathas conquering the Rajput kingdoms, or the Sikhs conquering the Punjab from Afghan rule? It could be argued that in these cases the rule of Haidar Ali in Mysore, the Marathas in the former Rajput kingdoms and the Sikh rule in the Punjab was infinitely worse than the worst aspects of British rule in, say Robert Clive’s Bengal. *So why is one imperialist bad and the other not?* Historically, there is a great deal to be said for foreign intervention as opposed to internecine struggle, in that it invariably brings in new ideas, as for example the Roman invasion of Britain. (“The history of India,” 2013, emphasis mine)

Allen lists the alleged civilizing benefits of the British Empire that have “helped” former colonies—now postcolonial nations—and offers the example of contemporary India. “There’s the added irony that Macaulay’s contempt for Indian culture as expressed in his notorious ‘Minute on Education’, and his promotion of English as India’s common language has paid dividends in giving India a head start over China,” he pointedly states.⁷

The trouble with this account, as Indian MP and well-known writer Shashi Tharoor (2017) refutes, quoting from the historical account of a Yorkshire-born American Unitarian minister, J. T. Sunderland (1929),⁸ is that when the East India Company entered India, “Nearly every kind of manufacture or product known to the civilized world—nearly every kind of creation of man’s brain and hand, existing anywhere, and prized either for its utility or beauty—had long been produced in India. India was a far greater industrial and manufacturing nation than any in Europe or any other in Asia.” India’s architectural and engineering wonders were already well-known worldwide, and it was the best-known manufacturer of ships, with well-established trade routes that “extended to all known civilized countries” (Sunderland qtd. in Tharoor, 2017, p. 2).⁹ Tharoor details how the East India Company, once a trading front between Britain and the kingdoms of India, began to extend military services to warring kingdoms, gradually moving in and placing its officials in the Indian princely Courts, while conquering and taking over “independent or autonomous states.” Within a few decades of such intervention and expansion, the Company had “annexed a quarter of a million square miles of territory from Indian rulers” by the end of the eighteenth century. Until the infamous First War of Independence (also called the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857) that prompted the Crown to remove the East India Company from India, and directly administer British India,

[...] the East India Company presided over the destinies of more than 200 million people, determining their economic, social and political life, reshaping society and education, introducing railways and financing the inauguration of the Industrial Revolution in Britain. *It was a startling and unrivalled example of what, in a alter era, Marxists in the 1970s grimly foretold for the world: rule of, by and for a multinational corporation.* (Tharoor, 2017, p. 4, emphasis mine)

The civilizing mission that was used to justify British colonialism benefitted the colonizer and not the colonized. Tharoor lays out how India became Britain’s “cash cow,” with taxes flowing into the imperial treasury at the annual rate of £18,000,000 between 1765 and 1815 alone (2017, p. 5). By the close of the nineteenth century, India had become Britain’s largest wealth-generator—the jewel in the crown. The Raj (British-ruled India) was also forced to become the biggest importer of British goods, and “the source of highly paid employment for British civil servants and soldiers all at India’s own expense. *Indians literally paid for their own oppression*” (Tharoor, 2017, p. 20, emphasis mine). Just as telling is the unacknowledged tally of how many Indians died servicing British wars that were funded by Indian taxes, procured by driving the entire colony’s agricultural sector into penury. From multiple wars fought for the British cause overseas in China, Ethiopia, Malaya, Malta, Egypt, Sudan, Burma, East Africa, Somaliland, and Tibet, to World War II, the British had a “standing army” by the end of the nineteenth century, two-thirds of which was funded by Indian taxes. Every British soldier who arrived in India was “paid, equipped and fed and eventually pensioned by the Government of India, *not of Britain*” (Tharoor, 2017, p. 23, emphasis mine).

Ferdinand Mount, a descendant of a well-known Company general, succinctly captured the essence of the project of the British Empire—“it was all the simple logic of capitalism,” he admitted:

“The British empire in India was the creation of merchants and it was still at heart a commercial enterprise, which had to operate at profit and respond to the ups and downs of the market. Behind the epaulettes and the jingle of harness, the levees and the balls at Government House, lay the hard calculus of the City of London.” (qtd. in Tharoor, 2017, p. 26)

And, while defenders of the British Empire like to claim that it was imperial rule that created India’s political cohesion out of the warring principalities and kingdoms in the subcontinent, Tharoor remonstrates that prior to the British, great Indian royal dynasties had expanded their kingdoms with the goal to unify the diverse people across the land. It is this vision that informed the great Hindu epics—the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, “which reflect an “idea of India” that twentieth-century nationalists

would have recognized. The epics,” Tharoor (2017) maintains, “have acted as strong, yet sophisticated, threads of Indian culture that have woven together tribes, languages, and peoples across the sub-continent, uniting them in their celebration of the same larger-than-life heroes and heroines, whose stories were told in dozens of translations and variations, but always in the same spirit and meaning” (pp. 37–8).

Pavan Varma, author of *Being Indian: Inside the Real India* (2005),¹⁰ concedes that the Raj is very much woven into the cultural fabric of contemporary India, so that one of the biggest tasks for postcolonial India is recovering its own indigenous heritage that was placed under erasure by the cultural colonization accompanying imperial rule. Accordingly, any project to build India’s cultural and national identity, as separate and distinct from its colonial inheritance, is a difficult one. As Varma observes, “[t]he Union flag comes down, the Tricolour [Indian flag] goes up but when a country rules for a hundred years so much of that past sails into the future” (qtd. in Nelson, 2013, parenthetical insertion mine).

Postcolonial scholar Partha Chatterjee (2010)¹¹ reflects on how we Indians “are being told that it is a sign of our growing self-confidence as a nation that we can at last acknowledge, without shame or guilt, the good the British did for us.” But, as he sees it, this in itself is suspect, and the more that “popular democracy deepens in India, the more its elites yearn for a system in which enlightened gentlemen could decide, with paternal authority, what was good for the masses.” Not surprisingly, the thought of “an Oxford graduate of twenty-two going out to rule the destiny of a hundred thousand peasants in an Indian district can stir up many noble thoughts in middle-class Indian hearts today” (p. 163). In other words, imperial desires can crop up in the new form of neoliberal ambition.¹²

There has been this ongoing back-and-forth exchange in the news media on both sides of the pond—whether British colonialism was a brutal and exploitative system and should be apologized for, or whether its legacy should be acknowledged with gratitude by a former colony like India, that is now an emerging power “thanks” to the “gifts” of imperialism such as the English language, transportation and communication infrastructures, and a unified judicial and administrative system. Then there is another matter that deserves attention: if *both* the post-imperial British responses *and* the post-independence Indian responses reproduced here are examples of postcolonial articulations, can the entire world claim to be *equally* postcolonial, “without any historical reference to the asymmetries that govern the relationship between the worlds of the ex-colonizers and the ex-colonized?” If we take this route, we may end up overlooking the new geopolitical formations that are reproducing imperial relations in the global context (Radhakrishnan, 1993, p. 750).¹³ It is significant, postcolonial literary critic R. Radhakrishnan (1993) cautions, that in this phase of neoliberal capitalist expansion,

The entire world has been de-territorialized in anticipation of a democratic-capitalist takeover by the Free World. In short, the joyous counter-memory of the First World has succeeded in putting to rest the troubling and ongoing histories of Colonialism, Neo-Colonialism, and Imperialism. Within the indeterminate spatiality of the “post-,” the First World finds no problem or contradiction, experiences no sense of shame or guilt, while it insists on a dominant role for itself in projects of identity reconstruction the world over. Unwilling to accept a non-leader-like role, much less exclusion from Third World projects, the First World mandates a seamless methodological universalism to legitimate its centrality the world over. Clearly, this strategy is full of “betrayals within,” in particular, the duplicitous take on nationalism and a protectionist attitude to American and/or western identity. (Radhakrishnan, 1993, pp. 750–51)

Accordingly, if the “post” in “postcolonialism” entails, as postcolonial scholar Ella Shohat (1992) suggests, “both going beyond anti-colonial nationalist theory as well as a movement beyond a specific point in history, that of colonialism and Third World nationalist struggle,” (p. 101),¹⁴ then we must keep an eye on where we are headed. The *new* millennial postcolonialism in its neoliberal formulation, compels us as critics to attend to what literary critic Mary Louise Pratt (1992) has called *contact zones*, or “the social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination—like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths

as they are lived out across the globe today” (p. 4).¹⁵ And, if indeed the old forms of colonialism have been replaced by what political philosophers Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri (2000) call “Empire”—a “space of imperial sovereignty,” that is “both everywhere and nowhere” (p. 190),¹⁶ then the “contact zones” in this phase of globalization are where heterogeneous peoples and cultures *within* the nation confront each other on ideological grounds centered on identity-politics, while in the broader context, nations battle for global ascendancy along economic and cultural lines.

Postcolonial historian Arif Dirlik (2002) rightly observes that “[t]he colonialism of the nation-state” has become more evident “as the formerly colonized have sought to establish the hegemony of the nation, and the national idea, over widely disparate populations.” While ethnic conflict is not a problem limited to non-European states, “it continues to assume a sharper expression there.” Furthermore, the “[n]ational colonization of local populations need not be restricted to those that can be classified as ‘ethnic,’” but extends to “the relationship between the national and the local, as is visible these days,” and is evident too “in the proliferating assertions of local cultures against national or global hegemony” (Dirlik, 2002, p. 442).¹⁷

Accompanying this is the fetishization of specific master-terms that were first associated with imperialism, such as “civilization,” “progress,” and “development,” and have re-emerged as a *colonizing lexicon* that is still used to reaffirm hegemonic Euroamerican norms as the global standard. Sociologist Martha E. Gimenez (2002)¹⁸ pointedly suggests, therefore, that:

“globalization” is simply the reified, fetishized way of talking about the effects of capitalist development without having to talk about capitalism itself and without having to acknowledge, therefore, the capitalist material basis of the phenomena lumped under the label. While trendy and ubiquitous, “globalization” is an inherently conservative way of thinking about current social processes. (pp. 85–86)

Gimenez advocates “recognizing that capitalism has always been a world historical phenomenon unfolding in the dialectical relations among nation-states whose *particularity* was from the very beginning an effect and a *precondition of its universality*” (p. 87, emphases mine). Situating the labor and practices of nation-building *and* nation-branding within the affective and political economy of neoliberalism, while investigating how these, in turn, have informed new forms of ethno-nationalisms, is useful in critically deconstructing the “profit-and market-oriented” production and distribution of culture (Durham & Kellner, 2006, p. xxvii).¹⁹ More importantly,

[...] “political economy” does not merely pertain solely to economics, but to the relations between the economic, political, technological, and cultural dimensions of social reality. The structure of political economy links culture to its political and economic context and opens up cultural studies to history and politics. It refers to a field of contestation and antagonism and not an inert structure [...] (Durham & Kellner, 2006, p. xxvii)

Postcolonial historian Arif Dirlik (2002) attests to the fact that all along, within postcolonial studies, there have been “Third World voices dissatisfied with the containment of the colonial experience within the categories of capitalism, demanding a hearing for the psychological and cultural dimensions of colonialism to which racism was of fundamental significance” (p. 431). However, Dirlik also recognizes that:

Globalization returns us to a condition where once again it is capitalism, rather than colonialism, that appears as the major problem. The avoidance of this question is a serious problem of contemporary postcolonial criticism which, focused on past legacies, is largely oblivious to its own conditions of existence and its relationship to contemporary configurations of power. It also ignores the ways in which its interpretation of the past may serve to promote or, at the least, play into the hands of a globalized capitalism. (2002, p. 440)

Even as the ideology of nationalism emerged from the ashes of European colonialism, the idea of the postcolonial nation is associated with “a heightened sense of loss, however elusive may be the ‘self’

that has been lost, and of powerful imaginings: basing its claims on history.” This has driven “the search for an authentic identity, against the colonial legacy, that is autochthonous both in origin and the fulfillment of its historical destiny.” It is also the reason why “the search for national and ethnic identity against colonialism or memories of colonialism plays a powerful part in contemporary politics and culture” (Dirlik, 2002, p. 444). In keeping with some of the opening perspectives in this chapter, Dirlik maintains that colonialism, violent and unjust as it may have been, has “created cultural bonds between the colonizer and the colonized, which have shaped irrevocably the cultural identities of both and which survive decolonization” (2002, p. 445). In the contemporary landscape of international relations, however, these bonds have become pronouncedly antagonistic as former colonial powers face-off against ex-colonies in the battle for national ascendancy. There is thus, a need for “historicizing colonialism,” Dirlik urges, so we do not “erase the history of the present, and the part colonialism has played in shaping both its structures and its identities” (Dirlik, 2002, p. 440).

This book uses India, as a specific case, to critically investigate the deliberate and strategic manufacturing of a fetishized and commodified postcolonial national identity, though the practices of nation-branding, in order to “fix” the country’s cultural uniqueness, and establish its distinctiveness from, and rank among other nations. *Defined for centuries by its former British rulers as a possession*—the Jewel in the Crown—postcolonial India, having seen seventy plus years of independence, is *more deliberately fashioning its own brand of Indianness as an economic and cultural asset* that can accrue equity both internally and externally. As an emerging economy, India is poised to overtake China (Mourdoukoutas, 2018),²⁰ but is confronted with internal divisiveness along the lines of religion, race/ethnicity, and caste. The rise of Hindu neo-nationalism (Hindutva) as the hegemonic force in shaping the idea of postcolonial India, alongside the economic liberalization of India since the late 1990s, has prompted Hindutva to align itself with the nation’s neoliberal goals, thus contributing to a flourishing political economy of market-driven fundamentalism—or what media studies scholar Arvind Rajagopal has termed “Retail Hindutva” (2001a, p. 66)²¹. Rajagopal explains how:

Apart from ideological indoctrination, Hindu identity began to be retailed, by means of discrete commodified images, such as stickers, buttons, and armbands, and the exhortation of discrete acts of support from token participation at rallies to *kar seva*.²² Increasingly, particular kinds of consumption were used to inculcate a different relationship between individuals and the polity, signaled by the introduction of nationwide television programming in the mid-1980s, and to define a new style of citizenship commensurate with this shift. (2001a, p. 61)

Rajagopal writes about how the immense popularity of Hindu epics, like *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, broadcast as television serials, transformed what had been secular media entertainment into a quasi-religious past-time. By resurrecting Hindu mythology as the origin of a centuries-old, made-in-India cultural identity that affirmed the uniqueness and supremacy of Indian (read: Hindu) values and culture, the televised epics joined other “retail Hindu commodities” that “opened Hindu nationalism up to a wide audience.” In the process. “[a]s political propaganda mimicked the language of advertising, and the social landscape itself became a metaphor for the market, the categories of voter and consumer increasingly began to merge into each other” (Rajagopal, 2001a, pp. 67–68).

The Political Fetish and Modi-fying India

FirstPost reporter Sandip Roy (2014)²³ details how Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as the informal brand ambassador for Hindutva (Hindu-based cultural nationalism), has spurred the sale of all types of products bearing his name or likeness. From a NaMo (short for Narendra Modi) store in a high-end Ahmedabad mall that sells Modi-related fashionwear and other merchandise, to *kurtas* modeled after the Prime Minister’s own, to plush Modi Lion toys, this “cottage industry of memorabilia springing up around Modi, both in *mithai* [sweet] shops with Modi *pedas* [type of sweetmeat] and in

upscale malls,” Roy (2014) observes, “is really a comment on the *commodification of our politics* where the man and his message can be merchandised. And *the sales figures are regarded as a mark of his political salability*” (parentheses and emphases mine).

Advertising guru Santosh Desai explains that the success of commodifying Brand India lies in the fact that “it allows for the translation of a large, abstract concept into an ownable and easy-to-consume confection.” If the old state-sponsored method of establishing a public presence for political figures meant “giant statues in public parks,” or “endless government schemes” and streets named after political “royalty” and their VIP friends, then Modi, according to Roy, has moved to a “more market-savvy, people-friendly” kind of branding. The commodification of Modi may have its lighter side, but there is also a “deadly” earnestness to it: “Brand Modi becomes an act of reflection with the multiplying effect of a hall of mirrors. As Modi stands at the rally, beaming, waving to the crowd, the jubilant crowd gazes back at him draped in NaMo paraphernalia—Modi masks, Modi t-shirts, Modi-kurtas” (Roy, 2014).²⁴ With the neoliberal turn in politics, where image is everything, political brands are symbolically proliferated through commodity fetish-signs. They stand for very specific ideological values, so that in the case of Modi, citizens who self-fetishize by wearing or using NaMo paraphernalia, are showing their support for Hindutva, economic patriotism, and for the Prime Minister (PM), while also masking the “lack” of a coherent Indianness, apart from Modi-nomics translated as *India Inc.*

According to anthropologist William Pietz (1985),²⁵ every fetish “is a singular articulated identification [...] unifying events, places, things, and people, and then returning them to their separate spheres (temporal occurrence, terrestrial space, social being, and personal existence)” (p. 13). In other words, “the fetish [...] acts as a material space gathering an otherwise unconnected multiplicity into the unity of its enduring singularity [...]” (1985, p. 15). Sociologist Shiv Visvanathan (2017)²⁶ comments on the “production and consumption of Mr. Modi in public life,” as a *political fetish*,²⁷ adding that:

The analysis then focuses on image-building, on how Mr. Modi has become the collective Rorschach of an era. Brand Modi projected Mr. Modi as an act of conquest, an attempt by a rank outsider to conquer and domesticate Lutyens’ Delhi. The historical trope was clear. It was the second conquest of Delhi, an overthrow of the Congress as a Mughal regime, with Mr. Modi playing [the Hindu Rajput king] Rana Pratap. *It was also in brand terms, an act of erasure.* (Visvanathan, 2017, parentheses and emphasis mine)

Not only is Brand Modi the symbolic face of a *new* India, proving that old dynastic orders such as the Gandhi family and the Congress Party could be overthrown, but as a *political fetish*, he also represents the promise of a class reversal in neoliberal India, evidenced by the rags-to-riches story of his rise to fame from his humble beginnings as a tea-stall urchin. He reflects the “success” story of “Vibrant Gujarat,” and the promise of building India’s GDP through the “Make in India” initiative. He embodies a Hindutva-based neoliberal nationalism, visually reinforced by his Party’s official color, saffron, and the lotus insignia. Modi’s successful effort at globalizing Indian traditions by advocating an International Yoga Day that was unanimously backed by the United Nations General Assembly, also earned him credibility among his followers who see him as the best brand ambassador for the country. All of these associations with Modi as the *political fetish* are transferred, in turn, to the nation-brand of *India Inc.* As one fetish-sign (Modi) substitutes for another (the nation-brand), and the reification of national identity accompanies its rarefaction.

The philosopher Slavoj Žižek (1989)²⁸ reminds us that the Lacanian notion of the “Real” is an “empty place” (p. 135), since the “Real” cannot be inscribed.²⁹ What can be inscribed though, as Žižek points out, is the “impossibility itself, we can locate its place; a traumatic place which causes a series of failures” (Žižek, 1989, p. 172). This, I suggest, is the site of the fetish—a *place where object identity is substituted in the place of a traumatic loss of subject identity*. Following through with Lacan’s position, Žižek (1989) maintains that if the subject is an “answer of the Real,” the subject itself becomes a void, an emptiness, a refusal to be inscribed (p. 173). In the realm of the “symbolic” however, identity is

possible because each element “*takes the place of the lack in the other*, embodies what is lacking in the other” (p. 172, emphasis mine). Identity thus becomes a positive affirmation of a negation or lack. This is the operation of the fetish in the discursive space of the postcolonial Indian imaginary. The political fetish of Modi, for example, is a substitute for a lack (authentic pre-colonial cultural identity) that, in turn, is also constituted by other signs (the Taj Mahal, yoga, Indian food, the subaltern, etc.) to cover that lack. Thus, the trauma of the absence of an original uncontaminated Indianness is covered over by constructing a presence out of absence. Each fetish sign belongs in a chain of substitutions where there is an equivalence of meaning established between these circulating fetish signs. In the process, we are left with the logic of what Žižek calls, the “*negation of the negation*” (emphasis mine). In his words,

[...] this double, self-referential negation does not entail any kind of return to positive identity, any kind of abolition, of cancellation of the disruptive force of negativity [...] the whole point is just that *we come to experience how this negative, disruptive power, menacing our identity is simultaneously a positive condition of it*. The “negation of the negation” does not in any way abolish the antagonism, it consists only in the experience of the fact that this immanent limit which is preventing me from achieving my full identity with myself simultaneously enables me to achieve a minimum of positive consistency, however mutilated it is. (1989, p. 176)

Since the *double-negation* implies that the negation of the negation must incorporate the positive (erasing the positive, after all, creates the negative), Žižek formulates the potential for new possibilities in this double negation movement, “which opens the very place where every positive identity can be situated” (1989, p. 177). It is in the antagonism between how Indian identity has been pre-reconstituted (first by British colonizers, and now through dominant Euroamerican discursive formations), and how it is being re-constructed (in postcolonial narratives), that the “secret” of subject-ing through fetish-signs is thus contained.

The careful construction of the *political fetish* has a price tag, though. The Modi government had spent an enormous sum of nearly INR 3,755 crore [approx. USD 545 million] on its publicity efforts in just three and half years, as of October 2017, according to a statement from the Information and Broadcasting Ministry in response to a “Right to Information” (RTI) petition filed by social activist Ramveer Tanwar. The figure covers only television, Internet and other electronic media ads and does not reflect expenditures on outdoor and print advertisements. A previous RTI revealed that the Modi administration had spent nearly INR 8.5 crore [approx. 1.2 million USD] crore on newspaper advertisements for the Prime Minister’s monthly radio address “Mann Ki Baat,” as of July 2015 (IANS, 2017).³⁰ Thus, even as Brand Modi seems to be a “labor of love”—for Hindutva and *India Inc.*—and a “singular articulated identification [...] unifying events, places, things, and people” (Pietz, 1985, p. 15), what the fetishistic surface of the brand (produced by ads, slogans, social media posts/apps, propaganda, and Modi-gear) deflects citizens’ gaze away from is the amount of money that has been invested in creating the Modi brand. Instead, it focuses attention on how much money the brand makes *for* individual entrepreneurs and the nation, because of the “Modi touch.”

Bipin Chauhan tailors Modi’s attire and is well-known for fashioning Modi’s trademark kurtas and jackets. Chauhan’s twenty two *Jade Blue* stores have a dedicated section labeled “Modi kurtas and jackets” and the items are flying off the shelves. “NaMo” by *Katha* is another brand that only sells Modi jackets through its retail fronts (Roy, 2017).³¹ In both cases, the profitable sale of fashion items associated with the celebrity that Modi embodies, showcases how promoting the NaMo brand can be lucrative for everyone, by association. Similarly, Hriday Deka, owner of Deka Sweets in the state of Assam, was euphoric that he got the PM’s advice on how to market his sweetmeats, when the latter reached out to him, via video conference, to see how “the *Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana*, launched in 2015 to benefit small-scale traders, has helped the beneficiaries across the country.” In the young man’s own words:

“When I started my business, I had two employees. It has now grown up to seven. The loan that I received twice without having to run from pillar to post has changed my life. Now, I don’t have to struggle to run my family. My income has risen with the growth of my business. I will remain indebted to Modi government” [...]. (Qtd. in Mazumdar, 2018)³²

In the lead-up to the 2019 elections, the official NaMo app, it is planned, will allow the Prime Minister to connect directly with each of the twenty-two crore beneficiaries of the various government schemes. He has already started interacting with farmers, self-help groups, housewives, who were the beneficiaries of a cooking gas scheme, and with the residents of recently-electrified villages. “PM Modi wants to send across a very clear message. These are the forgotten men and women of India. He is trying to communicate with each of them,” said an official source (“PM Narendra Modi plans,” 2018, July 24).³³ The impression that such connectivity can bring the “magical” touch of *vikas* (progress) via NaMo as the *political fetish* into the lives of ordinary citizens, and even subalterns, reinforces the publicized myth that Modi’s success will rub off on the citizens he interacts with.

Just before voters went to the polls in 2014, an opposition leader put down Modi declaring that, “Someone rising from a tea shop can never have a national perspective.” It prompted a group of BJP supporters to design and print T-shirts supporting Modi’s candidacy, as part of what they termed a “Modi-fying India” campaign. While the front of the T-shirts showed an image of Modi, with the words, “I support Narendra Modi for PM,” the back of the T-shirts carried the image of a steaming cup of tea, and a challenge in Hindi: “*Ek chaiwala PM kyu nahi ban sakta? Jisne Gujarat badla hain who Hindustan kyu nahi badal sakta? Modi mera PM*” (Why can’t a tea vendor become the PM? Why can’t the man who has transformed the state of Gujarat also transform Hindustan? Modi is my PM). The campaigners planned to distribute about ten lakh T-shirts to tea vendors across the country. They also urged other BJP supporters to print and distribute the T-shirts in various parts of the country.

Since the safety of women has been a highly politicized issue following the global media coverage of the Nirbhaya rape case (see Ch. 2 and 6 for details), the same group of Modi supporters also promised the release of a low-cost pepper spray for women. The ad announced that “Namo Power” self-defense pepper spray was coming soon. It showed a photograph of Modi, arm raised, in campaign pose. The ad copy encouraged women to protect themselves from “attackers, rapists, kidnappers” by using the spray, and carried the following quote from Modi: “If women feel unsafe, we shouldn’t call ourselves MARD [men]” (Bhattacharya, 2013, capitals in the original).³⁴ The machismo inherent in Modi’s grandiose public statements is also an indicator of the hardline masculinist stance that he and his Party have advocated as a corrective to enhance India’s global position and make it an emerging power to contend with. In the run-up to the 2014 election, Modi got into a heated exchange with Samajwadi Party leader Mulayam Singh Yadav while defending his ability to expand the economic success he had achieved as its Chief Minister in the state of Gujarat, to transforming the nation as a whole. Modi retaliated with: “*Netaji* [this leader] has said that Modi does not have what it takes to make another Gujarat out of UP [Uttar Pradesh]. Do you know what making another Gujarat requires? [...] It requires a *chappan inch ki chhati* (56-inch chest)” (emphasis and square parentheses mine). Yet, two years later, when he was being measured for his formal convocation robes for a university function, it turned out the PM’s chest only measured fifty inches (Jain, 2016).³⁵ Shiv Visvanathan explains how postcolonial India was easily seduced by such shows of masculine bravado—having suffered “the angst of third-worldness and secondariness,” it “suddenly felt a muscular confidence about itself.” Modi catered to the deep-seated desires of a middle-class that longed to be respected as global Indians—able to become NRIs if they wished, and see India occupy a seat in the Security Council and earn its rightful place in the nuclear club. Mr. Modi created what Visvanathan describes as “a foreign policy for internal consumption which was different from a foreign policy for external consumption.” The homespun version of this “was a nonsense theory of Pakistan, no tolerance idea of Nepal, a muscular sense of Indian cavorting with the

biggest and best. It was a view of power for those who lived through stereotypes about it.” Secondary to this vision was the more grounded idea of India as a site for “experiments in governance and a place for investment.” Modi’s immense popularity across socio-economic classes was because he “projected a new role for India in history, and Indians loved it” (Visvanathan, 2017).

In terms of communication strategy in creating Brand India through Brand Modi, Visvanathan surmises that “Brand Modi needed gossip, needed folklore, stories to spread,” all of which make him “a larger than life character in oral and digital life.” By his skillful rhetorical skills and adeptness in using social media, he has created “a *semiotic self*” which can “*simultaneously evoke tradition and digital modernity, without creating any sense of contradiction. [...]*” His appeal lies in the fact that he “enacts this performance in every speech by creating a prime ministership made-easy, giving everyone a sense of the accessibility of power, both through body signals and language. [...]

Arguably, the political fetish of Modi is therefore a space of *double-negation* since it depends on the commodified political signs that cater to the consumer-citizens’ desires rather than on real governance. It also signals another space of lack which is that of “authentic” Indianness. If postcolonial Indians look to Modi to grasp a sense of who they are, and Modi reflects back what they would like to see, then the nation-brand (Modi/India) establishes the primacy of image politics, so that:

What Brand India constructed through Brand Modi was the idea of a fixer. The only thing the “Make in India” project was designed to do was to make *images* of India projecting its world of intentions. Brand Modi was the new costume ball of the Indian State in an era of globalisation. [...] Brand Modi told India that the act of mimicry, which created him, was to also construct a myth of a culturally confident India. In an odd way, *Mr. Modi is India because every Indian seems desperate to construct himself, to create a version of himself*. The speed the masculinity, the impatience has helped him create a rush-hour India [...] *Brand Modi was a victory of perception over practice of image over ideology, of the power of fiction over the realism of fact.* (Visvanathan, 2017, emphases mine)

Amanda Hess (2018),³⁶ writing for *The New York Times*, regards branding as “a process of humanization.” She is, of course, talking about putting a human face on impersonal corporations or commodities, or transforming ideas into slogans that seem to address us individually—*Nike’s* “Just Do It,” is an example. But once we personify institutions or commodities and give them a “soul” through branding, Hess fears that “our focus shifts away from things like labor practices and supply chains and onto issues of narrative and identity.” The idea of implanting a “soul” into something as abstract and impersonal as neoliberal “development” is explored as well by political scientist Nitasha Kaul (2017),³⁷ who analyzes Modi’s coining of the word “Rurban,” formed by combining Rural and Urban, for his “Rurban Mission” in Dongargad, Chattisgarh. Lauding a 104-year-old village woman from the area who had sold her goats to construct a toilet in her home, Modi hailed her as a “symbol of new development.” This model of Do-It-Yourself (DIY) development, Kaul expands, attempts to “combine the soul of the village with the facilities of the city” (p. 538). In Modi’s words, “*Aaatma hogi gaon ki, aur suvidha hogi shahar*” (qtd. in Kaul, 2017, p. 538). Translated this means that the “soul” or spirit of such development will reside in the village, but the efficiency or benefits it brings will raise the village lifestyle to that of the city.

The branding of the nation, state apparatuses, public leaders, and other aspects of political life, also distracts consumer-citizens from attending to the exploitative and colonizing aspects of corporatized nationalism, by turning their attention to a variation of what communications scholar Brooke Erin Duffy (2015) has termed “aspirational labor.”³⁸ In discussing gendered work in the digital culture industries, Duffy writes that,

Aspirational labourers pursue creative activities that hold the promise of social and economic capital; yet the reward system for these aspirants is highly uneven. Indeed, while a select few may realize their professional goals—namely to *get paid doing what they love*—this labour ideology obscures problematic constructions of gender and intersectionalities with class. (Duffy, 2015, p. 443, emphases in original)

Reworking Duffy's formulation within the Indian neoliberal political context, I propose that the work of branding oneself as a Hindutva ideologue, or a Modi supporter, is a particular kind of "aspirational labor" performed in the name of love for *one's country, culture, and religion*, where these three ideological formations have been conflated within neo-nationalism. And, while consumer-citizens are not always economically compensated for the work of supporting the branded nation and its signs, they all stand to benefit from the social and patriotic capital of being hailed as "true" Indians—a move that blocks any critique of the exclusions resulting from this narrow definition of national identity, since any challenge to equating Hindutva with Indianness is automatically labeled as unpatriotic. As Kaul (2017) elucidates, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has gained its power by making Hindutva the core premise in defining national identity, and using this to pit the contesting ideas of "Bharat" versus "India" against each other:

The Hindutva version of India is "Bharat" (literally, the Hindi word for India), which stands not just for a country that is India, but also connotes an idyll of pure Hindutva morality where there is no Westernization or its associated ills. For instance, the RSS³⁹ chief Mohan Bhagwat has said "Rapes do not happen in Bharat, they happen in India" (NDTV 2013). At various times, *Bharat is rural India, historically pure India, or an imaginary version of India that Hindus (and Indians, who are in this view, Hindus above all their other identities) must work to create*. However, with the neoliberal nationalist discourse, *this bifurcation has also come to signify the idea of a richer metropolitan urban India versus the poorer rural India*. And there are debates that refer to this latter way of connoting urban rich/rural poor divide, but this imaginary of nation is generally used so as to include the moral dimension and degree of Westernization/indigenous purity. The meanings shift in relation to the framing, as columnist Pattanaik (2013) writes (Mid-Day, 29 December 2013): "And so, *depending on the context, India becomes liberal to feudal homophobic patriarchal Bharat, or India becomes Western stooges to traditional, rooted and grounded Bharat*. Depending on the context, government policies seem to favour either India or Bharat. *Depending on the context, India has to learn from Bharat or Bharat has to learn from India.*" (Kaul, 2017, p. 540, emphases mine)

In the end, both "Bharat" and "India", Kaul reminds us, "are constructed for particular political purposes" (2017, p. 540).⁴⁰ What *Manufacturing Indianness* therefore examines is how the building blocks of this new corporatized and branded Indianness facilitate a reworking of history and cultural memory, both of which have tremendous implications in a post-fact era.⁴¹ Delivering the 2018 Jehangir Nicholson Memorial Lecture in Mumbai, India, political historian Sunil Khilnani addressed "the danger of mythologising facts, which prevents people from debating about them." According to Khilnani, "History has only been glorified. It is not appreciated when it is 'complicated' by asking questions. If you can de-mythologise, you can re-humanise" (qtd. in Deodhar, 2018). To learn who we are, he suggests, requires the type of critical inquiry that can challenge "widely held beliefs."

Discussing the contradictions within Indian historical narratives, he cites the example of Emperor Ashoka who is often hailed as an exemplar of non-violence, but who, it should not be forgotten, also had a deeply violent past, waging wars and ruthlessly slaughtering millions, before he turned to Buddhism. Similarly, in addressing how Indian history is fond of transforming strong and capable female rulers/warriors into goddesses, Khilnani observes about Rani Padmini, whose story inspired Sanjay Leela Bhansali's controversial film *Padmaavat* (2017), that:

"People are fearful when figures such as her are portrayed as human beings with emotions. Vasundhara Raje said that '*Her myth is our self-esteem, which seems to suggest that myth is the only way we know ourselves to be worthwhile*. [...] We need to move away from such essentialism and romanticisation' [...]. (Qtd. in Deodhar, 2018, emphasis mine)

The challenge in constructing a postcolonial idea of India, therefore, lies in being critically on guard and refraining from a self-Orientalization whereby history is mythologized by turning historical facts into ideological fetishes. In fetishizing specific historical events and personalities, but discouraging

different perspectives about the same historical evidence, we allow the political manipulation of facts and move into the domain of a *post-history*, or a *history that is based upon post-facts*. There are three reasons for this, Khilnani posits. The first is economic, since following liberalization, “there was an urge to dispose off [*sic*] history, which was considered baggage or bunk. It was not seen as having economic value.” The second factor concerns “the substitution of memory for fact, whereby people give up on history.” The final issue is “weaponisation, visible in instances [...] where historical events [form] the basis to make present demands,” according to Khilnani (in Deodhar, 2018, parentheses mine). Examining such cultural motivations and transformations through a postcolonial psychoanalytic lens is helpful because it prompts, as Lacanian postcolonial critic Derek Hook (2008) argues, a

[...] view of a general analytics of the contents and dynamics of unconscious desire (racial/sexual fantasies; affective economies and relational subject-positioning). It also allows us to identify potential subversions (slippages of [neo]colonial authority and identity; the “return effect” of colonial desire) and to bring into focus those *process* elements (metaphoric condensation, metonymic displacement) that spread and sustain racist ideology and thereby much of the underlying rationality of (post)colonial power. (Hook, 2008, p. 279, original emphasis)⁴²

Getting at the root of “the contents and dynamics of unconscious desire” in nationalist agendas is critical for this project, especially considering the recent political flare-ups over territorial issues involving India and its close neighbors Pakistan and China, and incidents of externally sponsored terrorism that have caused the sub-continent to become more vigilant about tightening its borders, even though free market trade demands the exact opposite.⁴³ In turn, the following chapters examine how Indianness as a culturally, economically, and politically invested fetish-sign is being used variously—as an instrument of soft power, a weapon of exclusion and terror, and a symbolic asset within the intertwined discourses of nation-building and nation-branding, to shape the increasingly colonizing imaginings of a Hindutva-based neo-nationalism.

The Fetish as a Critical Device

David Bennett (2005)⁴⁴ refers to how Freud identified the crowning achievement of psychoanalytic research as being “his discovery of the ‘economic’ model of the mind, which explained the psyche as an ‘economy’ of libidinal energy that could be pleasurably ‘spent’ or discharged in sexual activity, productively invested in work, or unproductively dammed up in the unconscious by neurosis.” In both *The Interpretation of Dreams* and his case history of “Dora,” Bennett informs us, “Freud had developed an elaborate monetary analogy for psychical processes, explaining repressed sexual desire as a form of unused ‘capital’, or sleeping asset, which requires an ‘entrepreneur’ to invest it profitably [...]” Freud’s clinical and theoretical writings are filled with “monetary metaphors and concepts, including descriptions of psychoanalysis itself as, variously, a form of gold mining, alchemy, burglary, or safe-picking,” all derived from “a long tradition of pseudo-scientific medical writing,” from the 18th century, in which sexual energy and sexual fluids were described as “a form of liquid currency that could be prudently saved or pleasurably spent, productively channeled into business enterprise or recklessly squandered in erotic activity” (Bennett, p. 6). Ernest Dichter (1907–91), regarded as the “father of motivational research,” tapped into this Freudian wealth by making libidinal associations between commodity fetishes such as soap, and the consumer’s relationship with them.⁴⁵ Psychoanalysis therefore, understands the political economy of desire that underlies the affective economy of exercises such as nation-branding, where the fetish signs of national identity are the cultural and emotional currency *as well as* debt of the neoliberal nation.

The etymological origins of the term “fetish,” refer back to several fragmented meanings. The Latin root *facticius* refers to “made by art,” and the Portuguese word *feitço* means “artificial, or skillfully contrived.” The notion of the sign taking the place of substance is also reflected in words from the other

Romance languages derived from the same Latin root. In Spanish, *afeitar* means “to make up, adorn, embellish,” and the French *feint* implies what is “feigned, simulated.”⁴⁶ All the roots of “fetish” thus imply a presencing through subterfuge; a deferral of what is absent through the process of endless substitution, and the creation of a hyper-reality that conceals the anxiety of a missing origin.

Within anthropological discourse, the fetish announced the unequal currency of exchange between capitalist and non-capitalist cultures. It signaled a difference in value systems that was ideologically employed to justify colonization by inferring that certain cultures were primitive, infantile and therefore open to conquest and appropriation. Fetishism therefore came to mean a lack in racial standards, whereby the white, European culture was perceived as hierarchically superior than all other non-white cultures. William Pietz (1985)⁴⁷ writes that the defining characteristic here “is that of the fetish object’s irreducible materiality.” As Pietz informs us, “The truth of the fetish resides in its status as a material embodiment; its truth is not that of the idol, for the idol’s truth lies in its relation of iconic resemblance to some immaterial model or entity” (p. 7).⁴⁸

Within psychoanalytical discourse, fetishism was also based upon substitution and displacement, but regarded as a perversion. In the 1880s, Alfred Binet used the term “fetish” to refer to the “sexual adoration” of inanimate objects (in McClintock, 1995, p. 189).⁴⁹ Fetishism became equated with a perverse fixation on objects that were invested with erotic energy. Psychoanalytical fetishism is built around the assumption of penis envy/fixation, and castration anxiety. In the Freudian model, the male child upon seeing the lack of the “maternal phallus” fears that he too will be castrated. He therefore substitutes the missing phallus with a substitute (the fetish object) that conceals his “trauma” and disavows his anxiety. Henceforth, the child is determined to own the phallus in order to avoid emasculation. He moves away from the mother and identifies with his father, and so passes through the Oedipal phase into sexual maturity. Thus, in the case of the psychoanalytical fetish, the fetish as a substitute for the maternal phallus becomes the spectacle or the spectacular for the gaze of the fetishist.⁵⁰

Lacan (1982) maintains that only the male subject can fetishize; the female can be the object *not* the subject of fetishism. Since the fetishist is driven by the perverse desire to preserve the *maternal* phallus, Lacan concludes that “fetishism *must* be absent in women” (p. 96).⁵¹ Though Lacan does identify female fetishism in lesbians, he places this discovery in the context of “disappointed heterosexuality.” Within this logic, the male subject is ‘normal’ in his perversion (fetishism) because it is contained within heterosexual desire and the phallic drama. However, the female subject is abnormal if she is a fetishist (as in the case of the lesbian) since she prefers her own sex and turns away from heteronormativity. Woman is thus colonized within the discourse of psychoanalysis, which requires her to be the *object* of male desire within normative sexuality.⁵²

The advent of industrialization brought fetishism into the theoretical scope of Marxism, where it was used to explain consumerist tendencies of collecting, desiring, exhibiting, touching, possessing, and gazing at material objects. In the case of Marxism, the commodity fetish is proof of the *misrecognition* of actual value, since the commodity accumulates *surplus* value through a system of exchange. The labor power that goes into producing a commodity cannot be inscribed upon its surface, so that the value of the commodity is determined only by its *exchange*. The commodity’s value thus becomes determined by its relation to other commodities in the market, and by its representation as the substitute for the consumer’s desire. In the exchange of substitute value for substitute value, money becomes the most abstract form of the commodity fetish. Money operates in the realm of the symbolic and appears detached from both the commodity and from labor, the primary source of commodity value.⁵³ Commodity fetishism, based upon a *willing misrecognition*, is thus the *triumph of appearance as a substitute for the real thing (desire/value)*.⁵⁴

The fetish is therefore a conflated site of the political economy of desire involving race, sexuality, and colonization. The viewing of colonized cultures as primitive, effeminate, and child-like, allowed what Abdul R. JanMohamed (1986) has called the West’s “fetishization of the Other”:

All the evil characteristics and habits with which the colonialist endows the native are thereby not presented as the products of social and cultural difference but as characteristics inherent in the race—in the “blood”—of the native. In its extreme form, this kind of fetishization transmutes all the specificity and difference into a magical essence. (p. 86)⁵⁵

In its utilization as a substitute for absence or lack, *the fetish poses a problem of missing subjectivity* (the fetish is after all an object). I prefer Anne McClintock’s (1995) reading however, which far from viewing the fetish as a mere phallic or commodity substitute, sees it instead as “*the displacement onto an object (or person) of contradictions that the individual cannot resolve at a personal level*” (p. 184, emphasis mine). McClintock further posits that the fetish stands at the “cross-roads of both personal and historical memory,” marking a “crisis in social meaning as the embodiment of an impossible irresolution” (p. 184). By controlling and manipulating the fetish object, the individual is able to gain symbolic control over their anxieties/traumas. Thus, as McClintock indicates, the fetish “can be called an impassioned object” (p. 184).

Whether the fetish is used as the overdetermined site of national identity, or as the objectification of the colonized Other within the postcolonial nation, it can be used to destabilize representations as well, and consequently produce a counter-discourse of its own. William Pietz (1985) explains:

The fetish is always a meaningful fixation of a singular event; it is above all a “historical” object, the enduring material form and force of an unrepeatable event. This object is “territorialized” in material space (an earthly matrix), whether in the form of a geographical locality, a marked site on the surface of the human body, or a medium of inscription or configuration defined by some portable or wearable thing. [...] This reified, territorialized historical object is also “personalized” in the sense that beyond its status as a collective social object it evokes an intensely personal response from individuals. This intense relation to the individual’s experience of his or her own living self through an impassioned response to the fetish object is always incommensurable with (whether in a way that reinforces or undercuts) the social value codes within which the fetish holds the status of a material signifier. *It is in those “disavowals” and “perspectives of flight” whose possibility is opened by the clash of this incommensurable difference that the fetish might be identified as the site of both the formation and the revelation of ideology and value-consciousness.* (Pietz, 1985, pp. 12–13, emphasis mine)

Pietz’s excellent suggestion that the fetish may be used to reveal its ideological underpinnings can be taken one step further. I argue that the fetish may extend beyond its location in material signifiers and be ‘territorialized’ in an image/imagining of another *idea* that it refers back to, but cannot and must not reproduce. Thus, the fetishization of Indianness, and of the Indian nation within the postcolonial imaginary forms the location of such a subjectivity, since it refers back to a pre-colonial origin that is both displaced and missing. Moreover, as Pietz has claimed, fetishism acts as a pointer to an “unrepeatable first form” and subsequently produces degraded reflections of this primary form. It is therefore susceptible to endless repetitions of itself that draw disquieting attention to its process of Othering.

A critical reading of postcolonial Indian nationalism can be achieved following Pietz’s recommendation that one should examine *the ideology behind the fetish*. The Indian nation is fetishistically reproduced through specific sights/sites that stand as signifiers of an absent/missing *authentic* idea of the origins of Indianness. To understand what this substitution means, entails a psychoanalytical diversion. Freud talks about the ‘fact’ of maternal castration in his 1927 essay “Fetishism,” and classical psychoanalysis describes the displacement of the maternal phallus onto material objects like furs, shoes, velvet, etc. The fact that the fetish object as the “other phallus” need not bear any actual resemblance to the real phallus, and the fact that there was *no* castration of the maternal penis (itself a fantasy), allows what Emily Apter (1993) terms a “subversive logic” of the fetish (pp. 4–5). Here, she draws from Sarah Kofman to remind us that the fetish stands for the *imagined* lack of a real lack, and therefore already presences an absence (Apter, “Introduction,” p. 5).

The *real* “trauma” that the colonizing narratives of neoliberal Indian nationalism attempt to conceal is two-fold: the lack of a pre-colonial *authentic* origin, along with the fear that the postcolonial nation lacks the virility to be regarded as a powerful contender among other neoliberal countries. The fact that the fetish points to an absent location (there was no unified Indian nation prior to the formation of the postcolonial state, and no ‘Indian’ subjects), elicits a disavowal, whereby the anxiety prompted by such a lack is projected onto a cultural/national Other (Muslim/ subaltern poor/ western nations, etc.). By establishing this point of difference, the postcolonial manufacturers of Indianness thus seek to construct a sense of a national-cultural Self. This rhetorical strategy bears close resemblance to the Othering of the Indian ‘native’ under British imperialism and it follows, therefore, that the discursive space of postcolonial Indian neo-nationalism stands in danger of replicating the colonizing tendency to know the Self through the Other. It was the ‘trauma’ of being discovered as ‘foreigners’ rather than the rightful owners of India that drove the British colonizers to fetishize the figure of the Indian native and produce the rhetoric of colonial manifest destiny. In a similar vein, the violent communal conflicts that are the legacy of the Indo-Pakistan Partition, the sustained emasculation from being labeled a poor third-world nation, and the recurring fear of being recolonized by western culture, have driven pro-Hindutva supporters in postcolonial India to claim ethnic and cultural purity as the definitive strength of a neoliberal Indianness, and to re-invigorate patriotic pride by emphasizing India’s upturn as an emerging economy. In turn, this determination to project a progressive and potent economic nationalism has resulted in the fetishization of a Young India, and a masculinist model of citizen-participation that can confidently reassert *India Inc.*’s brand equity in the international arena.

By examining the “subversive logic” of the fetish, however, we can move to decolonize the narratives of Othering that locate the fetish as the passive object of national desire. In the re-construction of Indianness—be it through the cultural nationalism of Hindutva, the neoliberal economic nationalism of *India Inc.*, or the affective economy of the neo-Orientalist nation-scape of *Incredible India*—the fetish presents an affective articulation of seemingly incommensurable tensions/differences. This formulation of national identity in terms of contradictions—progressive yet subaltern, feminine and nurturing yet strong and manly—poses what psychologist Gregory Bateson termed the “double-bind.”⁵⁶ What’s crucial in the case of the double-bind is that “[t]he situation is *not* a single trauma, rather a *repetitive activity that creates an habitual expectation*” (Gibney, 2006, p. 50; emphasis mine). When applied to the study of communication and culture, the “double bind” can be applied to any social situation in which the individual is asked to occupy two contradictory identity positions at the same time (Bordo, 1999, p. 242).⁵⁷ In deconstructing the various “double-binds” that inform the attempts to ‘fix’ Indian national identity, what the fetish as a critical tool can *reveal*, are the anxieties and fears behind such figurations that motivate the formation of what I call *geographies of crisis*. The term refers to the ideological and moral remapping of cultures, people, and places, to accentuate the threat of difference that they are made to present.

Let us consider an example where the fetish can be productively employed as a *tool of discovery* that can unmake such *geographies of crisis*. The term “Third World” was conceived originally by developed nations to categorize newly formed postcolonial nations that were not part of the modernized world.⁵⁸ However, this shared identity also allowed the developing nations attending the 1955 Bandung Conference to “assert a *common will* for an alternative to the polarizing capitalist–socialist confrontation.” While “the Third World’s projection of utopian longings has been tied to the vision of national liberation and independent development” (Lai, 2007, p. 306), this objective has been compromised by the liberalization of postcolonial economies and the Third World neoliberal nation-state subsequently becoming “an agent of the global capitalist regime and itself a source of oppression” (Lai, 2007, p. 307). Postcolonial feminist scholar Chandra Talpade Mohante (1991) reminds us, therefore, that the term “Third World”:

[...] foreground[s] a history of colonization and contemporary relationships of structural dominance between first and third world *peoples*. The shift of emphasis from states to peoples takes the Third World beyond the nation-state system to “particular sociohistorical conjunctures” where “peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, as well as “minority” population (people of colour) in the US and Europe [share] *similar relationships to the state*. (Mohanty qtd. in Lai, 2007, p. 308)⁵⁹

What Mohanty suggests, is a productive alliance *across* differences to uncover the hegemonic role that the nation-state plays in supporting continuing forms of socio-historical oppression. The Third World can thus provide a critical space of coalition *outside* of the nation-state where alternative forms of community can be imagined. The fetishized “Third World” was positioned as a site of *lack* of development and civilization by First World nations, many of whom were former colonizers, and fearful that the newly formed postcolonial nations were now in a position to catch up with them. In drawing attention to the fact that such a figuring produces an ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ binary and deflects our gaze away from a *shared oppression*—namely, the marginalization and exclusion of disenfranchised peoples by the nation-state colluding with global capitalism—the fetish (Third World as sign/site) can be appropriated usefully as a site of resistance. This is why postcolonial scholar Ella Shohat prefers the term “Third World” rather than “postcolonial,” because “[t]he invocation of the Third World implies a belief that the shared history of neocolonialism and internal racism forms sufficient common ground for alliances among such diverse peoples” (Shohat, 1992, p. 111).⁶⁰ Accordingly, the fetish of the Third World can be helpful in overturning old binaries of power by presenting instead, the possibility of a collective humanity above considerations of geography and economy.

Postcolonial Nationalism and the “Trauma Aesthetic”

In a letter to journalist Gauri Gill, the British-Indian novelist Rana Dasgupta (2014)⁶¹ reminisces about an incident during a World Cup cricket match between India and England a few years prior. Indian batsman Yuvraj had scored an astonishing six sixes in one, and all cameras were on him, when he began jerking his pelvis in a simulated sexual performance. The author and his friends, who were watching this incident unfold on television, were taken aback. They later learned that Yuvraj’s gesture had followed an angry exchange between himself and the English team captain, Andrew Flintoff. It turned out that Flintoff had uttered an obscenity aimed at Yuvraj, who returned the compliment. In the Indian batsman’s words:

“He [Flintoff] said ‘I will cut your balls off, so I said, ‘You see this bat in my hand? You know where I’m going to hit you with this bat.’”
Yuvraj added, “It got me really worked up. I got really angry and just wanted to hit every ball out of the ground; and sometimes, it’s good for you and sometimes it backfires, but that day, it backfired on them.” (qtd. in Dasgupta, 2014)

Dasgupta reflects on how all Indian viewers that day had automatically grasped Yuvraj’s televised rage, even though the cause of it had been unknown:

We could see the blind rage of castration on the cricket field, and all the wounds of history. Yuvraj’s triumphant phallus was not his alone.
My friend pointed at him, jerking on the screen.
“That’s our nationalism now, you know? We don’t have an idea of India anymore. There is no content to our nationalism. There is only that jerking pelvis.

“Don’t think it’s about desire, because desire requires imagination. Its ego ideal is a nuclear missile. It is just lurid masculinity, and women are a scandal for it. It has no sensuality. It has no language.” (qtd. in Dasgupta, 2014)

Dasgupta’s friend’s critique, that Indian nationalism is at once reactionary and a display of juvenile machismo parading as postcolonial revenge, sidesteps the racist provocation deeply rooted in old

colonial antagonisms that started the exchange in the first place. Underlying it all is the simmering rage of Indian postcolonial masculinity that has felt impotent in the face of such treatment across generations. If Indian nationalism has been reduced to a “lurid masculinity” that finds its ultimate phallic fetish in the “nuclear missile,” and the protection of its culture through the containment of its women, then a postcolonial reading must attend more closely to “the connections between representation and material experience in various global locales,” and how these experiences, informed by their own histories, “intervene in the construction of everyday life” (Hegde, 2005, p. 61).⁶²

It is useful here to turn for a moment to literary scholar Pramod K. Nayar’s (2009) account of how *scar cultures* form around traumatic events. The first component of such a culture consists of “the institutional–economic–structural contexts where suffering becomes the theme of various kinds of narratives,” while the second aspect is “the encoding of emotionally meaningful discourses through specific emotional ‘dominants’ in the representation of war, contests, terrorist attacks and trauma” (p. 147). Nayar’s point is that we develop “a visual and affective literacy” (p. 147) around pain and suffering, such that specific bodies become fetish signs of heroism, victimhood, or villainy in our “moral imagination” (Nayar, 2009, p. 149). Postcolonial encounters between the former colonizers and the ex-colonized, as in the example of the cricket match discussed above, recall the imperial oppression and the violence associated with it, and thus facilitate the creation of a *scar culture*. “It is in the act of repetition and translation—into other contexts,” of the inherited practices, attitudes, and discursive formations from colonialism that are being used to keep postcolonial nations and their people in their ‘proper place’—“that a universal grammar of suffering and its concordant affects arise. They encode [postcolonial] Others into specific identities through the emotionally meaningful discourses of suffering” (Nayar, p. 149, parenthetical insertion mine).

In that sense, postcolonial national identity-making is informed by what media and cultural anthropologist Allen Feldman (2004) describes as a “trauma-aesthetic,”⁶³ namely, the visual representations, testimonies, and narratives of suffering that produce and bind an affective community both on the basis of a “*universal* experience” (in this case, of the legacy of colonial subjugation), and the specific suffering of *individual* experiences (Nayar, p. 151). Feldman’s examples stem from slavery, and the truth-and-reconciliation processes following horrific acts of communal and ethnic violence. He considers how, in the case of South Africa for instance, “the term ‘trauma’ ended up creating hierarchies of victims and suffering” (Feldman, 2004, p. 184), leading to the important realization that the wound caused by the “trauma aesthetic” is its “myth of continuity” especially in the case of the modern project, exercised through “a politics of the body” (Feldman, 2004, p. 185).⁶⁴

Classics scholar Paige DuBois, in her investigation of state-approved torture in fifth-century Athens, discusses how the slave, who was considered to be an extension of the master by virtue of being the latter’s property, could be tortured to produce spontaneous testimony that either supported or contradicted the master’s court testimony. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, commenting on the relationship between slave and master, had this to say about the nature of the slave’s truth: “The slave is a part of the master—he is, as it were, a part of the body, alive (*empukhon ti*) but yet separated (*kekhôrismenon*) from it (*Politics* 1225b)” (qtd. in Feldman, 2004, p. 187). DuBois explains that:

[...] according to Aristotle’s logic, [...] the slave’s truth is the master’s truth; it is the body of the slave that the master’s truth lies. [...] Truth is constituted as residing in the body of the slave, because he can apprehend reason, without possessing reason. [...] Truth, *alêtheia*, comes from elsewhere, from another place, from the place of the other. (DuBois, qtd. in Feldman, 2004, p. 187)

DuBois sees the recovery of testimony from the enslaved body as akin to a form of writing or inscription (in Feldman, p. 187) so that the scars on the tortured body, like branding and tattoos, become a type of *violent fetish code* that signals the hidden barbarism of the master behind the markings on the slave’s body that are evidence of the latter’s alleged infractions. The reader also becomes aware of the

inseparability of the master-slave binary, where the existence of the privileged term (master) depends on the affirming presence and even suffering of the Other (slave).

If we extend this realization to the postcolonial context, especially with regard to the relationship between the former colonizer and ex-colonized, we are reminded of psychoanalyst Octave Mannoni's (1990) insight that any social and economic analyses of postcolonial encounters—such as the incident during the cricket match raised earlier in this section—are inadequate, especially in light of the discussion above on the “trauma aesthetic” and “scar culture.” Touching upon the psychological dynamics within imperialism, Mannoni (1990) asserts that, “The colonial is not looking for profit only,” but is “greedy for certain other—*psychological*—satisfactions, and that is much more dangerous” (p. 32, emphasis mine).⁶⁵ In the contemporary Indian postcolonial context of Hindutva-based neo-nationalism, Mannoni's statement can be extended to acknowledge that the postcolonial subject too is not invested in *India Inc.* simply for neoliberal gains, either. What is at stake here is the affective cultural *desire* to defeat History and reverse the colonial-postcolonial power binary. Devra Waldman, Michael Silk, and David L. Andrews (2017)⁶⁶ illustrate this, as they deconstruct the psychological underpinnings in an international property development project, where twelve branded cricket communities are being built in major Indian cities as part of

[...] a 2011 brand license agreement signed between Anglo Indian (an international real estate investment company), and the Marylebone Cricket Club (henceforth MCC, an exclusive private members club and venerated British institution [Stoddart and Sandiford, 1998] located at Lord's Cricket Ground [known internationally as the “home of cricket”] in London, England). These communities aim to clone—emblematic of what Bianca Bosker (2013) would call *duplitecture*—iconic elements of the MCC's physical and imagined spaces. (Waldman, Silk, & Andrews, 2017, p. 180, original emphasis and parentheses)

The authors examine how these new enclosed communities “invoke and re-appropriate various expressions of (cricketing) colonialism (material, symbolic, spatial, and organizational)” that inform the architecture of desire within India's aspirational new middle-class to repurpose the British colonial lifestyle and its fetish signs. In the process, there has been the creation of “a postcolonial *colonial* Indian class within reimagined (and certainly mythologised) ‘English’ oases,” transplanted onto Indian soil (Waldman, Silk, & Andrews, 2017, pp. 180–81, original emphasis). Interestingly, the international real estate company—*Anglo Indian*—explains that its name incorporates “the entrepreneurial dynamism and fast-moving development of the market that India represents, with the more established, governance driven Western ethos of *how to do business* that *Anglo-Saxon* [...] corporate ethos represents” (qtd. in Waldman, Silk, & Andrews, p. 182, original emphasis). The neoliberal “Indian Dream”, arguably, is to belong to a transnational upwardly-mobile consumer-class where wealth and status are affirmed by the *repossession* of the fetish signs of a historical wrong (colonialism) that, in turn, the new postcolonial rich can set right. It is driven in large part by the effort to cover the “scar culture” produced by the emasculating wound of almost two hundred years of colonial subjugation.

The analyses in this book investigate this tension between the surface allure of the fetish signs produced through the neoliberal branding of Indianness, and how these signs can equally uncover or *presence* the fears and desires, as well as new systems of oppressions that they seek to conceal. Subsequently, if, within colonialism, the “erotics of power” played out in the exoticization of the colonized Other that resulted in the “subsequent inferiorization and, indeed, feminization of the Orient,” (Hook, 2008, p. 278), then arguably, the present-day appropriation of former colonial symbols by the Indian *nouveau riche*, and the takeover of British assets by Indian multinational conglomerates, are a post-colonial form of shoring power whereby the postcolonial nation seeks to recuperate its masculinity through the accumulation of the former master's signs of wealth and power. As postcolonial literary scholar Deepika Bahri (2004) succinctly puts it, “[a]mong other *posts*, the term *postcolonial* too betrays

our struggle to move away into the future while remaining pegged to the *post* of the present” (p. 482, original emphasis).

The Rise of Neo-Nationalisms

Nationalism has become *both* precarious and more predominant at a time when new communication technologies make it seem that the world is shrinking, borders appear more porous because of free trade, and a middle-class younger generation in almost every postcolonial developing economy is aspiring towards global citizenship.⁶⁷ However, postcolonial literary critic R. Radhakrishnan (1993)⁶⁸ poses the conundrum that,

[...] what we are finding is that even movements that are pitted against nationalism are using the language of nationalism in their very act of resistance. *We thus have ethnic nationalism squaring off against nationalism*: what is left untouched is the morphology of nationalism. This is clearly an indication of the extent to which nationalism has dominated the political scene for the last two hundred years or so. *It has reached a point where projects of legitimation have become unthinkable except in nationalist terms: nationalism has become the absolute standard for the political as such*. As a result, even the most ferocious counterhegemonic collective practices are forced to take on the discredited form of nationalism. (pp. 757–58, emphases mine)

Even the diaspora is defined in the language of the nation as “a home away from home”—and all too often, complicated by virtue of being “in the very heartland of ex-Colonialism” (Radhakrishnan, 1993, p. 764). The diaspora is a different kind of “contact zone” (Pratt, 1992, p. 4) since here the immigrant/refugee/exile is doubly displaced—being alienated from their original homeland, and an alien in their current domicile. The clash of identities, in terms of being insider *and* outsider in both the country-of-origin and the new country-of-residence, is a painful one. It very often results in an extra-allegiance to one’s roots through the fetishization of an “imagined community”⁶⁹ that the diasporic global citizen nostalgically wishes to preserve and evoke as an ‘authentic’ ethno-geographical source of identity.

Postcolonial theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (2002) adds another layer of complexity to this discussion in addressing the large Indian diasporic segment that comprises a “global managerial community.” As she puts it, the members of this community,

[...] *are generally the custodians of culture of the various places from which they hail. Yet their interests are unmoored*. In India we call them DIPSO, Dollar Income Private Sector. Within economic restructuring, the weakening of national capital is coupled with the weakening of the state, the redistributive powers of the state, even assuming that the state wanted to redistribute. At least when it was not so decimated by the removal of the barriers between national and international capital, there was a possibility of asking for constitutional redress as something serious rather than derisive. *The people who speak for the state are now the people who really have more global connections than state based connections*. (Qtd. in Hegde & Shome, 2002, p. 282, emphases mine)⁷⁰

Not only this, but the prioritization of the nation in the public political sphere has caused a schizophrenic dichotomy, so that, as postcolonial historian and political theorist Partha Chatterjee (1990) acknowledges,

[...] nationalism in such a situation becomes a male preserve, and ‘women’ are punished into becoming the vehicles of a pure interiority that takes the form of a double deprivation (*Recasting Women*, pp. 238–39).⁷¹ Women are effectively excluded both from the history of the ‘outside’ and that of the ‘inside’—yet another instance of women being used as pawns in a male game of paranoia.” (Qtd. in Radhakrishnan, 1993, p. 758)

Within the sphere of media representations, “[t]he feminine has always spurred nationalist ideology with images such as the motherland, mother tongue, nation as mother” (Hegde, 1998, p. 281).⁷² The figure

of the woman has been fetishized as the sign of cultural authenticity and the allegedly uncontaminated private sphere of home and family, the microcosmic sites of “pure” culture. Chatterjee (1989) reminds us that while British colonial discourses used the figure of the native woman-as-victim to justify the project of political and cultural imperialism in India, subsequently, Indian postcolonialists have used the fetishized figure of the mother-as-nation to locate tradition in the maternal space of the home and domesticity. There is therefore the attempt to separate the more cosmopolitan and globalized (read: westernized) Indian woman from her idealized “pure” and traditional counterpart.⁷³ A recent ethnographic analysis by sociologist Smitha Radhakrishnan (2008),⁷⁴ of the new affluent middle-class of IT-sector Indians “that is global in scope, yet Indian in essence,” sheds light on how diasporic Indians remain moored to the original homeland. Radhakrishnan details, for instance, how it is the professional women from the subcontinent, living in the “software hubs” of both Bangalore and Silicon Valley, who perform the crucial function of “re-inventing the Indian family” and fostering a “global Indianness” (p. 7).

The tension in separating the private from the public sphere, inside from the outside, is also reflected in the views of some of the early Indian leaders and thinkers. Historian Ramachandra Guha recounts a telling exchange between Mahatma Gandhi and the Nobel poet laureate Rabindranath Tagore. In 1921, Gandhi had written a piece for *Young India*, in which he critiqued the progressive reformists Ram Mohan Roy and Bal Gangadhar Tilak for using the English language as their main vehicle for communicating their ideas. Tagore viewed Gandhi’s rebuke as a display of “narrow nationalism,” to which Gandhi famously responded:

I hope I am as great a believer in free air as the Great Poet. I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. (Qtd. in Tripathi, 2013)⁷⁵

Gandhi upheld *patriotic nationalism as a political necessity* because it could unite Indians from different backgrounds and faiths to rise up against colonial rule, on the strength of a unified vision. Tagore viewed such nationalism as dangerous. In *Nationalism* (1917), the poet laureate observed: “The nation with all its paraphernalia of power and prosperity, its flags and pious hymns [...] and the literary mock thunder of its patriotic bragging, cannot hide the fact that [...] any new birth of its fellow in the world is always followed in its mind by the dread of a new peril” (qtd. in Tripathi, 2013). This battle continues in the present moment. The anxiety produced by shifting allegiances—whether to the traditional political nation, privatized State, or multinational corporation—has been heightened by the homelessness/rootlessness brought about by wars and the exigencies that provoke border-crossings, and the alienation produced by uncertain global market and labor conditions. Subsequently, the fantasy of “a return of the real” (Foster, 1996, p. 168)⁷⁶—as in a “real” home/homeland or cultural origin—has become even more alluring.

With the global emergence of neo-nationalisms⁷⁷ and the turn towards neoliberal politics⁷⁸ at the end of the 1990s, the idea of the *nation-brand* gained traction. Wally Olins (2002),⁷⁹ a world-renowned corporate identity and branding consultant, questions the consternation produced by nation-branding, asking why it is perfectly acceptable to talk about “the rise of nationalism and the growth of nation-states, the need for post-colonial societies to invent a mythical past through names of semi-historical empires, or for nations like Indonesia even to invent a new language,” but there is outrage when any of these practices become linked with “those that have been used by clever corporations and their brands for many years” (p. 246). Much like nation-building, businesses too build loyalties—“loyalties of the workforce, loyalties of suppliers, loyalties of the communities in which they operate, loyalties of investors and loyalties of customers” (Olins, 2002, p. 247). Just as with the construction of national identity, corporate branding is about “creating myths, special languages, and environments which reinforce loyalties, colours, symbols, and quasi-historical myths. They even have heroes” (Olins, p. 247). And,

Olins confidently prophesizes that in the upcoming decades, nation-branding will become established as a “quite normal national practice” (p. 248).

International policy advisor Simon Anholt is credited with coining the word *nation brand* in 1996, and developing the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index⁸⁰ (Anholt & Hildreth, 2010, p. 8).⁸¹ In his view, a country’s “good name” impacts all types of decisions such as:

[...] companies deciding where to build their factories, set up their overseas operations, market their products or outsource their industrial processes and customer service centres; governments deciding where to spend their foreign aid budgets; international sporting bodies or beauty pageants deciding which country or city will host their next event; opera and theatre companies deciding where to tour; film studios deciding where to go on location; supranational bodies like the European Union, Mercosul, NATO or ASEAN deciding which countries can join and which can’t; even governments picking their allies in times of international conflict. (Anholt & Hildreth, 2010, p. 20)

In *Brand America*, Anholt & Hildreth (2010) emphasize that the idea of the nation marketed as a brand works only if it exaggerates a foundational truth, rather than attempts to build itself upon a lie (p. 24). “Good countries, like good companies,” notes Anholt (2009),⁸² “should be product-obsessed, not story-obsessed” (p. 178). The product here, of course, is the commodified neoliberal nation:

So all responsible governments, on behalf of their people, their institutions, and their companies, need to measure and monitor the world’s perception of their nation and to develop a strategy for managing it. It is a key part of their job to try to earn a reputation that is fair, true, powerful, attractive, genuinely useful to their economic, political, and social aims, and honestly reflective of the spirit, the genius, and the will of the people. This huge task has become one of the primary skills of administrations in the twenty-first century. (Anholt, 2011, p. 9)⁸³

In his ruminations about the “good name” of a country being its most valuable asset, Anholt (2011) asserts that to be admired, a country must be relevant, and “in order to become relevant, it must participate usefully, productively, and imaginatively in the global conversations on the topics that matter to people elsewhere and everywhere” (p. 9). This idea of the neoliberal nation acting as an *ethical global citizen* is based on the notion of cultural engagement,⁸⁴ according to him, which, after all, is “much safer and more valuable a way of increasing understanding between nations than the rather risky game of reducing a country’s history, culture, and population to an infantile stereotype, and then discharging it at other nations as if from a gun” (Anholt, 2011, p. 12).⁸⁵

The cultural and regional specificity of a country cannot be overlooked, moreover, in favor of a model that celebrates that the “world is flat” (Friedman, 2005).⁸⁶ Anthropologist and political geographer David Harvey (2001)⁸⁷ observes that, “[t]hough we have been urged again and again to see the world in more unified spatiotemporal terms, history and geography still define themselves, respectively, through narrative and spatial ordering” (p. 286). Sociologist and subalternist Satish Deshpande (1998), for example, interrogates the relationship between globalization and Hindutva (Hindu cultural nationalism) that seems to be “‘closely and crucially intertwined with a geography’ (255)” (in Harvey, p. 286). Deshpande explores how independent India’s first Prime Minister—Jawaharlal Nehru’s—socialist and secular model of democratic development relied on alliances between “‘multi-dimensional relations of domination established along the inter-regional, rural-urban, and city-megacity axes’ (260)” (in Harvey, p. 286). However, this spurred oppositional “regional-ethnic movements” such as Hindutva, that tapped into “‘the ideological vulnerability of the placeless universalism of the Nehruvian nation-space,’” seeking “‘to rekindle a personalised commitment to particular places that are nevertheless embedded within the abstract social space of Hindutva’ (263)” (in Harvey, p. 286). In other words, Hindutva itself is a re-branding of Indian nationalism, and just as “Nehru had his steel mills [...] Hindutva has its symbolic centers” (Harvey, p. 287).

Communication scholar Melissa Aronczyk (2008)⁸⁸ suggests that nation branding can be “a necessary corrective to the waning importance of the nation-state in the context of globalized economic, political and cultural exchange” (p. 43). The threat to “[n]ationally *imagined* identity” (emphasis mine) posed by “the spectre of cultural homogeneity or, conversely, hyper-hybridity, stronger allegiances at the subnational, supranational or transnational levels [...] and widening networks of mobility, media and migration,” is counteracted by strategic corporate branding that builds the unique identity of the country by “consciously highlighting certain meanings and myths while ignoring others.” Nation branding has become an increasingly popular measure among governments “as a means to promote national identity while encouraging the economic benefits necessary to compete in a modern globalized world.” By combining “diverse motifs of heritage and modernization, domestic and foreign concerns, and economic and moral ideologies in the projection of national identity,” nation branding appears to many as a positive way to champion national interests, “one that lacks the ‘chauvinistic’ and ‘antagonistic’ elements of more reactionary nationalisms [...]” (Aronczyk, 2008, p. 43).

Economist Ying Fan (2010)⁸⁹ distinguishes between *national identity* and *nation branding* (also see van Ham, 2001).⁹⁰ She defines the former as the unique, foundational, and enduring characteristics that a country’s citizens accept as part of its historical legacy, and that are therefore, crucial in shaping its future. *National identity* is the “essentially irrational psychological bond that binds fellow nationals together” and creates “a sense of belonging” to the body politic (Fan, 2010, pp. 100–01). Then there is *national brand identity*, which Fan proposes, has to do more with a country’s *image* that it constantly revises and re-presents in order to influence various external audiences outside of the nation’s borders (p. 101). Where *nation-branding* goes further than mere place branding, or tourism marketing, is in determining a *central ideological concept* whose uniqueness defines the “country-of-origin.” Furthermore, this must be an idea that all the *internal* citizens, ambassadors and advocates of the nation subscribe to, and that its multiple *external* audiences accept as legitimate because of how national identity and nation-branding converge. Advertising professional V. Sunil, for example, discusses the 2007 global launch of the *Incredible India* nation-branding campaign that took place in major cities like Berlin, and New York. In it, the pitching of a corporatized *India Inc.*, ready to embark on the world stage, was still “a version of India where we [projected] our Indianness, but in a smart way” (parenthetical insertion mine). And, Sunil recalls, it was the media hype around this campaign that built the “internal excitement” among Indians *at home*, which was critical, “because that’s how the excitement spreads” (qtd. in Mathew, 2017).⁹¹

This ongoing convergence of national identity and brand image entered the public spotlight again, recently, with recent news media headlines announcing that “a hundred major monuments and historical sites [in India] are up for ‘adoption’ by private corporations, public sector undertakings and individuals under the government’s ‘Adopt A Heritage’(sic) plan” (Kesavan, 2018).⁹² Under this scheme, the historic Red Fort in Delhi, for example, will be maintained by the Dalmia Bharat Group for the next five years. This brand equivalence, attempted by linking the cultural heritage and symbolic and affective associations of the national historic sites with the sponsor’s corporate values, is all the more controversial when one considers that the “the Red Fort is *every Indian’s business*,” (emphasis mine), and that “[o]ver the past century and a half, *it has come to stand for India*” (emphases mine). Television viewers across the country are familiar with the famous monument, as “India’s prime ministers have addressed the nation on every Independence Day from the ramparts of this iconic building” (Kesavan, 2018). Among the other national landmarks that are “up for corporate ‘friending’ on the Adopt A Heritage website,” are the Taj Mahal, the Sun Temple in Konark, Fatehpur Sikri, the Residency in Lucknow, Sarnath, the Sunderbans, Pangong Lake and India Gate. These places “are India,” and critics say that while the corporate money can certainly fund restoration work that will preserve the historical legacy of the country, there should, at the very least, be “a national conversation on the relationship being proposed between private capital and national heritage.” While archeologists, art historians, preservationists, and other experts must be consulted so that the sites are not irreparably damaged, *adding the corporate sponsor’s*

name to any of the sites in question can significantly devalue the core worth of a nation's history: “There is a reason why we don't yet have the *Lacoste* Louvre or the *Walmart* Washington Monument or the *Virgin* Westminster Abbey. Some names are best left unsold” (Kesavan, 2018).

Today, technological convergence has resulted in what Sunita Rajan (Senior VP of Asia Pacific advertising sales at CNN International Commercial) calls the “experience economy”—a place where audiences want to feel the country, not just see it” (Rajan, 2017).⁹³ Therefore, instead of depicting “a country's landscape or its people through a glossy, detached lens, many of the most successful campaigns now present the country as an experience undertaken by a protagonist who can be identified with.” And, depending on who the specific target audience for that destination is, “this could be via a blogger, travel writer, business person, a family” (Rajan, 2017).⁹⁴ Google Arts & Culture and India's Ministry of Tourism have partnered to create 360-degree videos of some of the iconic destinations in India. A Press report notes that “[f]or Google Cardboard users, the experience will be even more gratifying as they can turn the 360-video into a fully immersive virtual reality (VR) experience.” Luisella Mazza, head of operations, maintains that “Google Arts & Culture brings the best of travel experiences from the world at the fingertips of culturally curious people and travel enthusiasts, and the point of *this* exercise is “to bring new and global audiences to India's rich heritage and history” (“Golden Temple features,” 2018).⁹⁵ The contemporary ‘idea’ of postcolonial India is derived, therefore, from the synergistic efforts at nation-building (by and for the country's consumer-citizens), nation-branding (for India's growing and evolving middle classes, diasporic Indians, and foreign governments, investors/business partners, and tourists), and the digital curation of an *experience economy* of national culture and history that positions India as an ancient *civilization* “rich” in its own diverse *pre-colonial* heritage (for potential travelers and armchair tourists). As Lee Edwards & Anandi Ramamurthy (2017)⁹⁶ note, “market rationality has become the defining principle for ‘successful’ national identities in the global South.”⁹⁷ Nation branding enables these nations to demonstrate that they “are ‘normal’ and that they ‘work’ (Aronczyk, 2013, p. 33), making them a safe bet in a globalized economy” (Edwards & Ramamurthy, p. 327). A leading authority on place branding, Keith Dinnie (2008) regards the nation brand as “the unique, multi-dimensional blend of elements that provide the nation with culturally grounded differentiation and relevance for all of its target audiences,” but acknowledges the need to integrate within this, aspects of national identity that ground the branding in the history and culture of the country in question (p. 15).⁹⁸

Increasingly though, as sociologist Himani Bannerji (2006)⁹⁹ asserts, “ethnic/cultural nationalisms have recently succeeded in attaining state power, often by dismantling liberal democratic states.” These nationalisms have merged “the ‘unfreedom’ of a class society” with ideologies “of the ‘free market’, a neoliberal stance with an authoritarian form of governing and ideologies that are often connected with institutional religions and their ancillary cultural practices” (Bannerji, 2006, p. 363). More significantly, “[t]here is always, in these totalitarian political projects, an appeal to antiquity, to the past, in a *retrievalist* fashion, and to myths of origin, for the purpose of mediation and legitimation” (Bannerji, 2006, p. 364, original emphasis). Discursive representations and narratives that “smuggle in selected and invented traditions with moral and religious, therefore, binding injunctions for the group members,” ensure that “culture takes on the quality of the sacred.” In fact, it is worth remembering that “[t]he ethnicities that are in power and those that are subordinated are by no means ‘natural cultural communities’, but rather they have been subjected to ideological constellations of ‘found’ and reworked cultural elements existing within the competing hegemonies of the civil society” (Bannerji, 2006, p. 364).

Postcolonial political scientist and anthropologist Partha Chatterjee (2012), reflecting upon the Indonesian President Achmed Sukarno's address at the 1955 Bandung Conference,¹⁰⁰ offers the following insight about “Nationalism Today”:

[...] we hear daily of angry men from ordinary backgrounds with little power who choose to act dangerously out of fear and resentment. But we often forget how much more thoughtless and dangerous people

in power can be when, driven by fear, they choose to arrogate to themselves the prerogative of declaring the exception. This was something that the Marxist critique of imperialism pointed out a hundred years ago: the so-called national interest in acquiring global power through competition with other nations was little more than the pursuit of class interests by dominant groups. The scene has not fundamentally changed. The nation-state may not be at its healthy best any more, but empire, too, is certainly not dead. (p. 23)¹⁰¹

We are at a juncture when “socioeconomic policies are being reconstituted the world over,” and internationally, we are confronted with rising unemployment, and growing social and economic inequities. At such a moment in India’s postcolonial history, it is crucial to investigate how “popular media has woven such disparate projects of change as the state and corporate-class led economic reforms that have opened the national economy to the vagaries of global capital and political struggles for redistribution by historically disenfranchised groups together into a *single script* about progress and rupture” (Murty, 2014, p. 211, emphasis in original).¹⁰² Interestingly, feminist and critical race scholar Madhavi Murty (2014) contends that “the term neoliberalism carries little narrative resonance in India, [...] precisely because *it is experienced as renewal and emergence*; [and] as such it is *narrated as innately and intimately Indian*” (p. 226, emphases mine). It makes sense therefore, that Prime Minister Modi’s “center right and business-friendly”¹⁰³ economic policy is labeled as “Modinomics” and directly linked with his political persona and administration. “In other words,” Murty rightly suggests, “a focus on popular cultural narratives reveals that global capital is *particularized* and operates through the frame of the nation” (2014, p. 226, emphasis mine).

As we will see in the pages that follow, “the ability to dream in the language of global capital is represented as freedom” so that global capital and neoliberalism (new times in India) in particular are constituted as inherently democratic and inclusive” (Murty, 2014, p. 226). This is why Mohan J. Dutta and Ambar Basu (2018)¹⁰⁴ highlight the need “to recognize the hegemony of cultural tropes such as ‘India Shining’ and ‘Made in India’” that continue to “erase possibilities for social justice within subaltern contexts of India” (p. 89). They urge postcolonial critics to look beyond the “Made/Make in India” rhetoric and *critique the colonizing tendencies of the postcolonial state* that are evident in the state-sponsored violence to forcibly remove subalterns from their land, the labeling of subaltern protests and activism as “anti-India, terrorist, and threats to national security,” and the exploitation of subaltern labor alongside the erasure of their sources of livelihood (Dutta & Basu, 2018, p. 89).

Old and New Ways of Understanding Postcolonialism

As former colonies gained their independence, postcolonial theory emerged in literary and cultural studies departments and programs in an attempt to capture the vast and disparate histories and experiences of emerging nations through the perspectives of their own activists, academics, and writers. Ground-breaking theoretical work done by non-western scholars such as Aimé Césaire,¹⁰⁵ Leopold Senghor,¹⁰⁶ Frantz Fanon,¹⁰⁷ Stuart Hall,¹⁰⁸ Edward Said,¹⁰⁹ Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak,¹¹⁰ Homi Bhabha,¹¹¹ Partha Chatterjee,¹¹² Arif Dirlik,¹¹³ Arjun Appadurai,¹¹⁴ and researchers in the Indian Subaltern Group,¹¹⁵ among others, raised important questions regarding cultural and political identities that were the legacy of, or antagonistic to colonialism(s), the emergence and formation of different forms of nationalism, structural inclusions and exclusions within ongoing decolonization projects, hybridity and boundary crossings, diasporic imaginings, and new economic realities arising from the postcolonial configuration of first, second, and third world nations. Ato Quayson and David Theo Goldberg (2002)¹¹⁶ identify three main preoccupations of postcolonial studies over the past few decades. These include examinations of how “empire was the laboratory of modernity; how the very constitution of Western subjectivity from the period of empire and colonialism depended on the interactions with subjected others,” and how, in the present-day context, “the processes of transnational migration and globalization ensure that these dialogic encounters destabilize centers and peripheries” (Quayson & Goldberg, 2002, p. xii).

In its first iteration, the foundational postcolonial studies text, *The Empire Writes Back* (1989) described ‘postcolonial’ broadly, as referring to “all the cultures affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin 1989, p. 2).¹¹⁷ Since then, scholars have tried to contextualize the term either by referring to a specific historic period (typically the time immediately following the independence of the colony), or by focusing on the experiences of those affected most by colonization (namely, the colonized) and thereby, often excluding the accounts of the colonizers.¹¹⁸ Anthropologists Carol Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (1993), for instance, used the term ‘postcolonial’ to categorize the latter half of the twentieth century as the aftermath of imperialism (p. 1).¹¹⁹ While Marxist philosopher and literary scholar Aijaz Ahmad (1995) argued that “postcolonial” follows the “pre-colonial” and “colonial” in a “tripartite division of history, much as colonialist historiography had once cut up the whole expanse of Indian history into Hindu, Muslim and British periods. ‘Postcolonial’ in this sense served as an end-of-history term, just as the ‘British period’ was once supposed to last forever” (p. 11).¹²⁰ “Metaphorically” then, for Anne McClintock (1995), whose work explores the intersections between race, gender and sexualities, imperialism and globalization, and visual culture and mass media, “the term postcolonialism marks history as a series of stages along an epochal road [...]—an unbidden, if disavowed, commitment to linear time and the idea of development” (p. 10).¹²¹

On the other hand, for postcolonial theorist Bill Ashcroft (1997), “‘Postcolonial’ did not mean ‘after colonialism.’” In other words, postcolonialism did not simply end when the colonizers left and the former colonies became postcolonial nations. Since “postcolonial analysis examines the full range of responses to colonialism,” it is evident to Ashcroft that, “the term ‘postcolonial society’ does not mean an historical left-over of colonialism, but a society continuously responding in all its myriad ways to the experience of colonial contact” (Ashcroft, 1997, p. 21).¹²² In fact, postcolonial literary critic Leela Gandhi sees postcolonialism as “a theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath,” adding that as “a disciplinary project,” it must be “devoted to the academic task of revisiting, remembering and, crucially, interrogating the colonial past” (1999, p. 4).¹²³

What concerns theorists like Ahmad (1995) about such delineations is that “colonialism” remains the master trope in the arrangement of a linear history, and everything preceding colonialism (or following colonialism, as historian Dipesh Chakrabarty has posited) is reduced to being an appendage of the history of colonialism itself. McClintock (1995) grasps this problem of postcolonialism precisely, writing:

If postcolonial *theory* has sought to challenge the grand march of Western historicism and its entourage of binaries (self-other, metropolis-colony, center-periphery, etc.), the *term* postcolonialism nonetheless reorients the globe once more around a single, binary opposition: colonial-postcolonial. Moreover, theory is thereby shifted from the binary axis of *power* (colonizer-colonized—itself inadequately nuanced, as in the case of women) to the binary axis of *time*, an axis even less productive of political nuance because it does not distinguish between the beneficiaries of colonialism (the ex-colonizers) and the casualties of colonialism (the ex-colonized). (pp. 10–11, original emphasis)

Subsequently, in the case of India, as Dipesh Chakrabarty (1992) has shown us, by making Indian history look like “yet another episode in the universal [...] march of citizenship, of the nation state,” and of themes that are central to the narrative of the European Enlightenment, “hyper-real Europe will continually return to dominate the stories we [postcolonials] tell” (p. 17, parenthetical insertion mine).¹²⁴ To borrow Meaghan Morris’s (1990) observation made in the Australian context, but equally applicable to Indian postcolonialism, “the modern” will continue to be viewed as “a *known history*, something which has *already happened elsewhere*, and which is to be reproduced, mechanically, or otherwise, with a local content” (p. 10, original emphasis). This only results in what Morris refers to as the constant replication of “the project of positive unoriginality” (1990, p. 10)¹²⁵ We are reminded too, of Ahmad’s acute

insight, that “colonialism” has become a “transhistorical” phenomenon, “always present, and always in process of dissolution in one part of the world or another, so that everyone gets the privilege, sooner or later, at one time or another, of being colonizer, colonized, and postcolonial—sometimes all at once [...]” (1995, p. 31).

Africanist Pal Ahluwalia (2002)¹²⁶ reiterates that the “post” in postcolonial studies is no longer attached to the “periodization of the 1970s debates that signalled a new era after decolonization.” Instead, “the postcolonial seeks to problematize the cultural interactions between both the colonized and the colonizers from the moment of colonization onwards” (p. 196). At the core of critical postcolonial projects is the realization that “colonialism fundamentally alters historical trajectories” so that it is impossible to “return to some essentialized precolonial conception, because the very act of colonization has a fundamentally rupturing effect. It is colonialism that breaks down conciliation and necessitates reconciliation.” (Ahluwalia, 2002, pp. 197–98). However, postcolonialism can facilitate the recognition “that it is possible to imagine both a reconciled present and future,” and thereby, bring about healing. In this way, “the postcolonial economy of giving,” can seek “to break down the cycle of revenge” (Ahluwalia, 2002, p. 198).

For Deepika Bahri (1996), the problem in formulating the boundaries of postcolonialism stems from the fact that during the 1990s, “as the term [was] defined and used at the moment,” it [was] still yoked to the history and project of European imperialism. Bahri explains how the phrase “establishment of independence,” which is central to the understanding of postcoloniality, was linked so closely to the ideology of the imperial nation that it hindered the conception of pre- or non-European “nations.” Moreover, it prevented the “nation” from being regarded as an evolving discursive construct, and the consideration of the “prevalence of dual or even multiple loyalties based on ethnicity, language, and other factors” (p. 141).¹²⁷ According to Bahri, a postcoloniality that depends upon nationhood for its definition and identity is dangerous in its suppression of difference within the homogenizing collectivity of one “people.” Such a definition excludes alternate forms of identity that are not based upon citizenship and passports, and creates another master-narrative that is as subsuming as colonialism. She also distinguishes between the nation-state, which she perceives as a “legacy of modern colonialism,” and the “rhetoric of nation.” The latter, she recognizes, “is essential to the solvency of the political state, while the attainment of political sovereignty is premised on a ‘shared’ sense of national identity” (1996, p. 142).

Postcolonialism thus began as a counter-discourse to the grand narratives of European colonialism, and as materially grounded resistance to the political, cultural, and economic hegemony of imperialism. Through a constant *remembering*, postcolonial investigations have sought to repudiate the claims about, and constructions of the colonized that are deeply embedded in imperial discourses that have preserved regressive binaries (self-other, civilized-primitive, culture-nature, etc.). It is also why Franco-phone and poet-politician Aimé Césaire (1994) makes the valid claim that any serious study of colonialism and its effects must examine the “dishonest equation” implicit in colonial discourse that makes *colonization* synonymous with *civilization*. We must, says Césaire,

[...] study how colonization works to *decivilize* the colonizer, to *brutalize* him in the true sense of the word, [...] to awaken him to buried instincts, to covetousness, violence, race hatred and moral relativism; and we must show that each time a head is cut off or an eye put out [...] they accept the fact [...] [and] civilization acquires another dead weight, a universal regression takes place, a gangrene sets in, a center of infection begins to spread; [...] (Césaire, 1994, p. 173, original emphases)¹²⁸

By disrupting the primacy of the term “civilization,” Césaire consequently makes the concept vulnerable to a critique that entails examining the contradictions, ambivalences, and fractures inherent in the epistemic¹²⁹ vocabulary of colonization.

Yet another critical approach to understanding postcolonialism has been to look at *internal* forms of oppression within the postcolonial nation, so that the project of decolonization has expanded to

liberating all the groups that are marginalized by the postcolonial State and prevented from fully exercising their rights and freedoms as citizens. Side-by-side with this is the ongoing analysis of what Kwame Nkrumah (1962) termed *neocolonialism*,¹³⁰ which resulted from the new forms of structural inequalities produced by capitalism that persist within neoliberal globalization. Neocolonialism continues to perpetuate the social injustices inherited from colonialism—from colorism and economic exploitation, to the internal oppression of marginalized groups within developing nations. Globally, neocolonialism has produced a hierarchy of nations with the “developed” nations (predominantly white Euroamerican countries that were former colonizers) clustered in the Global North, and the “developing” countries (mostly postcolonial nations of color) in the Global South.¹³¹

Palestinian postcolonial theorist Edward Said (2002),¹³² returns to Arif Dirlik’s critique that postcolonial criticism needs to be more than simply textual deconstruction in unpacking neocolonialism and how it operates through international institutions. Care must be taken, he advises, that the “material details” are not overlooked (p. 2). A case in point would be the discussion between Homi K. Bhabha and John Comaroff (2002).¹³³ It concerns the anti-colonial movements in Asia and Africa after WWII that sought “a new ethico-political order—a new humanism, as Frantz Fanon put it—that had its most visible manifestation in the Bandung Conference and the movement of non-aligned nations” (p. 16). However, these new postcolonial countries found themselves corrupted by the “twin forces of economic deprivation and cultural and technological dependence” that made “indigenous national elites of a neocolonial cast” inadvertently collaborate with the IMF, World Bank, and other “international cartels” (in Bhabha & Comaroff, 2002, p. 16). Caught up in the throes of “‘West-oriented’ international capitalism,” postcolonial nations are discovering that they are trapped in the rhetoric of “modernization” that has accompanied “the neoliberal triumphalist ‘aura’” of the “boom-and-bust of economic globalization (especially in Asia).” The false belief that “free market” enterprise will radically transform society has been disproved, as Bhabha and Comaroff noted in 2002, by the fact that “fifty years after independence, Indian literacy and poverty rates have hardly budged, the poverty line in the US has barely shifted in this half-century, while we delight in the accelerated connectivity between California and Bangalore” (p. 16).

In her essay on the effects of power/knowledge, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1993) outlined the “epistemic violence” (p. 136)¹³⁴ that has been wrought because “[t]he political claims that are most urgent in decolonized space are tacitly recognized as coded within the legacy of imperialism: nationhood, constitutionality, citizenship, democracy, socialism, even culturalism” (p. 316).¹³⁵ The subject-position of the postcolonial individual in a decolonized nation, she declared, is therefore “epistemically fractured” (p. 53). In other words, Spivak explained, the private and public selves of the postcolonial individual can inhabit “widely different epistemes, violently at odds with each other yet yoked together by way of the many everyday ruses of *pouvoir-savoir*” or power/knowledge (p. 53). The space that could resist the regulation of the colonial/Enlightenment code, according to Spivak (1996c), was the site of the sub-proletariat or subaltern. Such a position was originally imagined to exist outside of “organized labor” and below “the attempted reversals of capital logic.” This space of “dystopic decolonization” (so called because it had yet to feel the positive effects of decolonization) could offer an articulation that ran counter to the narratives of both past imperialism, and internal colonialism (modernization and the national project) (pp. 163–64).¹³⁶ By resurrecting the subjugated knowledges that operate below colonizing representations, subaltern theorists, including Spivak and Ranajit Guha, attempted to question who was acting/speaking for the ex-colonized subjects who remained marginalized and subjugated within the postcolonial project.¹³⁷

But if neocolonialism can surface within the decolonized space of the postcolonial nation, then it has also evolved today into a more widespread and contagious phenomenon through the assemblages of global neoliberalism. In her essay, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988) Spivak describes the transition from the military imposition of colonialism to the economic brutality of neo-colonialism. In the

latter instance, First World countries hold investing power and capital, while Third World countries provide the labor and field for such investment (1995, p. 83). The important observation that Spivak articulates through her investigations is the complicity between the postcolonial project and new forms of colonialism, so that even within postcolonialism there are privileged voices and representations that can negate those without access to the hegemonic discourses of power/knowledge. Rethinking issues of 'voice' within postcolonialism has also focused attention on the blatant gendering of much of the discourse. Spivak wryly notes, "Within the effaced itinerary of the subaltern subject, the track of sexual difference is doubly effaced" (2010, p. 41). Subsequently, there has been a re-examination of the subject position of women within such discourse.¹³⁸ As postcolonial feminist critics Sara Suleri (1989) and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1988) have independently and eloquently argued, the diverse experiences of postcolonial women tend to get subsumed under the general category of "Third World woman." Women are constituted as "victims" or "objects" by the othering within postcolonial discourse even before they have had a chance to speak for themselves.¹³⁹

Anne McClintock (1994) also points out the phallogocentrism or patriarchal logic that dominates the rhetoric of postcolonial "progress" and industrial "modernization." Such a rhetoric privileges the signs of male potency and power (the phallus being the obvious signifier of such presence), while woman is viewed as "absence" or "lack" unless she is supportive of male national aspiration by fulfilling her reproductive duty. To resist the colonizing tendency of such discourse, McClintock (1994) argues for:

[...] a proliferation of historically nuanced theories and strategies [...] which may enable us to engage more effectively in the politics of affiliation, and the currently calamitous dispensations of power. Without a renewed will to intervene in the unacceptable, we face being becalmed in an historically empty space in which our sole direction is found by gazing back, spellbound, at the epoch behind us, in a perpetual present marked only as "post." (p. 303)¹⁴⁰

To avoid falling into the regressive trap of looking backwards while remaining blind to the colonizing tendencies within postcolonialism, postcolonial critic and historian Arif Dirlik (1994) suggests moving away from framing the debate in the binary opposition of colonial/postcolonial since that prevents the postcolonial intelligentsia from conducting a self-reflexive critique of its own ideology (p. 336) based upon "its class-position in global capitalism" (p. 356).¹⁴¹ Similarly, Leela Gandhi (2006) believes that "if postcolonial thought" wishes to retain its ethical and political significance, "it must use the analytic advantage of historical hindsight scrupulously to disclose the failure of imperial binarism" (p. 3).¹⁴²

For postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha (1994) therefore, "the act of 'writing the world', in which imperialism inhabits the invention of modernity," is deeply situated "in the critic's responsibility 'to fully realize, and take responsibility for, the unspoken, unrepresented pasts that haunt the historical present' (*Location 12*)"¹⁴³ (in Daiya, 2017, pp. 149–50).¹⁴⁴ Literary theorist Wai Chee Dimock (2008),¹⁴⁵ in turn, proposes the useful term, "deep time" to emphasize the interlocking timeframes between and within cultures that weave them together in a "densely interactive fabric" (Dimock, 2008, p. 4) of mutual influence and impact. This also recognizes and accommodates those who have been left out of postcolonial historicizing.

Literary critic Kavita Daiya (2017) refers to Bhabha's insight that the primacy of the dehistoricized universal figure of "Man" that was central to the project of imperial modernity, has been at the expense of those at the margins "women, natives, the colonized, the indentured and enslaved"—various "Others" "who, at the same time but in other spaces, were becoming the peoples without a history' (197)" (qtd. in Daiya, 2017, p. 150). The plight of these "Others" is the preoccupation of more recent postcolonial works such as Paul Gilroy's *Postcolonial Melancholia* (2003),¹⁴⁶ Zygmunt Bauman's *Strangers at Our Door* (2016) and *Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty* (2007),¹⁴⁷ and Spivak & Butler's *Who sings the Nation State?* (2011).¹⁴⁸ At the same time, literary scholar Indrani Mitra (1996),¹⁴⁹ rephrasing philosopher Régis Debray's comment about the Third World, proposes a more rigorous

re-examination of the term “postcolonial” before it becomes another “shapeless sack into which one could simply dump peoples, classes, races, civilizations and continents so that they might more easily disappear” (1996, p. 296). Edward Said supports the challenge to oppressive and colonizing forms of “identity thought” brought about by postcolonial criticism. And, he exults, “Gone are the binary oppositions dear to the nationalist and imperialist enterprise [...] new alignments are rapidly coming into view, and it is those new alignments that now provoke and challenge the fundamentally static notion of *identity* that has been the core of cultural thought during the era of imperialism” (qtd. in Gandhi, 2006, p. 3, emphasis in original).

Thus, “[i]n recent times the hyphen in ‘post-colonial’ has come to represent an increasingly diverging set of assumptions, emphases, strategies and practices in reading and writing”—an acknowledgement that ‘postcolonial’ is not a universalizing concept (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2002, pp. 197–98). The hyphen in the term ‘post-colonial’ “is a statement about the particularity, the historically and culturally grounded nature of the experience it represents,” and attests to the unique material and psychological characteristics that distinguish postcolonial nations and the experiences of their people from each other (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2002, p. 198). Since the 1990s, discussions within postcolonial studies have centered largely on the definition of postcolonialism as a geo-specific phenomenon and/or form of resistance, with an accompanying investigation into how the intersectionality of categories such as nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, and class is shaping the affective and political economy of postcolonial identity politics in the neoliberal context [see, for example, Lewis & Mills (2003),¹⁵⁰ Ahluwalia (2004, 2011),¹⁵¹ and Mandair (2004)¹⁵²]. Historian Arif Dirlik (2002) concurs that alongside the postcolonial analyses of colonial antagonisms that are still evident in the international relations between countries within the contemporary global context, there have been

[...] all along, Third World voices dissatisfied with the containment of the colonial experience within the categories of capitalism, demanding a hearing for the psychological and cultural dimensions of colonialism to which racism was of fundamental significance. These are the voices that have come forward over the last two decades when there has been a distinct shift in postcolonial discourse from the economic and political to the cultural and the personal experiential. (Dirlik, 2002, p. 431)

Questions of inclusion and exclusion continue to resurface as new ‘territories’ within postcolonialism are being mapped and new boundaries determined by the term’s expansion and redefinition. Early on, theorists such as Santiago Colás (1995) drew attention to the fact that postcolonial scholarship had initially failed to include other non-Asian postcolonialism investigations, such as Latin American studies, as part of its concern.¹⁵³ Colás, and other recent scholars, such as Lee, Jan, & Wainwright (2014),¹⁵⁴ Moore-Gilbert (2018),¹⁵⁵ and Fernández Parrilla (2018),¹⁵⁶ have advocated that postcolonial studies be more inclusive of other manifestations of postcolonialism, including those resulting from non-western forms of colonization. Such a broadening of horizons can be problematic however. This is nowhere more evident in John Tomlinson’s (1991) over-broad definition of colonialism as “the invasion of an indigenous culture by a foreign one” (p. 23).¹⁵⁷ By Tomlinson’s standard, India’s history can be regarded as one of multiple colonizations, which in turn permits an all too easy reading of “manifest destiny”. Instead, what again needs more attention is the study of different *forms* of colonization (internal and external), just as there needs to be a recognition of different and sometimes contesting *definitions* of postcolonialism.

More recently, emerging postcolonial critiques that “coincided historically with the ascendancy of neoliberalism” have taken on “the proliferation of questions of identity that has accompanied the intensified global motions of human beings and commodities over the last three decades.” There is the accompanying realization that with the increasing radicalization of “ethnicized politics,” it is essential that we attend once more to the social and ideological underpinnings of “culture and cultural identity” (Dirlik, 2008, pp. 1376–77).¹⁵⁸ Jean and John Comaroff (2005),¹⁵⁹ for instance, acknowledge

that, “identity struggles, ranging from altercations over resources to genocide, seem immanent almost everywhere as selfhood is immersed—existentially, metonymically—into claims of collective essence, [...] and primordial sentiment, that nestle within or transect the polity.” In other words, the “national fantasy” of an undifferentiated body politic is no longer possible in the face of global multiculturalism produced by people and cultural flows across borders (p. 127).

There have been thoughtful investigations into the growing might of U.S. imperial projects worldwide, such as Amy Kaplan’s (2005)¹⁶⁰ analysis of how these interventions abroad have imprinted American popular and domestic culture, and Cash and Kinvall’s (2017) examination of “postcolonial bordering and ontological insecurities” caused by new surveillance and security technologies such as drones.¹⁶¹ Moreover, following 9/11 and American military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, there has been a turn to studying ‘Empire’ as an emerging form of global neoliberalism that is not limited by geographical boundaries.¹⁶² Political philosophers Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000) propose that:

In contrast to imperialism, Empire establishes no territorial center of power and does not rely on fixed boundaries and barriers. It is a *decentered* and *deterritorializing* apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers. Empire manages hybrid identities, flexible hierarchies, and plural exchanges through modulating networks of command. The distinct national colors of the imperialist map of the world have merged and blended in the imperial global rainbow. (pp. xii–xiii, emphases in the original)

The subsequent alert raised by several scholars has been that in this new world order marked by cosmopolitan “flows” and digital *-scapes*, anything “global” tends to be interpreted through a universalizing (post/neo) colonial lens, with scant attention paid to the *specific* historical, political, and socio-cultural *differences* within that larger experience.¹⁶³ Anthologies examining whether postcolonialism is indeed past the “post,” also reveal the knowledge-power tensions in locating a legitimate academic “home” for postcolonial studies that can facilitate the continued exploration of difference and identity politics at the margins armed with the awareness that the language of postcolonial resistance has been co-opted by neoconservatives and neoliberals alike.

In situating postcolonialism within the networks and assemblages of neoliberal globalization, one of the recurring concerns has been about whether the over-valuation of the nation state has placed the postcolonial project in jeopardy. This critique is twofold. First, that the “imagined community” of the nation demands a conforming homogeneity that puts difference under erasure. Second, that any vision of postcolonial nationalism tends to be defined by the national elite in that country and therefore repeats the exclusionary and subjecting effects of colonialism within a supposedly decolonized space. While both these are legitimate charges that we need to be vigilant about, one cannot ignore the growing importance of studying the discursive trajectories of postcolonial nationalism and citizenship in a post 9/11 world. If anything, the debate over whether we are facing a clash of civilizations, or living in a world that is flat, should make it clear that the question of geographic and symbolic boundaries is not a thing of the past. In fact, the rise in fundamentalism and terrorism is indicative of communities that feel excluded and alienated from ‘belonging’ in a boundaryless world, and who choose to express their allegiance to fetishized causes and homelands in ways that, ironically, have caused nations to tighten or seal their borders.

What postcolonial studies can benefit from, is a study of how the neoliberal ideologies of sovereignty and empowerment embedded in nation-branding and nation-building have produced new incarnations of *national* versus *global* communities, citizenship, labor, assets, and legitimacy, fortified by neo-colonial discourses, new alliance blocs, and corresponding hierarchies of influence.¹⁶⁴ Multi-national brands have long celebrated this dual positioning of national/global citizenship (e.g. HSBC: “The World’s Local Bank”), while north American and European universities send their students to the developing world to practice global stewardship, and transnational corporations train their workers

to be fluent in intercultural communication practices. However, we are now confronted by emerging economies of fear stimulated by the threat of global terrorism, and the overt racism and religious discrimination in the treatment of refugees and exiles from the new ‘colonies’ devastated by wars waged from within as well as against their populations by groups funded either in the name of a different God,¹⁶⁵ or the profiteering interests of the industrial military complex in rich countries.¹⁶⁶ The ascension of China and India as alternate power blocs because of their growing economic and political clout, has resulted in what political scientist Dibyesh Anand (2017) calls “postcolonial informal empires.”¹⁶⁷

Communication scholars Mohan J. Dutta and Ambar Basu (2018)¹⁶⁸ describe the paradoxical “freedoms” woven into the “new story of Hindu growth” in India, accompanied by the promises of free-market liberalization “wrapped in the ‘shining’ branding strategies of the nation state” (p. 81). The siren call of “neoliberal development” that promises to liberate subalterns from the cycle of poverty has spawned a “culture of development workers and social change academic-tourists, funded by imperial development agencies that fly into subaltern communities on promises of delivering social change (Grewal & Bernal, 2014)” (in Dutta & Basu, 2018, p. 81). Small surprise then that, “*the promise of freedom of subaltern communities is the very instrument of erasure of subaltern voices*” (Dutta & Basu, 2018, p. 81, emphasis mine).

Communication scholar Ambar Basu worries that as postcolonial nations in the global south build on this promise of “freedom,” it creates inroads for “new colonialisms both beyond and within the nation state, justified in narratives of security for the state-market nexus, [while] social change is wrapped up in ‘feel good’ stories of aspirations, upward mobility, and economic growth” (qtd. in Dutta & Basu, 2018, p. 81). Simultaneously, the myth of a cosmopolitan global class that has been set ‘free’ by private enterprise positions neoliberal capitalism as a common solution that can overcome difference and unify the world. In examining the *will to power*¹⁶⁹ in such discursive formations, this book addresses the need for postcolonial studies to deconstruct the political collusion between the postcolonial nation-state and its ideological apparatuses in ‘manufacturing’ neocolonialism as an aspiration brand.

Literary theorist Stefan Helgesson (2017),¹⁷⁰ for instance, suggests the term *post-anticolonialism* instead of postcolonialism, noting that it is “analogous to Loren Kruger’s neologism ‘post-anti-apartheid,’” and marks a time when the “moral convictions of the antiapartheid (or in our case, anti-colonial) movement” have “waned and been replaced by ‘*uneven development rather than radical social transformation*’ (35)” (Helgesson, 2017, p. 165, emphasis mine). As national interests clash with free-market ideologies (the recent trade tariffs imposed by the U.S. on China, and justified as part of the scheme to “Make America Great Again,” is one such example), we are seeing more countries turn to “economic nationalism.”¹⁷¹ A timely line of inquiry for postcolonial studies, therefore, and one that has shaped this project, is asking how developing economies are using the cultural exercise of nation-branding to uniquely shape their neoliberal agendas. It also investigates how the commodity fetish of the nation-brand has been converted by authoritarian politics into a ‘magical’ sign to stigmatize and cover up otherness within the imagined community, thus becoming an instrument of colonization that promotes an exclusionary politics of belonging.

Postcolonialism and Communication Studies

For communication scholars in postcolonial and cultural studies, this is a particularly crucial time to address the great ideological schisms between old and new forms of nationalist imagining that are shaping the formation of a new world order.¹⁷² With new media technologies at their disposal, governments of various nations are particularly equipped to rewrite History and map new territory in the cultural imaginary of their consumer-citizens and diasporic loyalists. The concept of *cartography* is used in this project to capture the “representational practices that in various ways have attempted to inscribe something called India and endow that entity with a content, a history, a meaning, and a trajectory. Under such a definition, cartography becomes nothing less than the social and political production of

nationality itself” (Krishna, 1994, p. 508).¹⁷³ In fact, my project is specifically concerned with how the *affective* borders erected in the cultural imaginary, through the discursive mapping of national and communal identities, produce fetishized sites of contestation and disruption in the *geophysical* realm.

Take, for instance, the ongoing border skirmishes between India and China. In 2012, Beijing released new e-passports with watermarks depicting the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh and the disputed Aksai Chin desert as belonging to China. In retaliation, the Indian Embassy in Beijing began issuing visas to Chinese citizens showing those two contested sites as part of the map of India. Two years prior to this, China had stepped on the toes of Indian officials when it suddenly began stapling the visas of Kashmir residents. The Himalayan frontier state of Kashmir is already the site of an ongoing border fight between the Indian military and Islamic insurgents sponsored by neighboring Pakistan. By stapling the visa instead of using a regular passport stamp, China was staking a claim on Kashmir as well. (Lakshmi, 2012).¹⁷⁴ Such symbolic acts can, therefore, have great impact on how old antagonisms play out in new cartographic forays. “Ultimately,” writes political scientist Sankaran Krishna (1994),

[...] cartographic anxiety is a facet of a larger postcolonial anxiety: of a society suspended forever in the space between the “former colony” and “not-yet-nation.” This suspended state can be seen in the discursive production of India as a bounded, sovereign entity and the deployment of this in everyday politics and in the country’s violent borders. (p. 508)

Faced with the complexity of unfolding international relations shaping the contemporary neoliberal nation-scapes, it is all the more imperative to be aware of the historical backdrops that are resurfacing in the form of neo-nationalisms that support more narrowly inscribed imagined communities based on claims of racial/ethnic purity. There is also a need to question the ‘civilizing’ mission of what used to be a colonial agenda, now being presented as a push for neoliberal ‘development’ in the emerging economies by the industrialized countries in the global north, in a move to maintain the power and privilege of what has been described as the “Anglosphere.” British-Nigerian popular historian and media practitioner David Olusoga (2017)¹⁷⁵ proposes in his opinion piece for *The Guardian* (UK) that losing the American colonies “was the first time the process of British empire building had been put significantly into reverse.” It provided the “starting point for a nostalgic yearning for lost colonies—and the wealth and global influence that came with them—that has become part of [Britain’s] national psyche” (parentheses mine). Winston Churchill had long imagined “a global alliance of the English-speaking peoples, which included America,” and now and then, across the decades since the end of WWII, “generations of [British] politicians and historians of all political stripes have from time to time nursed similar ideas, latterly calling the concept the Anglosphere,” writes Olusoga (“Empire 2.0 is dangerous,” parentheses mine).¹⁷⁶ The neocolonial fantasy, of what some Whitehall officials controversially referred to as “Empire 2.0” in 2017, envisions open trade relations between a post-Brexit Britain and the Commonwealth nations.¹⁷⁷ It is an idea that astonishes Olusoga and other critics from India and Africa—Britain’s blatant assumption that former colonies would want to be part of Empire 2.0 “any more than most of them wanted to be part of Empire 1.0” (“Empire 2.0 is dangerous”).

Equally troubling are the racial and cultural affinities that define the “Anglosphere” club. As public policy researchers Michael Kenny and Nick Pearce (2018b) explain in *Shadows of Empire*, the “Anglosphere” has a “long historical lineage” dating back to the Victorian period when historians and politicians mulled over what held the British Empire together, “particularly those ‘kith’ and ‘kin’ colonies where ‘Anglo-Saxons’ had settled [...]” (p. 3). Post-Empire, the British Conservative icon Enoch Powell, whose idea of British nationalism was shaped by his absolute admiration for the British Raj, delivered his infamous “enemies within” electoral speech of June 1970, in which he declared that the greatest danger facing Britain—“as great as any she has faced before”—was Commonwealth immigration. He firmly believed it would put British culture and heritage at risk. Powell was invested in the idea that “the

only kind of national community that could prosper was one where its members share the *same racial background, culture and customs*" (Kenny & Pearce, 2018a).¹⁷⁸

Today, even as the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand show no inclination to join Britain in new political and economic alliances that would support the idea of an "Anglosphere alliance" (Kenny & Pearce, 2018a), the case could be made that the rise of white nationalist movements across Europe, Australia, and in the U.S. is a reactionary response from predominantly white populations to the threat posed by emerging economies-of-color in the global South, like China, that are in a position to challenge western hegemony. Stephen Bannon, conservative media executive and former White House Chief strategist for President Trump, recently declared Australia to be "at the forefront of the geopolitical contest of our time" in combating the influence and growing power of China in that part of the world. He offered the cautionary that, "If we continue on this path we're down, China will control all of the countries of South East Asia and they will control Australia" (qtd. in Hartcher, 2018).¹⁷⁹ The China scare, as well as the fear that immigrants, refugees, and exiles from other countries-of-color are irrevocably altering the racial and cultural fabric of white Euroamerican spaces, has escalated what Anthony H. Richmond described in 1994 as "global apartheid." In his book *Global Apartheid: Refugees, Racism, and the New World Order*,¹⁸⁰ Richmond detailed how the displacement of people across international borders, due to either war, famine, environmental disasters, political persecution, or economic precarity, produced fleeing hordes who entered the wealthy countries of North America, Europe, and Australia. The latter, in turn, countered this flow by putting into place repressive and restrictive policies to stop the arrival of any more migrant workers, exiles and refugees from developing countries, who they perceive will destroy their "territorial integrity and privileged lifestyles" (Richmond, 1994, p. xv). To therefore understand the formation of what Omi & Winant (1994)¹⁸¹ have revealed as the "racial state," with its institutions, policies, and practices of *absorption* and *insulation*¹⁸² for disciplining and re-forming groups to fit the hegemonic racial politics of the ruling power bloc (pp. 86–87), we need to examine the origins of these racialized regimes, as well as their *modus operandi* in the current political climate.

The reticence to revisit the past and question the atrocities embedded in imperial modernity has long characterized the field of international communication studies, so that as Radha Hegde (2005) notes:

In a field that has fiercely insisted on the insularity of cultures and the instrumentality of knowledge, there has also been until quite recently an insistent refusal to recognize and record the violence of colonialism, patriarchy, racism or, for that matter, history. What we have acquired in terms of epistemological legacy are Orientalist images of racial and gendered bodies, an unquestioned promotion of Westernization from which follows the hierarchical ordering of global cultures. (pp. 59–60)¹⁸³

In fact, as Hegde underlines, to be able to understand "globalization from below (as Appadurai, 2000,¹⁸⁴ suggests)" requires a critical examination into media practices so that we are able to better appreciate "the global as it gets scripted and performed on multiple levels" (2005, p. 60). Cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (2000) is optimistic that if globalization is defined by "disjunctive flows that generate acute problems of social well-being, *one positive force that encourages an emancipatory politics of globalization is the role of the imagination in social life*" (p. 6, emphasis mine). And while he acknowledges that by controlling the cultural imaginary, the State and its culture industries can wield great power over its consumer-citizens, Appadurai also recognizes that the social imagination, as a space for envisioning change and new ways of being, has great liberating potential (Appadurai, 2000, p. 6).

"By providing a complex picture of the relationship between globalization from above (as defined by corporations, major multilateral agencies, policy experts, and national governments) and below," as Appadurai advocates, the interdisciplinary approach of my project deliberately combines various theoretical perspectives to open up the space of the critical imaginary to new ways of looking at how media

practices and representations are shaping local, national, and global politics. At the same time, I agree with Martha Gimenez (2002)¹⁸⁵ that to make globalization

[...] the starting point of the analysis, to attribute to globalization all the problems that currently afflict direct producers all over the world, or to marvel at its accomplishments and qualitative transformations in consciousness, communications, and scientific and intellectual achievements is simply to worship a fetish, unless *its historically specific roots in the capitalist mode of production are elucidated*. (p. 87, emphasis mine)

After all, as social theorist Ulrich Beck (2001)¹⁸⁶ shared during an interview, “[w]hat seems to be an ‘end’, a ‘breakdown’, a ‘post’ is—looked at from the other side—a beginning, a restructuring,” and therefore, what we need is “a new language to find out what is going on.” Above all, we need to avoid what he calls “zombie categories” that “are ‘living dead’ categories which govern our thinking but are not really able to capture the contemporary milieu [...]” (p. 262).

Postcolonial communication scholar Raka Shome concurs with media historian John Durham Peters (2008)¹⁸⁷ that the “‘globalization of scholarly communication’” could productively “‘stimulate a more global past’” (Peters, p. 32). However, what is at stake here is not simply the issue of writing a “‘global’” history (of media) to “‘stimulate a more global past.’” It is being able to show that “the current received history of media in the West” is linked with “colonialism and postcolonial inequalities.” And, it demands an inquiry into how “this history may have suppressed other epistemes of media and communication from gaining visibility in flows of everyday and academic knowledge” (Shome, p. 246).

While decolonization of theory remains an important postcolonial scholarly goal,¹⁸⁸ an important reminder of the critic’s role comes from art historian Hal Foster (2012).¹⁸⁹ He shares philosopher and sociologist Bruno Latour’s wariness towards the critic who “pretends to an enlightened knowledge that allows him to demystify the fetishistic belief of naive others—to demonstrate how this belief is ‘a projection of their wishes onto a material entity that does nothing at all by itself.’” By failing to utilize “this antifetishistic gaze” on their own “fetish of demystification,” Latour states, the critic is revealed to be “the most naïve of all.” This is a position reiterated by French philosopher Jacques Rancière who also recognizes the trap in critique that “is compromised by its dependence on demystification.” In asking viewers “to discover the signs of capital behind everyday objects and behaviors,” it also “confirms the ‘transformation of things into signs’ that capital performs” (in Foster, 2012, p. 5). Recognizing that theory itself can become a fetish means acknowledging that:

The problem is *not that truths are always hidden* (Latour and Rancière are right here) *but that many are all too apparent—yet with a transparency that somehow blocks response*: “I know the mantra of ‘no taxes’ is a boon to the rich, and a bust for me, but nevertheless ...” Or: “I know the big museums have more to do with finance capital than with public culture, but nevertheless ...” As a fetishistic operation of recognition and disavowal (precisely, “I know, but nevertheless”), cynical reason is also subject to antifetishistic critique. Of course, such critique is never enough: one must intervene in what is given, somehow turn it, and take it elsewhere. Yet that turning begins with critique. (Foster, 2012, p. 7, emphasis mine)

In fact, “antifetishistic critique” demands a keen awareness of the critic’s positionality and how that affects the knowledge formation at hand. Raka Shome (2009) reflects that, “for scholars raised in post-colonial contexts, some form of ‘post-colonial predicament’ has been the ‘natural’ condition under which they have performed scholarship” (pp. 701–02). Especially since scholars from former colonies conducting postcolonial scholarship in American universities, the translation of “‘India’ and the post-colonial politics of ‘Indianness’ [is] through the social space, relations, and imagination of the US academy and context” (p. 702, parentheses mine). What begs closer examination therefore, are “the *conditions* of ‘internationalizing’ including issues of agency that may or may not be available (given one’s history and geopolitical positioning) to certain groups in such moves of ‘internationalizing’”

(p. 703). And, while “‘internationalizing’—as a term—implicitly assumes a level of agency (for the term connotes an action, or possibility of action),” Shome discerningly notes that for postcolonial scholars/critics from outside western academia,

[...] given our own history and our ‘international’ relations with cultural studies or other knowledge formations, we were rarely ‘internationalizing’ as much as being constantly ‘internationalized’ *upon* through relations and academic imaginations which were not of our making. (Shome, 2009, pp. 702–03, original emphases)

Applauding the call for “*equality* of imagination, recognition, and speaking positions across borders and boundaries” that is being demanded now (Shome, 2009, p. 703, original emphasis) within international media and cultural studies, Shome advocates attending to our own diasporic relationship with the subject matter at hand (India/Indianness), and our own distance and/or disconnectedness from the networks of scholars and activists working in the Indian academic context (2009, p. 704). Such self-reflexivity prompts complex questions such as who is the audience for this scholarship, and what purpose is being served through such knowledge-formation? Do postcolonial scholars, in fact, produce knowledge shaped by the strategic awareness that it is more ‘valued’ if it can be used by western think-tanks and news media reports, assist Euroamerican corporations to enter non-western ‘markets,’ shape foreign interventions in those regions, or ‘make sense’ of unfolding events/crises in those countries? As Spivak (1999)¹⁹⁰ puts it, postcolonial scholarship “often dissimulate[s] the implicit collaboration of the postcolonial in the service of *neocolonialism*” (p. 361, parentheses mine). Shome is acutely aware too that,

[...] the growing visibility and recognition of cultural studies in/of Asia in international spheres (including the North American academy, that continues to have so much power to confer legitimacy) is occurring at the same time that the “West” is having to confront and recognize, what in journalistic parlance these days is being framed as, the “rise of Asia.” (2009, p. 712)

Therefore, we have to ask whether in translating non-western cultures, histories, artifacts and events through the lens of primarily western theories, postcolonial scholars and critics are, in fact, undoing their own mission of adding a different perspective to the work that already exists in the colonial archives as a translation of their cultures. Shome also alludes to the governmentality in western academia whereby the “affective regulation” in the presentation of ideas in professional forums, eschews any demonstration of passion “or alternative forms of self-presentation that may disrupt the tight norms of Eurocentric [*sic*] ‘civility’ required in the performance of the ‘professional’ self in Western academy” (2009, p. 710).¹⁹¹ Subsequently, she suggests that we need to make room for a decolonizing approach to doing postcolonial scholarship that, on one hand, will challenge these often invisible ‘norms,’ and on the other, also encourage our “research imaginations” to “cross borders and barriers in a *downward* movement” and study globalization “from below” (Shome, 2009, p. 715).

I would add that in a world where media technologies and access to media are shaping the lives of even the poor and marginalized populations in emerging economies,¹⁹² it is all the more important for postcolonial media and cultural studies scholars *not* to shy away from the task of addressing the corporatization of the state and of the national-cultural imaginary. In other words, while “studying globalization from below” is a necessary and vital approach to understanding how its processes affect the most disenfranchised and marginalized communities, it is just as crucial to study the political economy of the collusion between the State and corporations *from above*, in redefining national cultures in neoliberal postcolonial countries.

Media scholar Vincent Mosco (2009)¹⁹³ offers two understandings of *political economy* as a critical practice. The first is studying “*the social relations, particularly the power relations, that mutually constitute*

the production, and consumption of resources, including communication resources" (p. 2, original emphasis). This investigation tracks how media products move through the production, distribution, and consumption phases, and how the feedback loop affects new media commodities and practices. More importantly, it enables us to unpack "the operation of power" to explain, "how people get what they want even when others do not want them to get it" (p. 2). In a different "more ambitious" approach to political economy, the critic undertakes "*the study of control and survival in social life*" (p. 3, original emphasis). Here, Mosco explains, control pertains to how a society "organizes itself, manages its affairs and adapts, or fails to adapt, to the inevitable changes that all societies face." Accordingly, *control* "is a political process because it shapes the relationships within a community, and survival is mainly *economic* because it involves the process of production and reproduction" (Mosco, 2009, p. 3). Mosco identifies more recent subsets of political economy studies such as *feminist political economy* that presents a critique of patriarchy and attends to domestic, maternal, and other forms of overlooked "reproductive labor," "*environmental or ecological political economy*" that examines the connections between social behaviors and larger environmental issues, and the Italian Marxist school that has theorized new forms of political economy of the internet in terms of affective labor (p. 5; original emphases). Following this progression, this book attempts a *postcolonial political economy analysis* of the labor entailed in nation-branding, the production of a specific cultural imaginary by the corporatized state (in this case, *India Inc.*), the commodification and consumption of the nation-brand, and the generation of *surplus affective value* in the form of an extra-allegiance to neoliberal neo-nationalism.

I concur with postcolonial media scholar Radhika Parameswaran (2002),¹⁹⁴ therefore, that "communication studies, [...] can fruitfully deploy the deconstructive insights of postcolonial theories to challenge the colonialist assumptions that underwrite the neocolonial discursive regimes of globalization" (p. 288). In writing critically about nation-branding as a postcolonial *enterprise*, and drawing from multiple perspectives¹⁹⁵—postcolonial criticism and media studies, cultural politics and political economy, psychoanalysis and affective theory, cultural geography and critical race theory—this project is inspired by Stuart Hall's words that "[t]he only theory worth having is that which you have to fight off, not that which you speak with profound fluency" (1992, p. 280).¹⁹⁶

Here, Spivak (2003)¹⁹⁷ too is immensely useful as she discusses the "literature of ethnicity" through which the "question of globality" is typically explored, especially as it concerns "discourses of identity" (p. 82). The Greek word *ethnos* refers to "one's own kind of people" and consequently, we also use it to signify "nation." Accompanying this word, is also *ethnikos*—"other people, often taken to mean 'heathen, pagan.'" Spivak posits that the literature of ethnicity is inscribed between "*ethnos*—a writer writing for her *own* people (whatever that means) without deliberated self-identification as such—and *ethnikos*, the pejoratively defined other reversing the charge, (de)anthropologizing herself by separating herself into a staged identity" (original emphases). It follows, Spivak argues, that "the literature of ethnicity in this second sense thus carries, paradoxically, the writer's signature as divided against itself" (p. 83). In a similar exercise, *Manufacturing Indianness* attempts to pull away from a theoretical position of simply describing what is familiar and 'known', selecting instead to adopt Spivak's second stance of *ethnikos* or the "pejoratively defined other reversing the charge" by uncovering the contradictions in a "staged" national/cultural identity-making that is "divided against itself." This is, to return to Hall, "[t]he only theory worth having [...] that which you have to fight off."

Postcolonialism and Neoliberalism

With the spread of neoliberalism across developing nations, we have seen a corresponding rise in poverty along with failing infrastructure and the widening gap between the rich and the poor in the global South, as well as the growing chasm between nations in the global North and South. This has been exacerbated by shrinking foreign aid packages from the G-7 accompanied by massive flows of wealth from the global South to the North in the form of debt repayment. To avert a crisis, in 2002, former

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan convened a Financing for Development (FfD) conference in Monterrey, Mexico. While it aimed at focusing attention on “the issues raised in the Millennium Declaration against global poverty as they applied to economic development,” the *Monterrey Consensus* backed by the U.N. “reiterated that the *raison d’être* of the FfD was to forge tighter alliances among states, business, and global civil society in order to improve governance in the world economy” (Driscoll, 2004, p. 60).¹⁹⁸ Calling upon the developing nations to get with the program and catch up with the advanced economies in the North, the *Monterrey Consensus* actually pressured “[...] the South to make themselves up as provocatively as possible for international financiers through creating a better ‘investment climate’ (decode the contents of this cosmetic kit as: disciplining labor, reducing taxes on multinationals even further, and eliminating environmental protections) [...] and liberalizing international trade.” (Driscoll, 2004, pp. 61–62). However, as Mark Driscoll reveals through his insightful analysis, “the *Monterrey Consensus* shows just how much the U.N. is beholden to global capitalist governance in the North,” and how it “reinforces and re-legitimizes the disciplinary regime of transnational capital, in particular its capacity for capital flight or investment strikes if domestic conditions in the South are ‘unattractive’” (2004, p. 62). Subsequently, Driscoll uses the term “reverse postcoloniality” to describe the failure of the industrialized countries in the global north to keep their post-WWII promise, “to assist in the development of the former colonies of the South,” and facilitate “the global advances of postcolonial hybrid politico-cultural forms” (p. 63).

The ruthlessness of this new international order became visible more recently in the devaluation of currencies in India, Turkey, Indonesia, and other “emerging economies” in late August 2013, when the Indian rupee, among other Asian currencies similarly affected, hit a record low against the U.S. dollar. According to Arvind Singhal, Chairman of a consulting firm in India’s capital city, “[t]he strengthening of the American economy appears to be one of the catalysts for the problems in the emerging economies,” since the upturn in the United States stock market drew away investors who would have potentially invested in overseas stocks. Most of the “emerging economies” in the global South had benefitted until then from foreign investment, helped also by the low interest rates offered by the U.S. Federal Reserve to send money abroad. In 2012 alone, an HSBC Report noted that 1.2 trillion USD was pumped into the global South from all across the world, “nearly six times the amount going in just a decade ago.” In 2013, however, with the U.S. Federal Reserve raising interest rates to stimulate economic growth at home, investors began returning to the U.S. market, setting off alarm bells of a possible financial crisis in the developing countries effected by the pull-outs (Popper, 2013).¹⁹⁹

The most at-risk national economy in this sudden turn in neoliberal fortunes was India. As Nathaniel Popper reported in the *New York Times*, foreign investors started selling most of their Indian bonds from May 2013, and as all that money exited the country, it made the Indian rupee almost worthless (Popper, 2013). With inflation on the rise, and a slow-down in economic growth within the Indian economy, there was growing worry about the political and social stability of the world’s largest democracy, and about the spillover effect of these changes into neighboring economies across Asia. Such a situation also makes it easy for pro-neoliberal international organizations, like the U.N., the IMF, and the World Bank, to present these downturns in the South as more proof that “emerging economies” require interventionist aid, or that (to use neoliberal logic) they must relax their policies to attract greater foreign investment from the North—the problem, without any irony, being presented as a solution. The sharp devaluation of the Indian Rupee in 2018, as a consequence of the U.S.-China trade sanctions and currency war, and the rising crude prices following U.S. sanctions on Iran (Adhikari, 2018),²⁰⁰ has once again demonstrated that despite its strong annual growth rate,²⁰¹ India, like other emerging economies, is still at the mercy of international economic policies decided by the Euroamerican center.

What emerges from this discussion therefore, is the crucial recognition that the global order within which we are situating this conversation is one that is still marked by geo-political occupation as well as systems of financial interdependence that inextricably link the fortunes of the emerging economies

of postcolonial nations with the policy-making by historically established, and therefore economically stronger industrialized economies, many of whom are former colonial powers. Just as important is the insight that the political economy of the free market does not necessarily support a free world. The project of allegedly democratizing the world *through* free market enterprise is, in fact, questionable since, as of 2018, the United Nations' website still lists sixteen "non-self-governing territories" that fall under the dominion of either the U.K, U.S., France, or New Zealand (See: <http://www.un.org/en/decolonization/nonselfgovterritories.shtml>).²⁰² The U.N. had announced that these incorporated territories would achieve self-governance by 2010, which marked the golden anniversary of the General Assembly's call for independence and the end of its second International Decade for the eradication of colonialism. But this emancipation has yet to be realized.

In the discursive cartography of the neoliberal world the fetishized master tropes of *civilization* and *development* work to conceal and disavow the historically-based racialized abjection of countries-of-color that remain stereotypically fixed as backward and poor within a neo-colonial lens. Emerging economies are viewed as potential markets to be exploited by industrialized economies, but are clearly not credited with being able to manage their own growth and progress. Which countries are positioned at the center of the international power grid, and how other countries are arranged with regard to this center (or if they are included at all) informs a *politics of visibility* so that as demonstrated in the previous sections, how postcolonial countries/cultures are defined is often on Euroamerican terms. Furthermore, as ethnic nationalisms have begun to proliferate within this neocolonial political economy, the metaphor of *expansion* that dominated colonial mapping has been replaced by *segregation* which is the legacy of imperial violence.

Manufacturing Indianness deconstructs the fetish-signs of the nation-brand as a form of what sociologist Stewart R. Clegg (1994) calls "efficacious resistance."²⁰³ Here, the existing patterns of domination and subordination are made apparent by adhering to established communication codes to such an extent that the underlying ideologies are rendered farcical. Thus, the fetish reveals exactly what it is attempting to conceal, namely its cultural desires and anxieties. Case in point: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is known for hugging world leaders. He has been photographed embracing President Trump, Vladimir Putin, Shinzo Abe, Benjamin Netanyahu—not even skipping Nawaz Sharif, when the latter was still prime minister of Pakistan. However, Modi was totally caught off-guard when, during the Parliamentary proceedings in mid-July 2018, Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi crossed the aisle, after delivering a vitriolic speech condemning the Modi administration, and "wrapped his arms around the man he had just called incompetent." As Journalist Barkha Dutt puts it:

Imagine Hillary Clinton surprising Donald Trump in a clasp right at the close of their fiery presidential debates in 2016. "The Hug," as it is being called in India, was dramatic, unlikely and unexpected. The 48-year-old Congress leader was caught on camera winking at a colleague right after; he totally knew he had won the headlines. The Modi government handsomely won the no-confidence motion moved by the opposition in Parliament, but Gandhi won the talking points. (Dutt, 2018c)²⁰⁴

Gandhi's hug seemed to be an attempt to talk back in the PM's own language—a combination of hard-line rhetoric, followed by the political embrace of affected intimacy for the cameras. And the Press and social media went to town with this. One of the popular memes on "The Hug" depicts Rahul Gandhi "discovering that the prime minister's chest is not quite the 56 inches it has been made out to be" (Dutt, 2018c). Dairy manufacturer *Amul* dedicated its next billboard ad round to the cartoon images of Gandhi hugging Modi, with the caption, "Embracing *ya* embarrassing?" (Embracing or embarrassing?). There were *YouTube* satirical shorts of excerpts from Bollywood romantic songs accompanying photographs of the hug, and celebrating the unexpected bromance. Even Dutt was sufficiently amused to offer this tongue-in-cheek journalistic insight: "'The Hug' has been offered as a turn-the-other-cheek moment," she penned, "that allows the Congress Party to claim the moral high ground—a sort of

Gandhian (*I mean Mahatma here*) goodness that separates political differences from personal enmity” (Dutt, 2018c, emphasis mine).

The fetish of the “Modi hug,” well-known to the news media and the viewing public, was completely co-opted by the Congress Party’s Rahul Gandhi. Moreover, the latter’s wink that followed the seemingly spontaneous hug showed that Gandhi was fully aware that by adopting his political opponent’s tactics, he was also revealing the insincerity and careful choreography behind Brand Modi’s photo-op moments:

Later, in his parliamentary speech, Modi sarcastically said Gandhi’s walk across to his chair was an illustration of his desperation to be prime minister. But by that time, the defining image of the day already belonged to Gandhi. *In this, he had borrowed from Modi’s own playbook.* Modi has long been master of the message, in charge of scripting his own narrative that often bypasses media interviews and news conferences and is instead rooted in the power of the photo op. The till-now moribund Congress has been forced to play catch-up. *But the party has now learned the new idiom of politics, acquired an edge on social media and sometimes outmaneuvers the BJP at its own game. “The Hug” was one such example.* (Dutt, 2018c, emphases mine)

In using the fetish of the hug as a critical communication tool, Rahul Gandhi also set up that hyper-real moment in the ending to his speech, where he acknowledged “that those who don’t like him call him ‘Pappu’ (the condescending, sneering colloquialism for a bumbling, not-fully grown-up man).” Again, by taking Modi’s “favorite put-down used against him,” and following it up with “an instrument of mockery” (Dutt, 2018c), Gandhi took the sting out of the repeated attacks against him by the PM. The importance of the fetish as resistance thus lies in the fact that it can be used as what film theorist, Claire Johnston, refers to as a “device of *making strange*” (qtd. in Kabir, 1998, p. 14, original emphasis)²⁰⁵ The fetish can be used to question what we take for granted or consider to be ‘real’. Such a “making strange” would have the purpose, as rhetorical scholar Ronald Wendt clarifies, “not to illuminate ultimate truths, but to make the familiar strange, to investigate the fluid, convoluted aspects of power relations, and to better understand [the Self] in the process” (Wendt, 1996, p. 258, parentheses mine).²⁰⁶

The complexities of India have baffled even the members of its founding corps, the middle-class elite. In 1946, Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India (educated in British universities) noted that while India was in his blood, he approached her as an “alien critic,” and “came to her via the West,” looking at her as “a friendly westerner might have done” (1994, p. 50)²⁰⁷ Addressing the Constituent Assembly in 1949, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, a political leader from the untouchable caste, lamented that while politically, India recognized the principle of “one man one vote and one vote one value,” in its social and economic structure, it continued to “deny the principle of one man one value” (in Moon, 2014, p. 1216).²⁰⁸ Independent India as a body politic was founded on the western notions of nationhood (one man one vote), contrary to its own feudal system of an inherited and caste-structured system of governance. It was led into the twentieth century by Nehru, a leader whose opinions had been shaped by a colonial education, and who was regarded by the British ex-colonizers as one of them. This schizophrenic birthing has kept India oscillating between modernity and tradition, between becoming like ‘them’ (the ex-colonizers), or remaining ‘us.’ The affluent upper-middle class in India today celebrates the fact that it does not have to be ethnically *desi* anymore. Global Indians model a consumerist cosmopolitanism, thanks to the growing presence of multinational corporations (with well-paying jobs) in urban India, and the proliferation of international brands with which they can declare their upward mobility. Meanwhile, the streets of Indian cities are still congested with slums, proof that while urban India offers the lure of the “Indian Dream” for migrants from its small towns and villages, for millions of Indians that dream has yet to be realized. It is in the yoking together of these incommensurabilities, and the articulation of different imaginings (or the absence thereof), that a somewhat shaky idea emerges of what being postcolonial and Indian is all about.

To be able to point to something concrete that can stand as evidence that India exists and that it has a pre-colonial origin and history, becomes critical for a people who were under erasure during British colonialism for more than a century. If colonial discourses fetishized the primitive, ignorant and backward culture of the natives under the British *Raj*, the postcolonial neoliberal narratives of nation-branding, ironically, revert to tradition and even religious fundamentalism as an alternative and authentically Indian space outside of the (neo)colonial experience. This fetishization of postcolonial national identity, as one that is summoned by a colonial past, reveals the fear of remaining colonized as a “made-in-England” India. To Indian entrepreneurs today, the challenge is to live up to the neoliberal standards of development and progress that would enable them to catch up with the West. To peasants in rural India, women who are exploited in the name of tradition, child laborers, and the urban poor, the question is one of survival. Yet, the idea of India is a powerful one for all. It is an idea that is comprised of several imaginings.

For many Indians, India is what they see reflected through the representations within Western media, a habit inherited from colonialism where the colonized depended upon the defining gaze of their British rulers. For others, India is the “motherland”—the space of personal and socio-historical origins. It is also the tenuous articulation of a democracy that has survived the legacy of British colonialism, and the hegemonic and corrupt practices of modern day politicians. Ask Indians what India is, and there is no single answer. That is the beauty and the challenge of Indianness. The notion of *unity in difference* has held the country through its post-independence days, but it is a concept that needs to be revisited constantly. The call by Hindu Sikhs for a separate state (Khalistan); the Assam agitation to secede; the growing Muslim discontent with state-backed Islamophobia in Modi’s India; the hegemonic popularity of Hindu fundamentalism; the staunch resistance to providing employment and education opportunities to backward castes like the Dalits, or displaced farmers and tribals—all these are indicators that *difference has become a problem for the unity of India*.

The idea of India though formulated in the space of the cultural imaginary, is a real political economy exercise, executed and disseminated by professional branding agencies and professionals from the creative industries, gurus-turned-entrepreneurs, and India’s billionaire class at home and abroad. Take the case of Baba Ramdev, officially backed by the Modi administration, and architect of the multi-billion dollar Patanjali Ayurved Ltd. empire. In many ways, he is the face of the DIY (Do-It-Yourself) neoliberal entrepreneurialism of *India Inc.*:

In his own way, Ramdev is India’s answer to Donald Trump, and there is much speculation that he may run for prime minister himself. Like Trump, he heads a multibillion-dollar empire. And like Trump, he is a bombastic TV personality whose relationship with truth is elastic; he cannot resist a branding opportunity—his name and face are everywhere in India. In May, he announced plans to add *swadeshi* SIM cards to his ever-growing list of products: packaged noodles, herbal constipation remedies, floor cleaner made with cow urine. He has a gift for W.W.E.-style publicity stunts: Last year he “won” a televised bout with an Olympic wrestler from Ukraine. [...] *In a sense, Ramdev is more powerful than any prime minister. He may be a wholly new breed: a populist tycoon, protected from critics (and even, to some extent, from the law) by a vast following and a claim to holy purpose.* (Worth, 2018, emphases mine)²⁰⁹

No longer is it an anomaly that a spiritual leader should pursue wealth and political power. Instead of a traditional *ashram*, Patanjali’s main operations are run from an ultra-modern complex, located ironically in the holy city of Rishikesh. The complex resembles a Silicon Valley IT campus. Patanjali has skyrocketed in “just over a decade from a tiny operation into an economic powerhouse, with \$1.6 billion in sales in the current fiscal year,” though its owner insists “that Patanjali is not a business at all; it is “a service for humanity, for the nation.” While Ramdev’s needs are opulently catered to by the company, “[m]ost of Patanjali’s employees are paid much less than they would receive elsewhere; asking for a raise is taboo. (A company spokesman denies this.) They are forbidden to drink alcohol or eat nonvegetarian food.” In a classic neoliberal move, the Patanjali adage summed as a slogan is “[p]enance in individual

life, prosperity for others.” As *New York Times* journalist Robert Worth (2018) shows, Patanjali’s success is very much tied in with the nation-branding agenda of *India Inc.* An ad run by the company states: “As East India Company plundered our country for 200 years likewise these multinationals are exploiting our country by selling their harmful and dangerous chemical products. Beware! Ramdev’s competitors have sued Patanjali repeatedly, but the slurs persist” (Worth, 2018). During a tour of his Assam factory in India’s north-east corridor, the site manager pointed to a road that could double as an airstrip:

In fact, it is a runway, built in consultation with the Indian Air Force so that jet fighters can take off and land on it, Singh told me. “We will dedicate this to the nation in case there is need for an extra airstrip,” he said, and then added with a knowing look, “We are near China.” *Patanjali seems almost to view itself as an extension of the state*—or rather, an illustration of what has become a “state-temple-corporate complex,” in the apt phrase of the Indian author Meera Nanda. (Qtd. in Worth, 2018, emphasis mine)

These fetishized sites are the schizophrenic spaces of the social contradictions *and* accommodations of the neoliberal postcolonial *India Inc.* The merging of Gandhian principles (*swarajya*, asceticism, and a strict vegetarian yogic life) with the neoliberal pursuit of economic and political power does not seem at odds in Modi’s corporatized nation state. Within this construction of Indianness that is ready to go global, but has a strong mooring in Hindutva (itself a consumer durable), who has the power to speak for whom, and who is left out in the bargain, are issues that reveal the colonizing propensity of post-colonialism itself.

Since this investigation of the fetish hinges upon discursive analyses, it is necessary to remember that *discursive formations shape and impact the material aspects of a culture*. Thus, to understand how/ why something is necessitates an investigation of the terms employed to speak about something, as well as who has the power to speak. The import of discourse is best expressed by French theorist Michel Foucault (1989) who admits,

Personally, I am rather haunted by the existence of discourse, by the fact that particular words have been spoken; these events have functioned in relation to their original situation, they have left traces behind them; they subsist and exercise, in this subsistence even without history, a certain number of manifest or secret functions. (p. 25)²¹⁰

It is the “manifest functions” (the fetishized sites of representation) of (neo)colonial and postcolonial discourse and its “secrets,” that this project is concerned with. At the same time, I am conscious that the analysis itself is a discourse on discourse. Keeping that in mind, an inquiry into the terms used in constructing particular identities within (neo)colonial/postcolonial discourse is instructive, since it permits an understanding of the material effects of power on the subjects being constituted through such discourse. Foucault himself suggests that he found it intriguing,

[...] to try to understand our society and civilization in terms of what its systems of exclusion, of rejection, of refusal, in terms of what it does not want, its limits, the way it is obliged to suppress a certain number of things, people, processes, what it must let fall into oblivion, its repression-suppression system. (Foucault, 1989a, p. 65)²¹¹

What is omitted or erased from the discursive ‘memory’ of (neo)colonial/ postcolonial discourses, and what the silenced or repressed spaces disclose, can be utilized to disassemble the colonizing ‘regime’ of postcolonial nation-building. It is this taking apart of the presumed ‘truth’ of any discourse that offers the challenge in studying cultural texts and artifacts. To begin to comprehend the network of limits and exclusions that we “practice without knowing it,” entails the endeavor to make “the cultural unconscious apparent” (Foucault, 1989a, p. 71).

Side-by-side with this, one must be made aware of the “historical effects” of the Reason that structures the knowledges of our time. As Foucault cautions,

One should not forget—and I'm not saying this in order to criticize rationality, but in order to show how ambiguous things are—it was on the basis of the flamboyant rationality of Social Darwinism that racism was formulated, becoming one of the most enduring and powerful ingredients of Nazism. This was, of course, an irrationality, but *an irrationality that was at the same time, after all, a certain form of rationality* [...] (Foucault, 1989b, p. 269, emphasis mine)²¹²

Apart from deconstructing the “irrationality” of the Reason embedded in the discourses of (neo)colonialism and postcolonialism, a questioning of the identity-construction in each case, involves the question of who produces the narratives, and the location of the text within specific political and material conditions that predicate the tone and tenor of the narratives. Since it is those in power who have access to the apparatuses of discourse and knowledge-making, it is they who are privileged with subjectivity. Those who they study, and who fall under the gaze of such knowledge, are in turn constituted as objects. In the story about origins and the imagining of the homeland, there is a certain privileging of the narrating Self as the deserving owner of such a center. It is this manner of story-telling that made colonialism seem the justified discourse of civilization and progress, through the imperial expansion of ‘home’ into other territories. It is this expansionist tendency too that provides the colonizing impetus for postcolonial discourses to center around a nation-brand that is the signifier of modernity as well as traditions, and that can be identified with by domestic and diasporic Indians seeking identity and home in a rapidly changing world.

As the French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1998) reminds us,

Whatever the story of a return to oneself or to *one's home* [*chez-soi*], [...] no matter what an odyssey or bildungsroman it might be, in whatever manner one invents the story of a construction of the *self*, the *autos*, or the *ipse*, it is always *imagined* that the one who writes should know how to say *I*. (p. 28, original emphases)²¹³

It is vital to keep in mind that this “I” can be problematic—posing questions of identity while simultaneously demanding submission of the Other. In other words, the Self (“I”) can provide the decolonizing impetus by prompting questions of identity: “who am I?,” at the same time as it colonizing (by demanding the submission of Others to its desiring gaze). It is by re-examining the fetish substitutes for colonial/postcolonial identity that one can begin to grasp the epistemic constitution of this “I”. By looking behind the fetish, this project aims at challenging established identity politics—one that makes visible the irrational rationality of discursive practices. It is only through such a critique that one can begin to reverse the effects of epistemic violence, and hope to stem its material effects.

The Subject Is the Object

Since this project is indebted to the psychoanalytical study of the fetish, and the Lacanian analysis of subject-formation, it is worthwhile to mention the Lacanian concept of the *point de capiton*, which as Ernesto Laclau indicates, is taken to be the fundamental ideological operation. Laclau explains,

[...] “fantasy” becomes an imaginary scenario concealing the fundamental split or “antagonism” around which the social field is structured; “identification” is seen as the process through which the ideological field is constituted; enjoyment or *jouissance* enables us to understand the logic of exclusion operating in discourses such as racism. (p. xi)²¹⁴

It is through the reiteration of the fetish in different discursive contexts that one is able to make visible the operation of effects in the interplay between fantasy, identity, and *jouissance*. To begin to comprehend the process of objectification that forms the crux of colonialism, it is necessary to investigate the object before it attempts to reconstitute itself as Subject. In taking an “anti-descriptivist” stance, one can begin to decipher what Laclau (1989) terms the “primal baptism” of an object (p. xiii). The phrase

refers to the anti-descriptivist viewpoint that the “name continues to refer to that *object* even if all the descriptive features of the object at the time of its baptism have disappeared” (Laclau, 1989, p. xiii). The central problem, Laclau argues, is determining what in the object, beyond its usual descriptive features, makes up its identity. He is talking here about the Lacanian *objet petit a*—that “surplus” in the object, which is more than itself, and which stays the same in all contexts. Laclau points out, “we search in vain for it in positive reality because it has no positive constituency, that is, because it is just a positivation of a void—of a discontinuity opened in reality by the emergence of the signifier” (Laclau, 1989, p. xiv). In other words, “naming” is not just a pen and paper exercise of labeling an already constituted subject; “It is the discursive construction of the object itself” (Laclau, 1989, p. xiv).

The significance of this is of course, that this “performative character” of naming is the “precondition for all hegemony and politics” (Laclau, 1989, p. xiv). Consider the import of this in the light of Indian identity. If the Indian people have been “named” and objectified by colonialism, the question is can we identify something that in the moment of “primal baptism” survived the effects of imperial erasure, as an excess, a surplus if you will, of the object itself? It is the search for the *objet petit a* (the surplus of a pre-colonial Indian identity), that postcolonialism is concerned with. Through a deconstruction of the fetish as site of postcolonial national identity, and the sight of lack of an “original” identity, this project hopes to keep the subjectivity of Indianness an open query.

The philosopher Slavoj Žižek (1989) reminds us that the Lacanian notion of the “Real” is an “empty place,” since the “Real” cannot be inscribed. What can be inscribed though, as Žižek points out, is the “impossibility itself, we can locate its place; a traumatic place which causes a series of failures.” Following on the heels of Lacan, Žižek (1989) suggests that if the subject is an “answer of the Real,” the subject itself becomes a void, an emptiness, a refusal to be inscribed (p. 178). In the realm of the “symbolic” however, identity is possible because *each element “takes the place of the lack in the other, embodies what is lacking in the other”* (p. 172, emphasis mine). Identity thus becomes a positive affirmation of a negation or lack.

It is in the antagonism between Indian identity, imagined as pre-constituted (precolonial), rather than in the process of being constructed (postcolonial), that the “secret” of subjectivation is exposed. Thus, in the postcolonial vision, the former colonizer represents the threat of negation—the figure responsible for destroying the cultural identity of India. A second look though, reveals that Indian postcolonial identity is closely tied to this *negative presencing* of the ex-colonizer. After all, *we need the colonial to produce the postcolonial*. Put differently, the manufacturing of postcolonial Indianness requires the antagonistic point of reference in the negating space of colonialism as a stable birthing point. Simultaneously, postcolonial Indianness also requires its internal Others (religious and ethnic minorities, lower castes, women, peasants, the poor and dispossessed) who are blamed for the nation’s failures, and who therefore constitute another “negation of the negation” touchpoint in identity-making. Without these “impossible” referents, postcolonial identity becomes meaningless. Emphasizing this alliance between the Self and Other, Žižek concludes, “[w]hen a subject is confronted with an enigmatic, impenetrable Other, the thing he has to grasp is that his question to the Other is already the question of the Other itself” (1989, p. 178). Within the space of the following chapters, I will analyze the double-negation in the site of the fetish: the presencing through absence, inaugurated by the antagonistic relation of the Self to the Other, and of the Imaginary to the Real.

As this project analyzes the project of manufacturing India within the neoliberal cultural/national imaginary, it also explores the predicament of being caught between the discourses of past, present and future. This means having to reconfigure the meaning of ‘independence’, ‘progress’, and ‘betterment’ for *all* Indian citizens in terms that do not resurrect the regressive binary of ‘tradition’ versus ‘progress’ and ‘modernity’. Nor should such an imagining prevent the nation from participating in ‘development’, owing to the anxiety that being modernized means being colonized by a predominantly Euroamerican idea of neoliberal globalism. By starting to articulate the margins, the fetish links both terms in various

binary oppositions. The fetish, as a form of “efficacious resistance,” can embody modernity and tradition, presence and absence, and be a substitute for a fixed identity, even as it simultaneously suggests resistance to such hegemonic thinking.

In the following six chapters, I examine the resistant readings that the fetish can provide to the colonizing discourses of imperialism, phallocentrism, and nationalism. In each case, the fetish marks a place of rupture, where what is being repressed in the cultural memory re-surfaces. In the Othering produced by the fetish, there is also the possibility of starting to “become,” or for the presencing of the Subject, presently fetishized as a passive Object, to begin. The fetish, as a critical tool, allows a change in positioning that accommodates the interaction between multiple “I”-s and “You”-s, and in the process, encourages repetition, displacement, (re)membering, reversal and recognition.

Chapter One, “Nation Inc. and Postcolonial Neoliberalism,” examines the contested idea of India by foregrounding how formal History can be fabricated and commodified into a populist history that can be easily consumed, thus facilitating the reworking of cultural memory. Through specific examples we see how, in a free-market world, it is crucial to investigate how postcolonial nations are *complicit* in using the rhetoric of liberation to (re)produce colonizing ideas of “the imagined community.” Simultaneously, the ‘civilizing mission’ of neoliberal development used by countries in the Global North, is an attempt, once again, to subjugate emerging economies in the Global South. The chapter closes with a consideration of the challenges for postcolonial media critics, and some of the questions that will be examined in subsequent chapters as we examine how neoliberal postcolonialism is remapping what we mean by the ‘national’ and the ‘global.’

Chapter two, “From the East India Company to Nation Inc.” begins with the story of the recent acquisition of the historic East India Company and its Merchants’ Mark (brand) by a diasporic Indian entrepreneur, in his pursuit to purchase the rights to own and remake History. It examines how, in the global neoliberal context, the Indian postcolonial nation is engaging in *postcolonial cannibalism* through the consumption of its own traumatic history. This symbolic return to the original site/sight of trauma through the purchase and/or appropriation of the fetishized commodity signs of the former Empire, raises questions regarding cultural authenticity and commodity nationalism. It also prompts the recognition that the neocolonial impulse of postcolonial India to appropriate the cultural and symbolic capital of the former colonizer and use it to generate wealth and value for itself *depends on keeping colonial history and identity intact*. Consequently, postcolonial triumph is undone by othering and consuming the painful parts of one’s own History that always seems to return to the repressed trauma of a colonial origin. Accordingly, the move by postcolonial nations to accrue the economic and symbolic assets that will set them apart and give them a competitive advantage above other countries, has led to the shift from political nation-building to the political economy project of manufacturing and positioning the nation-brand. Nation-branding is the postcolonial neoliberal nation’s attempt to control its own discursive construction and dissemination, and to challenge the colonizing Euro-American media narratives that insist on circumscribing it within what Anne McClintock (1995) has described as an *anachronistic space outside of history proper* (p. 30).

Within postcolonial nation-branding the fetish sign of the neoliberal nation or *India Inc.* announces the return of pigment as a *positive* indicator of national identity rather than an absence of civilization, development, or progress, as the epidermal politics of white bias would suggest. Subsequently, one of the tasks in nation-branding tasks is to challenge the racialization of the postcolonial nation state, whereby brownness/blackness is automatically equated with the under-development, poverty and disease in the Third World, and constantly contrasted against the white standard of Euro-American civilization, industrialization and ‘natural’ leadership. The link between the individual citizen’s body and the body politic through the *commodity-body-sign* of the nation-brand allows us to see this practice as a specific *historically situated* postcolonial response to the larger challenge of a colonizing global *image politics* with far-reaching political and material consequences.

The third chapter, “Nation-Branding: *India Inc. is Incredible India*,” traces the branding of neoliberal India (or *India Inc.*) as an investment hub, through the “India Everywhere” and “Make in India” promotional initiatives led by the Government of India. Also analyzed here are the *Incredible India* tourism promotions, the neo-patriotic music videos produced by filmmaker Bharat Bala and celebrity singer A. R. Rahman, and the making of “Brand Modi” as an extension of neoliberal India. In examining the relationship between psychoanalytical and material discourses, I start by looking at the geopsychological divides created by colonial maps, the cartographic bifurcation of India-Pakistan through Partition, and the constitution of symbolic borders within contemporary India to separate insiders (‘authentic’ Indians) from outsiders (foreigners, or indigenous ethnic, caste-based, and religious minorities), as well as men from women, in subscribing to the chauvinism of Hindutva as the hegemonic “idea of India.” Drawing from Mary Douglas’s work on symbolic pollution, and the fetishization of what I describe as *neoliberal dirt*, the chapter deconstructs Modi’s *Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan* (“My Clean India” Project) and the emergence of the *gau rakshaks* (cow protectors) to explain what I call a *maternal geography* that is defined and controlled however, by the representational machinery of a *masculinist State/religion*.

Moreover, in the setting up of what I term as *bio-boundaries*, what we discover is that gender has emerged, alongside caste, and religion, “as a point of *crisis* in the cultural, social, and political space of nation” (Sunder-Rajan, 2001, p. 3).²¹⁵ Utilizing Sara Ahmed’s concept of “sticky signs” to examine the economic nature of hate, I posit that there has been a *sticky logic* of constructed reasons to justify scapegoating religious minorities, supported by a political and economic agenda. Looking at post-colonial nation-branding through an *economic gaze* we begin to realize how “*poverty can be converted into enterprise*” (Roy, A. [Ananya], 2012a, p. 140, emphasis mine).²¹⁶ Similarly, by deploying a critical *excavating gaze* in examining the fetishized signs that form the nation-brand, we are able to excavate the blind spots in these representations, and thus prevent postcolonial Indianness from becoming static, fixed, and inflexible.

Chapter Four, “Taking Care of the Mother(land): Bollywood Patriotism and Young India,” concerns the fetish of the *celluloid homeland* within Bollywood popular cinema. The chapter investigates the construction of desire for a prefabricated global Indianness for Indian viewers (particularly younger audiences) within and across national borders. The figure of the Bollywood Star (on and off-screen) has long served as a substitute for the nation, as well as a reminder of the viewer’s own perceived “lack” in terms of being the perfect citizen that the latter seeks to mirror. I argue that in the case of the neo-patriotic films, the idea of the mother(land) is tied to her sons and daughters who become the agents of change and transformation, and act on her behalf. Faced with the “ethnicization of the national,” (Žižek, 1997b, p. 42), it is worth considering how the Bollywood culture industry has “auto-colonized” the Indian cultural imaginary into accepting the fact that “capitalism is here to stay,” so that, as Žižek argues, what could have been a fight against this homogenizing system is displaced onto the struggles between internal groups and centered on identity politics. In each of the analyzed films—*Swades: We, the People* (“Our Country”, 2004), *Rang de Basanti* (Color It Saffron, 2006), and *Chak De! India* (Go India! 2007)—the fetish of the mother-as-nation substitutes for the nation’s history (past and present), culture (as mothers and teachers), and ethno-singularity (forging unity out of diversity). Motherhood, in each case, forms the backdrop of an emerging neoliberal nation, being ‘manufactured’ by its millennial sons and daughters, whose accomplishments are then presented on the global stage as proof of the prowess of neoliberal Young India.

Chapter Five, “Manufacturing Terror®: The Politics of Othering in Nation-Building,” examines the politics-of-terror attached to the body of the Muslim subaltern in neoliberal India. It traces the discursive trajectory of Muslim ‘fanaticism’ from British colonial accounts and artifacts, through the communal genocide of the Indo-Pakistan Partition, to the contemporary vilification and scapegoating of Muslims in the 2002 Gujarat riots, and the 26/11 Mumbai attacks that irrevocably linked terrorism with Pakistan and

Muslims in the Indian national imagination. Death and economic ‘development’ are closely linked within the necropolitics of the neoliberal nation, where the critical deconstruction of the fetishization of death allows us to see how the ‘value’ of lives lost/taken (the political economy of death and dying) is linked with the projects of neo-nationalism, economic ‘development’, and historical retribution. Using the concept of *the disruptive necrofetish*, I show how media representations of communal violence (riots, terrorism) transform the subaltern bodies into loaded symbolic sites/sights of re-remembering. At the same time, the fetish disrupts the ‘screened off’ content in the media images and narratives used to construct violent subalternity, revealing the operation of a *petrifying gaze* through which the terror resides in us who insist on terrorizing the Other. Subsequently, the analysis of *postcolonial violence* of neoliberalization in *India Inc.* touches upon the ‘manufacturing’ of the Muslim as a violent subaltern, the ‘labor’ behind the binary constructions of terrorism vs. corporate patriotism, and good vs. bad subalterns, and the economic logic informing terrorism and *neoliberal sacrifice* to produce the realization that the branding of the nation, tied as it is to the neoliberal project of ‘development,’ is also linked with the manufacturing of neoliberal terror.

The last chapter, “Old and New Goddesses: Disrobing Indian Femininity,” addresses the rise of the Indian neo-middle class, and the creation of an *identity economy* in which consumer-citizens utilize brands to shape an *authentically* global Indian image. The tension between the cultural obsession with whiteness that is a colonial hangover, and the *desi* fetish of *swadeshi* or made-in-India commodities that embody a patriotic and moral goodness, also reflects the tug-of-within consumer-citizens caught between aspiring to be national and global. The first half of this analysis entails a critical investigation of the uncanny return of whiteness as postcolonial desire, and the attempts to transcode brownness as a source of *desi* pride. I then examine the political and affective economy of female beauty, agency, and desire through Indian-born Canadian filmmaker Nisha Pahuja’s documentary *The World before Her* (2011) which offers a rich behind-the-scenes look at the Femina Miss India beauty pageant and an unprecedented glimpse into the world of the all-women *Durga Vahini* right-wing Hindutva organization. The juxtaposition here is between the beauty pageant as a neoliberal stage where a globalized Indianness is being produced for a white-washed gaze, and the fetishization of feminine divinity within the *Durga Vahini*, in an attempt to *disembody* the female form and make *femininity a spiritual attribute in a distinctly Hindutva way*. The chapter then looks at the *postcolonial violence* that is culturally sanctioned by the fetishization of women’s bodies. It ends by examining the decolonization of female sexuality and desire that can challenge the patriarchal codes of neoliberalism and Hindutva, and liberate women from being reified as fetish objects.

Within neoliberal globalization, Benjamin Lee and Edward LiPuma (2002) urge us to think of “circulation” beyond simply the movement of people, artifacts, and images from place to place. Instead, “[c]irculation is a cultural process,” they argue, “with its own forms of abstraction, evaluation, and constraint, which are created by the interactions between specific types of circulating forms and the interpretive communities built around them” (qtd. in Gaonkar & Povinelli, 2003, p. 391).²¹⁷ No matter what type of interpretive communities these may be—culture industries, financial institutions, or the more intimate coffeehouses—they open up the possibility of pursuing the “proliferating copresence of varied textual/cultural forms in all their mobility and mutability,” rather than settling for “a delineation of their fragile autonomy and specificity” (Gaonkar & Povinelli, 2003, p. 391). “The analytic dilemma of the material vehicularization of cultural forms” is addressed by Paul Kockelman (2002) who analyzes “the linguistic mediation of social life in a Q’eqchi’-Maya village in Guatemala.” He notices that in this culture, a woman can be accused of physically harming her husband if she “accidentally or intentionally tears a tortilla in her frying pan,” as he is preparing his fields. Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar and Elizabeth A. Povinelli (2003) ask:

How should the organization of gender and power be analyzed if one of the sites of its investment is the fragility of a tortilla? Other aspects of materiality are equally at play in the aporia between

meaning-focused and socially focused studies of translation, such as the physical organization of space from the perspective of the disabled or the comparative physical deterioration of bodies under different labor regimes (Gaonkar & Povinelli, 2003, p. 394).

There must be a consideration of what the authors call “the demanding environments of ‘things’ and their movement,” so that, instead of simply querying meaning-making across linguistic differences, semiotic systems, or genre conventions, the question that must be posed is:

What are the generative matrices that demand that things—including “meaning” as a captivating orientation and phantasmatic object—appear in a decisive form in order for them to be recognized as value-bearing as they traverse the gaps of two or more cultures, habitations, imaginaries, and forms of life? (Gaonkar & Povinelli, 2003, p. 395)

The *transfiguration* (rather than just translation) of fetish signs across various environments is what lets us recognize a *McDonald's* burger in any context, “even in the absence of cow meat, or any meat at all” (Gaonkar & Povinelli, 2003, p. 395). And it is this transfiguration of the fetish-signs of the nation-brand that we will be critically pursuing in this book.

Notes

1. Deshpande, S. (1998). Hegemonic spatial strategies: The nation-space and Hindu communalism in twentieth-century India. *Public Culture*, 10(2), 249–83. doi:10.1215/08992363-10-2-249
2. Visvanathan (2016a) refers to the Oxford Dictionary’s word for 2016—*post-truth*—which was the creation of American blogger and journalist David Roberts, adding that it is a “traumatic word” in the current political climate. Visvanathan reflects that, “the decline of the humble postbox has liberated the word ‘post’ to perform more courtly functions. Now, the word ‘post’ signals monumental change, an aftermath.” Since the state of democracy is itself in “flux”, the ordinary citizen is at a loss for how to interpret unfolding events. “He knows that democracy is a relationship between knowledge and power. But what does he do when the power of truth confronts the truth of power? He often confuses the two, creates labels, neologisms and acronyms: but the labels often turn out to be reductionist,” writes Visvanathan. And sometimes, the bemused citizen “takes two contradictory words and hyphenates them, and thinks the two contradictory worlds can co-exist. Or he puts a prefix to indicate a seminal shift in mindsets.” I propose that *post-colonial* like *post-truth* attests to this double-bind [See: Visvanathan, S. (2016a, December 31). The year we reinvented the truth. *The Hindu*. Retrieved from <http://www.thehindu.com/society/The-year-we-reinvented-the-truth/article16968501.ece>].
3. Mohan, M. (2016, August 15). Modi’s Independence Day speech: Here are the top quotes. *Hindustan Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/modi-s-independence-day-speech-what-he-said-at-red-fort/story-JiLkAct0OdhsIeCt9hPNrO.html>
4. Nelson, D. (2013, February 17). David Cameron’s India trade trip: Why we owe a debt to India. *The Telegraph*, UK. Retrieved from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/india/9876387/David-Camersons-India-trade-trip-why-we-owe-a-debt-to-India.html>
5. Boissoneault, L. (2017, August 30). The true story of the Koh-i-Noor diamond—and why the British won’t give it back. *Smithsonian.com*. Retrieved from <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/true-story-koh-i-noor-diamondand-why-british-wont-give-it-back-180964660/>. In their co-authored book *Kohinoor: The story of the world’s most infamous diamond*, William Dalrymple and Anita Anand address the fetishistic aspects of the Kohinoor diamond, quoting from the ancient text, the *Garuda Purana* that attributes “prosperity, long life, increase of wives and progeny and domestic animals, and the bringing home of a teeming harvest” to the wearing of “a diamond well-marked in its points, clear in lustre and divested of baneful traits” (qtd. in Dalrymple & Anand, p. 21). The true symbolic value of the Kohinoor diamond however, really emerged when the Sikh ruler Ranjit Singh brought back the gem to India after conquering the Afghan Durrani dynasty and winning back the vast Indian territories they had seized, along with the famed stone. “The transition is startling when the diamond becomes a symbol of potency rather than beauty,” Anand attests. “It becomes this gemstone like the ring in *Lord of the Rings*, one ring to rule them all.” And as Lorraine Boissoneault notes in her piece for *The Smithsonian*, “For the British, that symbol of prestige and power was irresistible. *If they could own the jewel of India as well as the country itself, it would symbolize their power and colonial superiority.*” Richard Kurin, Smithsonian’s first Distinguished Scholar and Ambassador-at-Large as well as the author of *Hope Diamond: The Legendary History of a Cursed Gem*, indicates another reason why the diamond has been fetishized as being invested with power and potency beyond its economic value. The “curse” of the Kohinoor that allows only women to wear it safely, he believes, has accrued mythic proportions primarily because of how it was acquired. “When the powerful take things from the less powerful, the powerless don’t have much to do except curse the powerful,” Kurin adds (in Boissoneault, 2017). The Kohinoor today, arguably, has become a particular type of *postcolonial fetish*, disavowing the specter of emasculation (the threat of UK having to return the stone to India), while bringing to light the difference in ascertaining the symbolic value of the gem on both sides of the divide. Literary scholar Mrinalini Chakra-

- vorty (2014) refers back to the psychoanalytic framing of the fetish, whereby it “takes the place of our most tangled desires, displacing onto itself the causes and origins of our overt fixations” (p. 33). The famed diamond is both a fixture of postcolonial and neocolonial desires. For many postcolonial Indians, the Kohinoor embodies the exploitative dynamics of British imperialism, while the British government continues to insist the diamond was a ‘gift’ from the ten-year old Sikh heir to a throne he never got to occupy. “Critical fetishism,” Emily Apter has argued, “both simulates the fetishist’s desire by way of an object and exposes its ‘imposter value’.” Depending upon whether one adopts the Indian or British perspective, the decision whether the jewel was looted or gifted, remains irreconcilable. Accordingly, the “fetish object incites deep affective responses even despite the understanding that it is an empty cipher” (Chakravorty, p. 33) [For more, see Dalrymple, W. & Anand, A. (2018). *Kohinoor: The story of the world’s most infamous diamond*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing, Kurin, R. (2006). *Hope Diamond: The legendary history of a cursed gem*. Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Books, and Chakravorty, M. (2014). *In stereotype: South Asia in the global literary imaginary*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.].
6. In his review of Niall Ferguson’s. *Civilization: The west and the rest*, Indian novelist and essayist Pankaj Mishra writes, “In 1877, decades before anti-colonial leaders and intellectuals across Asia and Africa developed a systematic political critique of colonialism, the itinerant Muslim activist Jamal al-Din al-Afghani was attacking ‘the trap of duplicity’ in British accounts of India. The British had invested immense sums in developing a global network of modern communications simply in order, al-Afghani wrote, ‘to drain the substance of our wealth and facilitate the means of trade for the inhabitants of the British Isles and extend their sphere of riches’. Two generations of Western historians have essentially confirmed the early Asian and African arguments that the imperatives of ‘free trade’, whether imposed, as on China, by gunboats, or as on India, by outright occupation, had a devastating effect. The Indian Declaration of Independence in 1930 inadvertently summed up the multifarious damage inflicted on a swathe of subjugated countries from Ottoman Turkey and Egypt to Java” [Excerpted from Mishra, P. (2011, November 03). Watch this man. *London Review of Books* 33 (21), 10–12. Retrieved from <https://www.lrb.co.uk/v33/n21/pankaj-mishra/watch-this-man>].
 7. Allen, C. (2013, February 19). The history of India is a history of colonialism. *The Telegraph*, UK. Retrieved from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/india/9879883/The-history-of-India-is-a-history-of-colonialism.html>. See the academic exposition of such a perspective in Ferguson, N. (2004). *Empire: The rise and demise of the British world order and the lessons for global power*. New York, NY: Basic Books. in which the author argues that the 19th century project of British imperialism “undeniably pioneered free trade, free capital movements and, with the abolition of slavery, free labour. It invested immense sums in developing a global network of modern communications. It spread and enforced the rule of law over vast areas” (p. 304). As such, Ferguson continues, if British rule had not expanded across the globe, former colonized peoples, like from the sub-continent, would not have their modern democratic ideas and institutions, or the global *lingua franca*, namely, the English language. Postcolonial theorist Arif Dirlik (2002) rightly observes therefore, that, “[l]iberal and conservative development discourses, most notably modernization discourse, have for the most part dismissed colonialism as an important aspect of modernity, and, where they have recognized its importance, they have assigned to it a progressive historical role” (p. 430, emphasis mine) [See: Dirlik, A. (2002). Rethinking colonialism: Globalization, postcolonialism, and the nation. *Interventions*, 4(3), 428–48. doi:10.1080/1369801022000013833].
 8. Sunderland, J. T. (1929). *India in bondage: Her right to freedom and a place among the great nations*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
 9. Tharoor, S. (2017). *Inglorious empire: What the British did to India*. London, UK: C. Hurst & Co. (Original work published 2016).
 10. Varma, P. K. (2005). *Being Indian: Inside the real India*. London, UK: William Heinemann.
 11. Chatterjee, P. (2010). Those fond memories of the Raj. In *Empire and nation: Selected essays* (pp. 161–63). New York, NY: Columbia University Press (original work published 2005).
 12. Tejaswini Ganti (2014) distinguishes between “late capitalism”, which she regards as a historical phase, and neoliberalism, which she sees as “an ideological and philosophical movement” translated into hegemonic policy by a group of intellectual architects such as Walter Lippman, Milton Friedman, Friedrich August von Hayek, among others, and institutions such as the Mont Pelerin Society. What’s central to neoliberalism, Ganti argues, is the binding agreement, between an increasingly corporatized government and its people, to reconceptualize citizenship in free market terms so that the health of the market rather than the welfare of the citizens becomes the new marker of the nation’s well-being (p. 91) [See: Ganti, T. (2014). Neoliberalism. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 43, 89–104. doi:10.1146/annurev-anthro-092412-155528].
 13. Radhakrishnan, R. (1993). Postcoloniality and the boundaries of identity. [Special issue]. *Callaloo*, 16(4), 750–71. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2932208>
 14. Shohat, E. (1992). Notes on the “post-colonial”. *Social Text*, 31/32, 99–113. doi:10.2307/466220
 15. Pratt, M. L. (1992). *Imperial eyes: Travel writing and transculturation*. New York, NY: Routledge. Pratt notes that, the “‘contact zone’ is an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal co-presence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect. By using the term ‘contact,’” she states, her aim is “to foreground the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters so easily ignored or suppressed by diffusionist accounts of conquest and domination. A ‘contact’ perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats the relations among colonizers and colonized, or travelers and ‘travelees,’ not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power” (p. 7; emphasis mine).
 16. Hardt, M., & Negri, A. (2000). *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

17. Dirlík, A. (2002). Rethinking colonialism: Globalization, postcolonialism, and the nation. *Interventions*, 4(3), pp. 428–48. doi:10.1080/1369801022000013833
18. Gimenez, M. E. (2002). The global fetish. *Latin American Perspectives*, 29(6), pp. 85–87. doi:10.1177/009458202237780
19. Durham, M. G. & Kellner, D. M. (2006). Adventures in media and cultural studies: Introducing the keywords. In M. G. Durham, & D. M. Kellner (Eds.), *Media and cultural studies: Keywords* (Revised ed.) (pp. ix–xxxviii). Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell Publishing (Original work published 1992). It is worth raising Dirlík's (2002) observation that “[t]he question of the nation is of fundamental significance not only because of its importance to understanding the dynamics of postcolonial societies, but also to conceptions of colonialism, which, [...] presuppose by definition the domination of one nation by another.” This leads Dirlík to ponder: “Is it possible that, as colonialism generated nationalism, it was only with the emergence of nationalism that colonialism came to be so named by the colonized?” (p. 435).
20. Mourdoukoutas, P. (2018, June 14). India's economy beats China. *Forbes*. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/panasmourdoukoutas/2018/06/14/indias-economy-beats-china/#62447cfc3e78>
21. Rajagopal (2001a) describes how Hindutva harnessed modern communication technologies, and the neoliberal “credo of opening out to the world” to “sell” Hindu nationalism as a way for India to regain its cultural roots and in turn, make this Hindu origin a source of patriotic pride and cultural supremacy (p. 42). The *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* (World Hindu Council, or VHP) established in 1964, made its mission the dissemination of Hindu values, and the creation of a global Hindu “family” of Indians at home and abroad. While its political arm, the Bharatiya Janata Party or BJP had to abide by electoral rules and stay away from religion-based campaigning, the VHP as a non-political organization could “be the same figure wearing one costume in the capital and another in the villages, or even the same figure in the same outfit speaking a different language” (p. 60). Subsequently, as Rajagopal observes, “there was a systematic coordination between parliamentary and extra-parliamentary wings of the Hindu nationalists, with statements made by the one designed as counterpoint to the other” (p. 60). Moreover, the VHP drew on a nostalgic and romanticized idea of a lost India that had “a thoroughly spiritual, yet highly scientific culture” and where, allegedly, there were “no divisions between the various castes, sects, and faiths at the time, and a feeling of selfless unity prevailed” (p. 60). Blaming the loss of this great culture on the turn of Indian society to the West, it proposed a solution by advocating a return to Hindu rituals and the guidance of Hindu sages/gurus. By doing so, “the Hindu nationalists were able to establish between religious identity and a long-denied participation in the polity, so that the exercise of faith could become not only an act of consumption but an assertion of political will” (p. 61) [For a brilliant detailing of the dove-tailing of media, marketing, and the rise of Hindutva, see: Rajagopal, A. (2001a). *Politics after television: Religious nationalism and the reshaping of the Indian public*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press].
22. *Kar seva* entails doing service in the name of religion, or building a place of worship devoted to the one ‘true’ God. The devotees who perform such service are called *kar sevaks*.
23. Roy, S. (2014, December 21). How brand Modi is merchandising Indian politics. *FirstPost*. Retrieved from <https://www.firstpost.com/politics/how-brand-modi-is-merchandising-indian-politics-1162299.html>
24. Marx illustrates how value can be determined through equivalence, or “the equation of different commodities of equal value. One commodity acts as a mirror, reflecting and thus expressing the value of the other or, indeed, of as many others as it takes for the equivalence to balance” (Mulvey, p. 9). Slavoj Žižek has compared this process to Lacan’s “mirror phase, in which the two sides of the exchange literally have to represent each other. While value may be inscribed through this reflective process, it depends on the literal presence of the goods, a barter that has to be repeated as often as exchange takes place” (Mulvey, p. 9). However, in the case of money as the sign of value, we find that it can “detach itself from the literalness of object exchange, [and that] it also facilitates the final erasure of labor power as the primary source of value. The referent, as it were, shifts away from the production process toward circulation and the market, where the commodity emerges and circulates with an apparently autonomous value attached to it” (Mulvey, pp. 9–10, parentheses mine). Marx would argue that “this appearance of self-generating value gives rise to commodity fetishism, the disavowal, that is, of locating the source of value in labor power.” It must also be remembered that, “a commodity’s market success depends on the erasure of the marks of production—any trace of indexicality, the grime of the factory, the mass-molding of the machine, and, most of all, the exploitation of the worker. It instead presents the market with a seductive sheen, competing to be desired. While money appears as a sophisticated, abstract, and symbolic means of exchange, *capitalism resurrects the commodity as image*” (Mulvey, p. 10, emphasis mine) [See: Mulvey, L. (1993). Some thoughts on theories of fetishism in the context of contemporary culture. *October*, 65, 3–20. doi:10.2307/1778760].
25. Pietz, W. (1985). The Problem of the Fetish I. *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 9, 5–17. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20166719>
26. Visvanathan, S. (2017, May 26). Dividing lines: Brand Modi—the remaking of India. *Deccan Chronicle*. Retrieved from <http://www.deccanchronicle.com/opinion/op-ed/260517/dividing-lines-brand-modi-the-remaking-of-india.html>
27. Ian S. Lustick (1996) analyzing the fetish of Jerusalem, writes that a *political fetish* “is a displacement of political desire from a ‘natural’ target to a larger or smaller object—a shift of attention and attachment that serves changing political interests.” It is successful, he argues, when it becomes first, “a majority opinion,” then, a “consensual doctrine,” and finally, “a hegemonic belief” that does not seem to be ideological, but rather, appears “as a given, as a natural and presumptively unchangeable expression of immutable circumstances” (p. 143) [See Lustick, I. S. (1996). The fetish of Jerusalem: A hegemonic analysis. In M. N. Barnett (Ed.), *Israel in comparative perspective: Challenging the conventional wisdom* (pp. 143–72). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press].

28. Žižek, S. (1989). *The sublime object of ideology*. New York, NY: Verso.
29. The *Real* according to Lacan is that which resists representation. It is outside the realm of the *symbolic* (language and signification). Žižek therefore writes: “It is because the Real offers no support for a direct symbolization of it—because every symbolization is the last resort contingent—that the only way the experience of a given historic reality can achieve its unity is through the agency of a signifier, through reference to a ‘pure’ signifier. It is not the real object which guarantees as the point of reference the unity and identity of a certain ideological experience—on the contrary, it is the reference of a ‘pure’ signifier which gives unity and identity to our experience of historical reality itself. Historical reality is of course always symbolized; the way we experience it is always mediated through different modes of symbolization: all Lacan adds to this phenomenological common wisdom is the fact that the unity of a given ‘experience of meaning’, itself the horizon of an ideological field of meaning, is supported by some ‘pure’, meaningless ‘signifier without the signified.’” (Žižek, 1989, p. 97, emphases mine)
30. IANS. (2017, December 08). Modi govt spent Rs. 3,755 crore on ads and publicity since April 2014, shows RTI. *Hindustan Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/modi-govt-spent-rs-3-755-crore-on-ads-and-publicity-since-april-2014-rti-reveals/story-p7g6NTVqpjZXHi2IvJvk0M.html>
31. Roy, T. L. (2017, August 12). Three years and counting, Modi jackets remain hot favourites with consumers. *Money Control*. Retrieved from <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/india/three-years-and-counting-modi-jackets-remain-hot-favourites-with-consumers-2358289.html>
32. Mazumdar, P. (2018, June 02). Assam man savours the taste of Modi’s sweet success mantra. *The New Indian Express*. Retrieved from <http://www.newindianexpress.com/thesundaystandard/2018/jun/02/assam-man-savours-the-taste-of-modis-sweet-success-mantra-1822915.html>
33. DNA Correspondent. (2018, July 24). PM Narendra Modi plans to reach out to 22 cr. beneficiaries via app. *DNA*. Retrieved from <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-pm-narendra-modi-plans-to-reach-out-to-22-cr-beneficiaries-via-app-2640935>. Anthropologist William Mazzarella (2006) addresses how the “vision that was e-governance appeared to resolve the tension between what Jodi Dean (2002) has called ‘technocracy’ and ‘technoculture’” (Mazzarella, 2006, p. 480). Dean posits that technoculture, “the distributed cultural logic of the Internet era, follows historically upon technocracy, the older top-down idiom of the age of the mainframe” (Mazzarella, 2006, p. 480). She regards both as “depoliticizing” categories of information technology, positing that, “[i]f technocracy aimed to eliminate politics in the name of efficient administration, technoculture forecloses politics in the name of communication’ (112–13)” (in Mazzarella, 2006, p. 480). As Mazzarella observes, “[t]he Indian discourse of e-governance suggests less a historical shift between two paradigms than an ongoing attempt to bring old-fashioned centralized power into alignment with a decentralized consumerist-populist notion of empowerment.” And in fact, “the mark of e-governance” in India, has been “this juxtaposition of a fetishized systems rationality with an affectively charged ideal of communicative immediacy” (Mazzarella, 2006, p. 481) [Mazzarella, W. (2006). Internet x-ray: E-governance, transparency, and the politics of immediation in India. *Public Culture*, 18(3), 473–505. doi:10.1215/08992363-2006-016].
34. Bhattacharya, D. P. (2013, December 13). ‘Modi-fying India’: NaMo fans respond to tea vendor jibe with special T-shirt range. *Daily Mail*, India. Retrieved from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-2522740/Modi-fying-India-NaMo-fans-respond-tea-vendor-jibe-special-T-shirt-range.html>
35. Jain, I. (2016, January 21). PM Narendra Modi’s chest now said to measure 50 inches. *The Times of India*. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/PM-Narendra-Modis-chest-now-said-to-measure-50-inches/articleshow/50662048.cms>
36. Hess, A. (2018, May 01). What happens when people and companies are both just ‘brands’? *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/01/magazine/what-happens-when-people-and-companies-are-both-just-brands.html>
37. Kaul, N. (2017). Rise of the political right in India: Hindutva-development mix, Modi myth, and dualities. *Journal of Labor and Society*, 20(4), 523–48. doi:10.1111/wusa.12318
38. Duffy, B. E. (2015). The romance of work: Gender and aspirational labour in the digital culture industries. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 19(4), 441–57. doi:10.1177/1367877915572186
39. RSS or *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (National Patriotic Volunteers’ Organization) is an offshoot of the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* (World Hindu Council), and has always used the Hindu epic *Ramayana*, and its protagonist, King Rama of Ayodhya, “to define its ideology, its peculiar brand of ‘culture.’” The RSS has been credited with being the main architect of a Hindu *rashtra* (Hindu nation), and while it claims to be a cultural organization, the propaganda of a Hindu nation that must be protected from non-Hindus is a central aspect to the cultural education in its *shakhas* or branches (Basu et al, 1993, p. 13) [See: Basu, T., Datta, P., Sarkar, S., Sarkar, T., & Sen, S. (1993). *Khaki shorts and saffron flags: A critique of the Hindu Right*. Hyderabad, India: Orient Longman Limited].
40. Rohan Venkataramakrishnan (2016) “The India-Bharat divide has always been something of a fiction, because the narrative suggests an impoverished rural nation out in the countryside, entirely disconnected from urban India. *The reality is that even within India’s cities, entire worlds have become detached from each other*. Go into the colonies adjoining the gated communities that are becoming ubiquitous, or even their back alleys, and you will see multiple nations that barely understand each other and often don’t even attempt to” (emphasis mine) [Venkataramakrishnan, R. (2016, August 15). The daily fix: On independence day, a deeply divided India—but not between Hindutva and liberals. *Scroll*, India. Retrieved from <https://scroll.in/article/814032/the-daily-fix-on-independence-day-a-deeply-divided-india-but-not-between-hindutva-and-liberals>]. Malini Goyal (2013), writing for the *Economic Times* (India), reports on the survey results

- that *FutureBrands*, a global brand consultancy, compiles as an annual “Country Brand Index”. In answering the question, “What defines Brand India?” the majority of respondents (64.3% of those surveyed) said Bollywood; the second most common answer “hit the other end of the spectrum—Mahatma Gandhi (57%).” The next two most popular answers too were polar opposites—the Taj Mahal and cricket. Asked what is it that makes Indians proud in the global context, “84% reckoned the opening up of the economy made their hearts swell with pride, [while] almost half of the sample felt that Bollywood’s high-jinks on the international stage made them feel good about themselves (parentheses mine).” Interestingly, approximately 60% felt that “‘incredible’ is the apt adjective to describe India—although more than half thought ‘corrupt’ was a far better prefix.” And all of 83% feel India’s economic growth story has taken a beating. The culprits are predictable: corruption, political leadership, policy paralysis and red-tapism [See: Goyal, M. (2013, October 27). Incredible or incredibly corrupt: For young Indians, what does brand India stand for? *The Economic Times*. Retrieved from http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/news-by-company/corporate-trends/incredible-or-incredibly-corrupt-for-young-indians-what-does-brand-india-stand-for/articleshow_opt/24764568.cms]
41. During the 2016 U.S. Presidential elections, the world witnessed the extent to which social media platforms could customize what viewers read/saw in their news feeds. It also became evident that information could be manipulated and disseminated widely, so as to appear legitimate and trustworthy, by appealing to populist values, so that readers were less likely to fact-check what they were being fed. In fact, the word “post-truth”, says reporter Neerja Deodhar (2018, January 13), refers to “circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.” The word “post-truth” originated in 1992, but has taken front-stage since 2016, with battle lines being drawn between authoritarian administrations in the US and UK and the Fourth Estate. Increasingly, the news media is finding its credibility under attack, being dismissed as fake-news by “a majority and State that is simply unwilling to accept the inferences drawn from and interpretations of their research, because it challenge[s] their power or ideology directly, or because it [goes] against the dominant narrative” (parenthetical insertions mine). Now, more than ever, we need to be vigilant about how the debate about “fake news” and post-facts is also shaping the tendency to favor “post-histories” and manipulate historical evidence and narratives to suit hegemonic political agendas [See: Deodhar, N. (2018, January 13). Sunil Khilnani on what it means to be Indian in a post-fact era, and dangers of mythologising history. *FirstPost*, India. Retrieved from <https://www.firstpost.com/living/sunil-khilnani-on-what-it-means-to-be-indian-in-a-post-fact-era-and-dangers-of-mythologising-history-4296251.html>].
 42. Hook, D. (2008). Postcolonial psychoanalysis. *Theory Psychology*, 18(2), 269–83. doi:10.1177/0959354307087886
 43. For more details, see, for instance: Gamble, R. (2018, June 18). The China-India rivalry is causing an ecological disaster in the Himalayas. *Quartz*, India. Retrieved from <https://qz.com/1307728/the-china-india-rivalry-is-causing-an-ecological-disaster-in-the-himalayas/>; Chaudhury, D. R. (2018, June 07). Stop work in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, says India after being urged to back ‘One China’. *The Economic Times*. Retrieved from <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/stop-work-in-pakistan-occupied-kashmir-says-india-after-being-urged-to-back-one-china/article-show/64500030.cms>; Norris, M., & Schofield, V. (2008, December 03). Kashmir dispute has roots in colonial history [Radio program]. In M. Gray, & A. Hsu (Producers), *All Things Considered*. Washington, DC: NPR. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=97766007>.
 44. Bennett, D. (2005). Getting the Id to go shopping: Psychoanalysis, advertising, Barbie dolls, and the invention of the consumer unconscious. *Public Culture*, 17(1), 1–26. doi:10.1215/08992363-17-1-1
 45. While conducting extensive consumer interviews for *Ivory* soap, Dichter discovered, for instance, that “that soap acquires more value by association with washing before a special occasion—such as a romantic date—when people bathe longer, more carefully, and more luxuriously; hence the more erotic a soap’s connotations or the more sexual its ‘personality,’ the greater its perceived value and the more likely the consumer is to spend on it (in Bennett, 2005, p. 14). His greatest coup was the marketing campaign for *Mattel’s* Barbie dolls where he combined his view that “sex sells” with giving the commodity a brand *personality*. Again, his research helped him position the doll as a socializing instrument through which the female child could learn how to be “as glamorous and American as possible,” and therefore the doll was marketed from the start as a “person.” “Happily unmarried, parent-free, and child-free, Barbie was a successful career girl and sexual free agent whose social mobility required as many (profit-generating) outfits as there were social occasions—from ‘Easter Parade’ to ‘Roman Holiday’ and ‘Gay Parisienne,’ from beach dates to high state occasions.” Dichter and *Mattel* successfully “constructed an object of female childhood desire that was a prototype of the compulsive spender and guiltless consumer driven by desublimated sexual desire” (Bennett, 2005, pp. 13–15).
 46. For this and a detailed discussion on fetishism, see Apter, E. (1993). Introduction. In E. Apter & W. Pietz, (Eds.), *Fetishism as cultural discourse* (pp. 1–12). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press; and Bernheimer, C. (1993). Fetishism and decadence: Salome’s severed heads. In E. Apter & W. Pietz (Eds.), *Fetishism as cultural discourse* (pp. 62–83).
 47. Pietz, W. (1985). The problem of the fetish, I. *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 9, 5–17. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20166719>
 48. Race and cultural historian Harvey Young (2005) adds an interesting footnote that the “fact that [the] word “fetish” was used to describe the religious objects of the West African rather than “idol” points to the ethnocentrism and, perhaps, racism of the Portuguese traders who refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of African spirituality. Their bias/prejudice prompted the creation of a new, separate word.” Young also emphasizes the racial origins of the word, since “the black body was always already a fetish—the word was created with blackness in mind” (footnote 37, p. 649) [See: Young, H. (2005). Black body as souvenir in American lynching. *Theatre Journal*, 57(4), 639–657. doi:10.1353/tj.2006.0054]
 49. McClintock, A. (1995). *Imperial leather: Race, gender, and sexuality in the colonial context*. New York, NY: Routledge.

50. For a more detailed explanation, see: Freud, S. (1957). Fetishism (1927). In J. Strachey (Ed. & Trans.). *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud. (vol. XXI, 1927–1931). The future of an illusion, civilization and its discontents, and other works* (pp. 152–57). London, UK: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis.
51. Lacan, J. (1982). Guiding remarks for a congress on feminine sexuality. In J. Mitchell & J. Rose (Eds.). *Feminine sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the École Freudienne* (pp. 86–98). (J. Rose, Trans.). New York, NY: W. W. Norton.
52. It is worth noting that there have been theorizations since, regarding a non-phallogocentric reading of the psychoanalytic fetish that opens up a space for more nuanced readings of cultural/historical contexts in which fetishistic disavowal can provide women with agency, while challenging the hegemonic patriarchal ways of looking and constructing identities [See, for example, Schor, N. (1985). Female fetishism: The case of George Sand. *Poetics Today*, 6(1/2), 301–10. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1772136>; Gamman, L. & Makinen, M. (1995). *Female fetishism*. Washington Square, NY: New York University Press; Williamson, C. (1996). “You’ll see it just as I saw it”: Voyeurism, fetishism, and the female spectator in lady in the lake. *Journal of Film and Video*, 48(3), 17–29. doi:10.2307/20688109; Guano, E. (2004). She looks at him with the eyes of a camera: Female visual pleasures and the polemic with fetishism in Sally Potter’s *Tango Lesson*. *Third Text*, 18(5), 461–74. doi:10.1080/0952882042000251732; Greven, D. (2010). Male medusas and female heroes: Fetishism and ambivalence in *The Silence of the Lambs*. In *Manhood in Hollywood from Bush to Bush* (pp. 85–104). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press; and, Brown, J. A. (2011). *Dangerous curves: Action heroines, gender, fetishism, and popular culture*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi.]
53. Philosopher Slavoj Žižek (1989) explains that when individuals are dealing with money, they “know very well that there is nothing magical about it,” and that the physical form of the currency is “simply an expression of social relations.” In other words, he argues, people are conscious that “there are relations between people behind the relations between things.” However, they *act* as if it is the physical form of money that is the ‘embodiment of wealth,’ which is why Žižek states that “[t]hey are fetishists in practice, not in theory. What they ‘do not know,’ what they misrecognize, is the fact that in their social reality itself—in the act of commodity exchange—they are guided by the fetishistic illusion” (p. 31) [See: Žižek, S. (1989). *The sublime object of ideology*. New York, NY: Verso].
54. For more on Marxism and the fetish, see Mulvey, L. (1996). *Fetishism and curiosity* (pp. 2–6). Bloomington, IN: BFI and Indiana University Press; Pietz, W. (1993). Fetishism and materialism: The limits of theory in Marx. In E. Apter & W. Pietz (Eds.), *Fetishism as cultural discourse* (pp. 119–51). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press; Keenan, T. (1993). The point is to (ex)change it: Reading *Capital* rhetorically. In E. Apter & W. Pietz (pp. 152–85); Amariglio, J. & Callari, A. (1993). Marxian value theory and the problem of the subject: The role of commodity fetishism. In E. Apter & W. Pietz (pp. 186–216); and Taussig, M. (1993). *Maleficium: State fetishism*. In E. Apter & W. Pietz (pp. 217–50).
55. JanMohamed, A. R. (1985). The economy of Manichean allegory: The function of racial difference in colonialist literature. *Critical Inquiry*, 12(1), 59–87. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343462>
56. Bateson, who was originally trained to be an anthropologist, was studying schizophrenic communication, and along with his colleagues formulated the double-bind hypothesis that, “the ‘victim’—the person who becomes psychotically unwell—finds him or herself in a communicational matrix, in which messages contradict each other, the contradiction is not able to be communicated on and the unwell person is not able to leave the field of interaction.” Bateson specifies that the double-bind conflict occurs in situations beyond psychotic phenomena (Gibney, p. 52) [See: Gibney, P. (2006). The double bind theory: Still crazy-making after all these years. *Psychotherapy in Australia*, 12(3), 48–55. Retrieved from http://www.psychotherapy.com.au/fileadmin/site_files/pdfs/TheDoubleBindTheory.pdf. For the primary source, please consult: Bateson, G., Jackson, D. D., Haley, J., & Weakland, J. (1972). Toward a theory of schizophrenia. In G. Bateson, *Steps to an ecology of mind: A revolutionary approach to man’s understanding of himself* (pp. 205–32). New York, NY: Balantine Books. (Original work published 1956).
57. See Bordo, S. (1999). *The male body: A new look at men in public and in private*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. In her discussion of the “double-bind” as it applies to gendered identity, Bordo points out that young girls are given mixed messages to be as good as their male counterparts and achieve their full potential, even as they are then encouraged to be feminine and child-like. Similarly, men are required to be tough yet sensitive. There are numerous manifestations of the double bind that are useful in considering how identity itself is a site of socially produced ambivalence (pp. 142–45).
58. Pletsch, C. E. (1981). The three worlds, or the division of social scientific labor, circa 1950–1975. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 23(4), 565–90. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/178394>
- Kuan-Hsing Chen (1996) acknowledges the need to challenge the “‘internal hierarchical structures’ within the Third World” and the conditions within global capitalism “that may accentuate such power differentials.” However, as Ming-Yan Lai (2007) argues, “upholding [...] a collective reference based on the common structuration of colonialism regardless of internal power differentials means prioritizing colonialism’s structuring effects on contemporary struggles within heterogeneous (ex)colonized spaces. Underlying Chen’s conceptual framework of the Third World, then, is still a binary structure of a colonialist core versus a colonized periphery, as Ang and Stratton (1996) point out” (Lai, 2007, p. 304) [For the full essay see: Lai, M-Y. (2007). Articulating the third world in/and cultural studies. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 10(3), 303–21. doi:10.1177/1367877907080146].
59. For her complete argument, please see Mohanty, C. T. (1991). Introduction—Cartographies of struggle: Third world women and the politics of feminism. In C. T. Mohanty, A. Russo, & L. Torres (Eds.), *Third world women and the politics of feminism* (pp. 1–47). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
60. Shohat, E. (1992). Notes on the “post-colonial”. *Social Text*, 31/32, 99–113. doi:10.2307/466220

61. Dasgupta, R. (2014, October 31). In G. Gill. 30 years: 1984. *Outlook Magazine*. Retrieved from www.gaurigill.com/huge_document.php?pd=1984.pdf
62. Hegde, R. S. (2005). Disciplinary spaces and globalization: A postcolonial unsettling. *Global Media and Communication*, 1(1), 59–62. doi:10.1177/174276650500100114
63. Feldman, A. (2004). Memory theatres, virtual witnessing, and the trauma-aesthetic. *Biography*, 27(1), 163–202. doi:10.1353/bio.2004.0030
64. Many black South Africans viewed male prisoners who had been tortured as “traumatized”, while a black female who had suffered the constant onslaught of police raids, the sudden “disappearance” of family members, and the struggles brought on by poverty in keeping her home and children together, was not considered as “traumatized” as her male counterpart. And then, “of course the structural violence of apartheid, which tended to be seen in mainly economic terms, was not described as traumatic” (Feldman, 2004, p. 184).
65. Mannoni, O. (1990). *Prospero and Caliban: The psychology of colonization*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
66. Waldman, D., Silk, M., & Andrews, D. L. (2017). Cloning colonialism: Residential development, transnational aspiration, and the complexities of postcolonial India. *Geoforum*, 82, 180–88. doi:10.1016/j.geoforum.2017.04.018
67. The crisis of the nation-state for Partha Chatterjee (2010), therefore, is that the “framework of global modernity” is structuring the world in a manner that is “profoundly colonial,” and in the face of which, democracy “will pronounce modernity itself as inappropriate and deeply flawed” (p. 177) [Chatterjee, P. (2010a). Beyond the nation? Or within? In *Empire and nation* (pp. 164–80) (Original essay published 1997)].
68. Radhakrishnan, R. (1993). Postcoloniality and the boundaries of identity. [Special issue]. *Callaloo*, 16(4), 750–71. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2932208>
69. See Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. (Revised ed.). New York, NY: Verso Books (Original work published 1983). Anderson describes the nation as “an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (pp. 6–7).
70. Hegde, R. S., & Shome, R. (2002). Postcolonial scholarship—productions and directions: An interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. *Communication Theory*, 12(3), 271–86. doi:10.1111/j.1468–2885.2002.tb00270.x
71. See Chatterjee, P. (1990). The nationalist resolution of the woman’s question. In *Recasting women: Essays in colonial history* (pp. 233–52). S. Vaid & K. Sangari (Eds.). New Brunswick: New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
72. Hegde, R. (1998). A view from elsewhere: Locating difference and the politics of representation from a transnational feminist perspective. *Communication Theory*, 8(3), 271–97. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2885.1998.tb00222.x
73. See Chatterjee, P. (1989). Colonialism, nationalism, and colonized women: The contest in India. *American Ethnologist* 16(4), 622–33. doi:10.1525/ae.1989.16.4.02a00020. He writes about how the distinctions are drawn between women who stay within the sanctity of the domestic realm and “women in the world outside the home.” Women are “marked” by their “dress, eating habits (drinking smoking), adherence or otherwise to religious marks of feminine status, behavior toward men, and so on,” and categorized as “Westernized” (read: not Indian), or as “low-class”, for instance—signaling a “deviation from the acceptable norm.” Through such an interpretive lens, a “woman identified as “Westernized”, for instance, would invite the ascription of all that the “normal” woman (mother/ sister/ wife/ daughter) is not—brazen, avaricious, irreligious, sexually promiscuous and this not only from males but also from women who see themselves as conforming to the legitimate norm, which is precisely an indicator of the hegemonic status of the ideological construct” (p. 630, emphasis mine). The projection of a moral code onto the bodies of women, based on appearance, solidifies into a ‘truth’ about their individual character and how they represent the values of Indian culture. Thus, Chatterjee writes, “(Perhaps the most extreme object of contempt for the nationalist is the stereotype of the Anglo-Indian—Westernized and common at the same time). Not surprisingly, deviation from the norm also carries with it the possibility of a variety of ambiguous meanings—signs of illegitimacy become the sanction for behavior not permitted with those who are ‘normal’—and these are the sorts of meaning exploited to the full by, for instance, the commercial media of film, advertising and fashion” (p. 630, emphasis mine). This, of course gives rise to the troubling construct of virtuous womanhood, which is attached to the postcolonial Indian project of nation-branding, and contrasted against the “woman as a sex object in Western patriarchy.” Consequently, the Indian “nationalist male” insists on the rigid surveilling and disciplining of “his own wife/sister/daughter as ‘normal’ precisely because she is not a ‘sex object,’ while those who could be ‘sex objects’ are not ‘normal’” (p. 630), and in many cases, therefore seen as inviting further degradation in the form of violence enacted on their bodies.
74. Radhakrishnan, S. (2008). Examining the “global” Indian middle class: Gender and culture in the Silicon Valley/Bangalore circuit. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 29(1), 7–20. doi:10.1080/07256860701759915. Also, see: Radhakrishnan, S. (2009). Professional women, good families: Respectable femininity and the cultural politics of a “new” India. *Qualitative Sociology*, 32(2), 195–212. doi:10.1007/s11133-009-9125-5
75. Tripathi, S. (2013, August 14). The idea of India revisited. *Live Mint & the Wall Street Journal*, India. Retrieved from <https://www.livemint.com/Opinion/JRBTAm3XX33Yvp5PnPzCiK/The-idea-of-india.html>
76. See Foster, H. (1996). *The return of the Real: The avant-garde at the end of the century*. Cambridge, MA: October Books/MIT Press. Foster is referring to Lacan’s concept of the Real, which is pre-symbolic and therefore impossible to recover since once we have moved into the domain of language, the Real is irrecoverably lost. Still, the Real continues to influence our adult lives and surfaces whenever we are made to acknowledge the materiality of our existence, an acknowledgement that is usually perceived as traumatic (since it threatens our very ‘reality’), although it also drives Lacan’s sense of *jouissance*. In Lacan’s explanation of psycho-sexual development, “symbolic castration” (whereby the person is introduced into and subjected to the socio-symbolic order) alienates the individual from being able to access

- “an immediate, undiluted *jouissance* in its raw, unmitigated intensities.” The *jouissance* presumably lost to the speaking subject returns only in the form of what might be called “limit experiences,” or, “encounters with that which is annihilating, inassimilable, overwhelming, traumatic, or unbearable.” In this sense, *jouissance* “is related to transgressive violations, the breaching of boundaries and breaking of barriers” [See Jacques Lacan. (2013, April 2) *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/lacan/>]. In the postcolonial context, the longing for the Real is the impossible desire to return to a pre-symbolic origin or sense of homeland, since the moment one tries to describe or represent this idea, it passes into the symbolic domain and is recolonized by nationalist ideologies. Foster (1996) addresses the traumatic aspect of this impossibility of recovering a lost beginning. He observes that, “[a]cross artistic, theoretical, and popular cultures (in SoHo, at Yale, on *Oprah*) there is a tendency to redefine experience, individual and historical, in terms of trauma. On the one hand, in art and theory, trauma discourse continues the poststructuralist critique of the subject by other means, for again, in a psychoanalytic register, there is no subject of trauma; the position is evacuated, and in this sense the critique of the subject is most radical here. On the other hand, *in popular culture, trauma is treated as an event that guarantees the subject, and in this psychologistic register the subject, however disturbed, rushes back as witness, testifier, survivor* (emphasis mine). Here is indeed a traumatic subject, and it has absolute authority, for one cannot challenge the trauma of another: one can only believe it, even identify with it, or not. In trauma discourse, then, *the subject is evacuated and elevated at once* (original emphasis). And in this way trauma discourse magically resolves two contradictory imperatives in culture today: deconstructive analyses and identity politics” (Foster, 1996, p. 168). We see this at work in the postcolonial discourses surrounding (neo)colonial encounters and neoliberal nationalisms being reworked in the former colonies. Nation-branding, and cultural neo-nationalism, in the India example, are thus more aggressive attempts to ‘empty out’ the colonized or ‘occupied’ subject and replace it with the corresponding fetishized substitutes, to manufacture an ‘authentic’ and recognizable Indian-ness that can keep foreignness out.
77. In the Indian context, see for example: Chakrabarti, A., & Dhar, A. (2012). Gravel in the shoe: Nationalism and world of the third. *Rethinking Marxism*, 24(1), 106–23. doi:10.1080/08935696.2012.635042; Chatterjee, P. (2012). Nationalism today. *Rethinking Marxism*, 24(1), 9–25. doi:10.1080/08935696.2012.635023
 78. In the case of India, see, for instance: Oza, R. (2012). *The making of neoliberal India: Nationalism, gender, and the paradoxes of globalization*. New York, NY: Routledge.
 79. Olins, W. (2002). Branding the nation—the historical context. *Journal of Brand Management*, 9(4), 241–248. doi:10.1057/palgrave.bm.2540075
 80. Every year, the Anholt-GfK Nation Brands Index ranks fifty countries, according to their performance vis-à-vis exports, governance, culture, people, tourism, and immigration/investment.
 81. Anholt, S., & Hildreth, J. (2010). *Brand America: The making, unmaking and remaking of the greatest national image of all time*. London, UK: Marshall Cavendish International.
 82. Anholt, S. (2009). The media and national image. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 5(3), 169–79. doi:10.1057/pb.2009.11
 83. Anholt, S. (2011). Beyond the nation brand: The role of image and identity in international relations. *Exchange: The Journal of Public Diplomacy*, 2(1), 6–12. Retrieved from <https://surface.syr.edu/exchange/vol2/iss1/1/>
 84. “If you know people through understanding and sharing their culture, it’s hard to hate them. You can sometimes hate what they do, but that’s infinitely easier to deal with and to recover from”, Anholt writes (2011, p. 12).
 85. An interesting anecdote concerns a *Make in India* dinner in San Francisco in 2016, offered by V. Sunil, the adman behind the *Incredible India* and *Make in India* brand initiatives to boost the image of *India Inc*. When Michelin-star chefs politely turned down a request that Indian wine be served at the upscale dinner-in-a-museum event, V. Sunil brought with him a few bottles of *Fratelli* the next time around. The palates of the chefs and guests, he reports, were “pleasantly surprised,” and the Indian brand resonated “at this gathering of influencers from business and the political class.” The takeaway, according to Sunil, is that, “[i]f we do small things on a large platform it can change things. *Make in India* is that kind of platform. We are not stopping at manufacturing. There’s always culture-building happening” [See: Mathew, S. (2017, June 16). The rules of nation branding. *The Hindu*. Retrieved from <http://www.thehindu.com/life-and-style/v-sunil-the-creator-of-the-make-in-india/article19087200.ece>].
 86. In his euphoric celebration of the technology boom in India during the earlier part of the millennium, *New York Times* veteran journalist Thomas L. Friedman (2005) writes, “Globalization 3.0 (which started around 2000) is shrinking the world from a size small to a size tiny and flattening the playing field at the same time. And while the dynamic force in Globalization 1.0 was countries globalizing and the dynamic force in Globalization 2.0 was companies globalizing, the dynamic force in Globalization 3.0—the thing that gives it its unique character—is individuals and small groups globalizing. Individuals must, and can, now ask: where do I fit into the global competition and opportunities of the day, and how can I, on my own, collaborate with others globally?” Apart from how Globalization 3.0 is “shrinking and flattening the world” and “empowering individuals”, Friedman distinguishes it from “Globalization 1.0 and 2.0 [that] were driven primarily by European and American companies and countries” (parenthetical insertion mine). In the future, he predicts, “Globalization 3.0 is not only going to be driven more by individuals but also by a much more diverse—non-Western, nonwhite—group of individuals. In Globalization 3.0, you are going to see every color of the human rainbow take part” [See: Friedman, T. L. (2005, April 03). It’s a flat world, after all. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/03/magazine/its-a-flat-world-after-all.html>. The expanded case can be read at: Friedman, T. L. (2005a). *The world is flat: A brief history of the twenty-first century*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux]. While

- Friedman endorses the “flat-world platform” made possible by technological convergence, and primarily the playing field of technocrats, “Globalization 3.0” overlooks the widening of the gap between the neoliberal elites in every country and those who are left far behind. It also presumes, quite naively, that the neoliberal diffusion of technology can significantly reduce the inequities between nations.
87. Harvey, D. (2001). Cosmopolitanism and the banality of geographical evils. In J. Comaroff, & J. L. Comaroff (Eds.), *Millennial capitalism and the culture of neoliberalism* (pp. 271–309). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
 88. Aronczyk, M. (2008). “Living the brand”: Nationality, globality and the identity strategies of nation branding consultants. *International Journal of Communication*, 2, 41–65. Retrieved at <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.471.7170&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
 89. Fan, Y. (2010). Branding the nation: Towards a better understanding. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 6(2), 97–103. doi:10.1057/pb.2010.16
 90. International Studies scholar Peter van Ham (2001) also distinguishes between the nation and its brand. The nation exists as a political entity before it is commodified and marketed for the international market. “The unbranded state,” he argues, “has a difficult time attracting economic and political attention. Image and reputation are thus becoming essential parts of the state’s strategic equity. Like branded products, branded states depend on trust and customer satisfaction. We talk about a state’s personality in the same way we discuss the products we consume, describing it as ‘friendly’ (i.e., Western-oriented) and ‘credible’ (ally), or ‘aggressive’ (expansionist) and ‘unreliable’ (rogue)” (p. 2). Discussing Britain’s nation branding campaign under the Blair administration, van Ham writes that “the shift from ‘Rule Britannia’ to ‘Cool Britannia’ should offer a lesson to the conservative (and not-so-cool) realist scholars of international politics: the change of slogans is not merely rhetorical window-dressing. On the contrary, it implies a shift in political paradigms, a move from the modern world of geopolitics and power to the postmodern world of images and influence” (p. 3) [See van Ham, P. (2001). The rise of the brand state: The postmodern politics of image and reputation. *Foreign Affairs*, 80(5), 2–6. doi:10.2307/20050245].
 91. Mathew, S. (2017, June 16). The rules of nation branding. *The Hindu*. Retrieved from <http://www.thehindu.com/life-and-style/v-sunil-the-creator-of-the-make-in-india/article19087200.ece>
 92. Kesavan, M. (2018, 29 April). Branding India: Dalmia’s Red Fort. *The Telegraph*, India. Retrieved from <https://www.telegraphindia.com/opinion/branding-india-226726>
 93. Rajan, S. (2017, November 22). How the ‘experience economy’ is changing nation branding. *The Drum*. Retrieved from <http://www.thedrum.com/opinion/2017/11/22/how-the-experience-economy-changing-nation-branding>
 94. Rajan details how the *Incredible India* nation-branding campaign extension, on the CNN platform, adopted this strategy. The short promotional clips focused on “how tourists perceive India in their own unique and individual manner by using various narrators—a Brisbane-based fashion designer, a US travel blogger, a London-based culinary expert and a Scottish professional golfer.” This allowed television viewers to also get a glimpse into how successful international professionals regard this emerging economy as a desirable destination to visit and do business with (Rajan, 2017) [See: “Incredible India 2.0” at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AtOgTu1MTws>]
 95. Press Trust of India (2018, April 27). Golden Temple features in ‘Incredible India’ virtual-reality video of Google Arts and Culture. *Hindustan Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.hindustantimes.com/punjab/golden-temple-features-in-incredible-india-virtual-reality-video-of-google-arts-and-culture/story-IzjxV82LkCw9hBsucs4HN.html>
 96. Edwards, L., & Ramamurthy, A. (2017). (In)credible India? A critical analysis of India’s nation branding. *Communication, Culture & Critique* 10(2), 322–43. doi:10.1111/cccr.12152
 97. The value of nation brands can be monetarily ascertained. For instance, in 2006, Brand Canada was assessed as being worth over a trillion dollars. To put this in perspective, the price tag is a trillion dollars to afford the goodwill that people, products, and services enjoy by virtue of their country-of-origin being Canada (Penner, 2006 in Sasikumar, 2016, p. 244) [See: Sasikumar, K. (2016). Branding India: Constructing a reputation for responsibility in the nuclear order. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 13(3), 242–54. doi:10.1057/s41254-016-0038-2].
 98. Dinnie, K. (2008). *Nation branding: Concepts, issues, practice*. Oxford, UK: Butterworth-Heinemann.
 99. Bannerji, H. (2006). Making India Hindu and male: Cultural nationalism and the emergence of the ethnic citizen in contemporary India. *Ethnicities*, 6(3), 362–90. doi:10.1177/1468796806068325
 100. The 1955 Bandung Conference was a gathering of delegates from more than twenty-nine Asian and African countries, and was organized by Indonesia, Myanmar (Burma), Ceylon (Sri Lanka), India, and Pakistan. The conference was an expression of their discontent at the refusal “by the Western powers to consult with them on decisions affecting Asia”; the growing tension between the People’s Republic of China and the United States; the delegates’ desire to establish protocols for peaceful relations between China and themselves and the West; a unified opposition to colonialism, especially the continued French presence in North Africa; and Indonesia’s desire to advocate its case in the conflict with the Netherlands over western New Guinea (Irian Jaya). In the following decades, as decolonization progressed, there were internal divisions that appeared between the Bandung participants, especially as countries like India, the United Arab Republic (Egypt), and Yugoslavia organized conferences of non-aligned nations that refused to adopt the vehemently anti-western positions being championed by China and Indonesia. In 2005, on the fiftieth anniversary of the original conference, leaders from Asian and African countries convened in Jakarta and Bandung to announce the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership (NAASP). This partnership promotes political, economic, and cultural cooperation between the two continents [Editors of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. (2014, August 05). Bandung Conference. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/event/Bandung-Conference>].

101. Chatterjee (2012) is careful to specify that his definition of empire is not linked with “annexation and occupation of foreign territories”; rather, the “imperial prerogative” as he sees it, “is the power to declare the colonial exception” (p. 15). Any country can be ranked in accordance with “the empirical global norm by measuring its empirical deviation, according to some common measure such as per capita gross domestic product or rate of infant mortality or female literacy, from the global mean.” The country is subsequently “evaluated normatively against the desirable global standard which would be set by the most advanced countries according to the selected measure. The comparison between the empirical and normative registers opens up a field of policy intervention” (emphasis mine). Accordingly, the data-driven conclusion that a country’s high infant mortality is a consequence of a “cultural factor such as early marriage or resistance to vaccination” brings with it the diagnosis and proposed ‘fix’ in terms of the “policy intervention [which] could then mean state legislation to raise the age of marriage of women or aggressive methods of vaccination, by superseding customary or religious practices, if necessary” (p. 15, parenthetical insertion mine). In turn, this provides the rationale for “suspending governmental standards that intervention would require declaring a colonial exception to the universal rule.” Chatterjee provides a colonial example of such an exception in “John Stuart Mill’s demonstration of the universal normative validity of representative government as the best form of government with the necessary caveat that it could *not* apply to dependencies such as Ireland or India, which were best governed, for the time being, by paternal despotism would otherwise be considered universally desirable” (p. 16, emphasis mine). Therefore, Edward Said (1994) writes that to “ignore or otherwise discount the overlapping experience of Westerners and Orientals, the interdependence of cultural terrains in which colonizer and colonized co-existed and battled each other through projections as well as rival geographies, narratives, and histories, is to miss what is essential about the world in the past century” (pp. xx) [See: Said, E. W. (1994). *Culture and imperialism*. New York, NY: Vintage Books].
102. Murty, M. (2014). “It’s true, India has emerged”: Gender, class, and the entrepreneurial subject in India’s mainstream media. *Communication, Culture & Critique*, 7(2), 210–27. doi:10.1111/cccr.12048
103. Eskesin, L. (2014, April 06). What is Modinomics? *CNBC*. Retrieved from <https://www.cnbc.com/video/2014/04/06/what-is-modinomics.html>
104. Dutta, M. J., & Basu, A. (2018). Subalternity, neoliberal seductions, and freedom: Decolonizing the global market of social change. *Cultural Studies – Critical Methodologies*, 18(1), 80–93. doi:10.1177/1532708617750676
105. Aimé Fernand David Césaire was a Francophone and French literary figure and politician from Martinique. He was a key player in the négritude movement in Francophone literature, and some of his influential poetry and writing include: Césaire, A. (2013). *Return to my native land*. (J. Berger & A. Bostock, Trans.). Brooklyn, NY: Archipelago Books (original work published 1956); Césaire, A. (2001). *Discourse on colonialism*. (J. Pinkham, Trans.). New York, NY: Monthly Review Press (original work published 1955).
106. Léopold Sédar Senghor was a Senegalese poet, politician, and cultural theorist, also associated with the négritude movement. For two decades he served as the first President of Senegal. Since most of his work was in French, a good translation of the influential ideas brought by Senghor and others in the négritude movement can be found in Rabaka, R. (2015). *The negritude movement: W. E. B. Du Bois, Leon Damas, Aimé Césaire, Leopold Senghor, Frantz Fanon, and the evolution of an insurgent idea*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
107. Frantz Omar Fanon was a Martinican psychiatrist, philosopher, writer-activist, who has influenced post-colonial studies, critical race theory, and Marxism. Some of his major works include: Fanon F. (1994a). *A dying colonialism*. New York, NY: Grove Press (original work published 1959); Fanon, F. (2005). *The wretched of the earth*. (R. Philcox, Trans.). H. K. Bhabha (Foreword). J.-P. Sartre (Preface). New York, NY: Grove Press (original work published 1963); Fanon, F. (2008). *Black skins, white masks*. (C. L. Markmann, Trans.). Z. Sardar & H. K. Bhabha; (Forewords). Exeter, UK: Pluto Press. (Original work published 1952).
108. Stuart Hall was a British citizen of Jamaican origins. He was a cultural theorist, political activist and sociologist, and along with Richard Hoggart, and Raymond Williams, began what came to be called British Cultural Studies, or The Birmingham School of Cultural Studies. Among his many publications, a few choice influential pieces include: Hall, S. (1993). Culture, community, nation. *Cultural Studies*, 7(3), 349–63. doi:10.1080/09502389300490251; Hall, S. (1994). Cultural identity and diaspora. In P. Williams, & L. Chrisman (Eds.), *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory: A reader* (pp. 392–403). New York, NY: Columbia University Press; Hall, S. (1997a). Local and the global: Globalization and ethnicity. In A. D. King (Ed.), *Culture, globalization and the world-system: Contemporary conditions for the representation of identity* (pp. 19–40). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press; Hall, S. (1997b). Old and new identities, old and new ethnicities. In A. D. King (Ed.), *Culture, globalization and the world-system* (pp. 41–68); Hall, S. (2002). Political belonging in a world of multiple identities. In S. Vertovec & R. Cohen (Eds.), *Conceiving cosmopolitanism: Theory, context and practice* (pp. 25–31). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press; Hall, S. (2007). Living with difference: Stuart Hall in conversation with Bill Schwarz. *Soundings*, 37, 148–58. Retrieved from <http://www.ram-wan.net/restrepof/hall/living%20with%20difference.pdf>; Hall, S., Evans, J., & Nixon, S. (2013). *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
109. For instance, see: Said, E. W. (1979). *Orientalism*. New York, NY: Pantheon; Said, E. W., Eagleton, T., & Jameson, F. (1990). *Nationalism, colonialism, and literature*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press; Said, E. W. (1994). *Culture and imperialism*. New York, NY: Knopf/Random House; Said, E. W. (2001). *Power, politics, and culture: Interviews with Edward W. Said*. (G. Viswanathan, Ed.). New York, NY: Pantheon Books; Said, E. W., & Barsamian, D. (2003). *Culture and resistance: Conversations with Edward W. Said*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

110. Some of Spivak's most cited works include: Spivak, G. C. (1985). Scattered speculations on the question of value [Special issue]. *Diacritics*, 15(4), 73–93. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/464935>; Spivak, G. C. (1985a). Can the subaltern speak? Speculations on widow sacrifice. *Wedge* 7/8, 120–30; Spivak, G. C. (1990). *The Post-colonial critic: Interventions, strategies, dialogues*. (S. Harasym Ed.). New York, NY: Routledge; Spivak, G. C. (1993). *Outside in the teaching machine*. New York, NY: Routledge; Spivak, G. C. (1996a). Echo. In G. C. Spivak, D. Landry, & G. MacLean (Eds.), *The Spivak reader* (pp. 175–202). New York, NY: Routledge (original essay published 1993); Spivak, G. C. (1996b). Poststructuralism, marginality, postcoloniality and value. In P. Mongia (Ed.), *Contemporary postcolonial theory: A reader* (pp. 198–222). London: Arnold; Spivak, G. C. (1996c). More on Power/Knowledge. In G. C. Spivak, D. Landry, & G. Maclean (Eds.), *The Spivak reader* (pp. 141–74). New York, NY: Routledge (original work published 1992); Spivak, G. C. (1996d). Subaltern studies: Deconstructing historiography. In G. C. Spivak, D. Landry, & G. Maclean (Eds.), *The Spivak reader* (pp. 203–36). New York, NY: Routledge; Spivak, G. C. (1998). *In other worlds: Essays in cultural politics*. New York, NY: Routledge; Spivak, G. C. (1999). *A Critique of postcolonial reason: Toward a history of the vanishing present*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; Spivak, G. C. (2005). Scattered speculations on the subaltern and the popular. *Postcolonial Studies*, 8(4), 475–86. doi:10.1080/13688790500375132; Spivak, G. C. (2010). Can the subaltern speak? Revised edition from the “History” chapter of *Critique of postcolonial reason*. In R. C. Morris (Ed.), *Can the subaltern speak? Reflections on the history of an idea* (Revised ed.). (pp. 21–78). New York, NY: Columbia University Press; Spivak, G. C., & Butler, J. (2011). *Who sings the nation-state?: Language, politics, belonging*. New York, NY: Seagull Books.
111. Some of Bhabha's important works include: Bhabha, H. K. (1983). “The Other question” ... The stereotype and colonial discourse. *Screen*, 24(6), 18–36. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/24.6.18>; Bhabha, H. K. (1990). *Nation and narration*. New York, NY: Routledge; Bhabha, H. K. (1992). Double visions. *Artforum*, 30(5), 85–89; Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. New York, NY: Routledge; Bhabha, H. K. (1996). Unpacking my library ... again. In I. Chambers & L. Curtis (Eds.), *The post-colonial question: Common skies, divided horizons* (pp. 199–211). New York, NY: Routledge; Bhabha, H. K. (2002). Terror and after ... *Parallax*, 8(1), 3–4. doi:10.1080/13534640110119579; Bhabha, H. K. (2008). Remembering Fanon: Self, psyche and the colonial condition. Foreword to the 1986 edition. Fanon, F. *Black skins, white masks* (pp. xxi–xxxvii). (C. L. Markmann, Trans.). Z. Sardar & H. K. Bhabha (Forewords). Exeter, UK: Pluto Press. (Original work published 1952); Bhabha, H. K. (2015). Introduction. In H. K. Bhabha (Ed.), *Debating cultural hybridity: Multi-cultural identities and the politics of anti-racism* (pp. ix–xiii). London, UK: Zed Books. (Original work published 1997).
112. See, for example, Chatterjee, P. (1989). Colonialism, nationalism, and colonized women: The contest in India. *American Ethnologist* 16(4), 622–33. doi:10.1525/ae.1989.16.4.02a00020; Chatterjee, P. (1990). The nationalist resolution of the woman's question. In S. Vaid & K. Sangari (Eds.), *Recasting women: Essays in colonial history* (pp. 233–52). New Brunswick: New Jersey: Rutgers University Press; Chatterjee, P. (1993). *Nationalist thought and the postcolonial world: A derivative discourse* (2nd ed.). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press; Chatterjee, P. (1993b). *The nation and its fragments: Colonial and postcolonial histories*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; Chatterjee, P. (2005). Empire and nation revisited: 50 years after Bandung. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 6(4), 487–96. doi:10.1080/14649370500316752; Chatterjee, P., & Sanyal, K. (2016). Rethinking postcolonial capitalist development: A conversation between K. Sanyal and P. Chatterjee. (P. Chatterjee, Trans.). *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 36(1), 102–111. doi:10.1215/1089201X-3482147
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114. Some of Appadurai's key works include: Appadurai, A. (1990). Disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy. *Public Culture*, 2(2), 1–24. doi:10.1215/08992363-2-2-1; Appadurai, A. (1993). Patriotism and its futures. *Public Culture*, 5(3), 411–29. doi:10.1215/08992363-5-3-411; Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press; Appadurai, A. (2006). *Fear of small numbers: An essay on the geography of anger*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press; Rajagopal, A. (2011). Notes on postcolonial visual culture. *BioScope*, 2(1), 11–22. doi:10.1177/097492761000200103; Appadurai, A., & Morley, D. (2011a). Decoding diaspora and disjuncture: Arjun Appadurai in dialogue with David Morley. *New Formations*, (73), 43–55. doi:10.3898/NEWF.73.03.2011
115. Guha, R. (Ed.). (1984). *Subaltern studies III: Writings on south Asian history and society*. New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press; Guha, R. (1997). Not at home in empire [Special issue]. *Critical Inquiry*, 23, 488–93. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1344031>; Guha, R. (2002). *History at the limit of world-history*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
116. Quayson, A., & Goldberg, D. T. (2002). Introduction: Scale and sensibility. In D. T. Goldberg & A. Quayson (Eds.), *Relocating postcolonialism* (pp. xi–xxiii). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

117. Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (1989). *The empire writes back: Theory and practice in post-colonial literatures*. New York, NY: Routledge.
118. Arif Dirlik (2002) cautions against erasing the past, indicating that to truly understand the inequities of contemporary globalization, we need to attend to how “[c]olonialism has differed historically according to not only the colonizer, but even more importantly the colonized,” especially since, “[i]t did not lead to the same consequences everywhere, and, within individual societies, different classes, genders, and ethnicities felt its effects, and related to it, differently” (p. 441) [See: Dirlik, A. (2002) Rethinking colonialism].
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125. Morris, M. (1990). Metamorphoses at Sydney Tower. *New Formations*, 11(10), 1–26.
126. Ahluwalia, P. (2002). Towards re(conciliation): The postcolonial economy of giving. In D. T. Goldberg & A. Quayson (Eds.), *Relocating postcolonialism* (pp. 184–204). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
127. Bahri, D. (1996). Coming to terms with the “postcolonial”. In D. Bahri & M. Vasudeva (Eds.), *Between the lines: South Asians and postcoloniality* (pp. 137–66). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
128. Césaire, A. (1994). From *Discourse on colonialism*. In P. Williams & L. Chrisman (Eds.), *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory: A reader* (pp. 172–80). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
129. I am referring here to the Foucauldian use of the term *episteme*, to refer to “all those relationships which existed between the various sectors of science during a given epoch.” Foucault thus refers to the interdependent relationship between discourses of knowledge within an episteme. In this vein, postcolonialism is one discourse among others (anthropology, psychology, history, philosophy, literature, etc.) that inform it and are in turn, affected by it [For more details, see Foucault, M., & Gordon, C. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972–1977*. (C. Gordon, L. Marshall, J. Mepham, & K. Soper, Trans.). New York, NY: Pantheon Books. Also, Foucault, M. (1989). An historian of culture. In S. Lotringer (Ed.), *Foucault live: Interviews, 1966–84* (pp. 75–77). (J. Johnston, Trans.), New York, NY: Semiotext(e)].
130. Nkrumah’s concept of “neocolonialism” has three aspects to it. First, that it arose because of the marginalized status of under-developed postcolonial nations within the international trade circuits that privileged the first world nations. Second, it acknowledges that countries with “imperial ambitions” can use military force to topple over less powerful nations, while the third characteristic is neocolonialism “as a form of bribery of local populations such as ‘politicians’; especially soldiers and public servants who act as agents or stooges of imperial powers” (Nimako, 2010, p. 55) [See: Nimako, K. (2010). Nkrumah, African awakening and neo-colonialism: How black America awakened Nkrumah and Nkrumah awakened black America. *The Black Scholar*, 40(2), 54–70. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41163920>]
131. Postcolonial theorist Arif Dirlik (2007) informs us that the concept of the “South” arose in the 1970s and referred to those societies that were outside “either capitalist or socialist modernity,” and similar to (though not identical with) the regions described in the 1950s and ’60s as belonging in the “Third World”. The expansion of the term to “global South” he attributes to the late 1990s and the massive economic changes sweeping across the world. Dirlik addresses the shifting sense of the term, recognizing that, “[w]hile the term was no doubt not intended by its coiners to be taken in a literal physical geographical sense, it seems worth pointing out, nevertheless, that like all geographical designations for ideological and political spaces and projects (globalization comes to mind readily), its geography is much more complicated than the term suggests, and subject to change over time; so that the ‘South’ of the contemporary world may be significantly different in its composition and territorial spread than the South of the early 1970s, or the colonial South of the immediate post-World War period” (Dirlik, 2007, p. 13). The “Third World” was a term conceived by Alfred Sauvy in 1952, “and intended to distinguish the formerly colonized or neo-colonized world from the modernizing worlds of capitalism and socialism,” though by the late 1960s it had become a political catchphrase for the radical left (Dirlik, 2007, p. 13). It is ironic that while “the national liberation movements” inspired by “Third World” solidarity against imperial capitalism, self-selected socialist forms of self-governance, today the pendulum has swung in the opposite direction. Within contemporary globalization, former “Third World” postcolonial countries like India and China are now “emerging economies” that have opted for free-market liberalization (Dirlik, 2007, p. 14). The implication of this is that in these countries, “under contemporary conditions, national economic development no longer means the development of the whole nation, but rather only of those sectors of the economy and population that can participate successfully in the global economy,

- usually in urban networks that are components of a global network society” (Dirlik, 2007, p. 15) [See: Dirlik, A. (2007). Global south: Predicament and promise. *The Global South*, 1(1), 12–23. doi:10.2979/GSO.2007.1.1.12].
132. Said, E. (2002). In conversation with Neeladri Bhattacharya, Suvir Kaul, and Ania Loomba. In D. T. Goldberg & A. Quayson (Eds.), *Relocating postcolonialism* (pp. 1–14). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
 133. Bhabha, H. K., and Comraoff, J. (2002). Speaking of postcoloniality in the continuous present, a conversation. In D. T. Goldberg, & A. Quayson (Eds.), *Relocating postcolonialism* (pp. 15–46). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
 134. Spivak (1999), refers to “epistemic violence” in her discussion of Foucault’s revisions of the discourse of madness, as “a complete overhaul of the episteme” (p. 266) [From: Spivak, G. C. (1999). *A Critique of postcolonial reason: Toward a history of the vanishing present*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press]. In her book on Spivak’s main ideas and concepts, postcolonial scholar Sangeeta Ray explains that “epistemic violence, which echoes Foucault’s notion of epistemic rupture and discursive violence, [...] draws attention to the manner in which epistemology is inevitably used to justify forms of political domination” (p. 32) [Ray, S. (2009). *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: In other words* (1st ed.). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell].
 135. Spivak, G. C. (1993). *Outside in the teaching machine*. New York, NY: Routledge.
 136. Spivak, G. C. (1996). More on power/knowledge. In G. C. Spivak, D. Landry, & G. Maclean (Eds.), *The Spivak reader* (pp. 141–74). New York, NY: Routledge (Original essay published 1992). Spivak (2010) quotes from Ranajit Guha, who observes that the “historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism—colonialist elitism and bourgeois-nationalist elitism [...] shar[ing] the prejudice that the making of the Indian nation and the development of the consciousness—nationalism—which confirmed this process were exclusively or predominantly elite achievements.” And while (neo)colonialist writings give credit to the British colonialists and their “policies, institutions, and culture” for the formation of an Indian nationalist consciousness, Guha notes that “in the nationalist and neo-nationalist writings,” the same praise is accorded to “Indian elite personalities, institutions, activities and ideas” (qtd. in Spivak, 2010, p. 38) [See: Spivak, G. C. (2010). Can the subaltern speak? Revised edition from the “History” chapter of *Critique of postcolonial reason*. In R. C. Morris (Ed.), *Can the subaltern speak? Reflections on the history of an idea* (Revised ed.). (pp. 21–78). New York, NY: Columbia University Press].
 137. Drawing from Marx, and describing the position of the subaltern peasant proprietors in relation to their feudal masters, Spivak (1994) emphasizes that, “[t]he necessarily dislocated machine of history moves because ‘the identity of the interests’ of these proprietors ‘fails to produce a feeling of community, national links, or a political organization’. The event of representation as *Vertretung* (in the constellation of rhetoric-as-persuasion) behaves like a *Darstellung* (or rhetoric-as-trope), taking its place in the gap between the formation of a (descriptive) class and the non-formation of a (transformative) class: ‘In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life [...] they form a class. In so far as [...] the identity of their interests fails to produce a feeling of community [...] they do not form a class.’” This “complicity of *Vertreten* and *Darstellen*, their identity-in-difference as the place of practice”, Spivak insists, “is precisely what Marxists must expose” (1994, p. 70) [See: Spivak, G. C. (1994). Can the subaltern speak? In P. Williams & L. Chrisman (Eds.), *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory: A reader* (pp. 66–111). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. (Original essay published 1988)]. For earlier scholarship in subaltern studies, see, for example, Guha, R., & Spivak, G. C. (Eds.). (1988). *Selected subaltern studies*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
 138. Spivak (2010) adds, “The question is not of female participation in insurgency, or the ground rules of the sexual division of labour, for both of which there is ‘evidence.’ It is rather, that, both as object of colonialist historiography and as subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. *If, in the contest of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow*” (p. 41, emphasis mine).
 139. For a more complete discussion on women within postcolonialism, see Suleri, S. (1989). *Meatless days*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Also, Mohanty, C. T. (1988). Under western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. *Feminist Review*, 30, 60–88. doi:10.2307/1395054.
 140. McClintock, A. (1994). The angel of progress: Pitfalls of the term “postcolonialism”. In P. Williams, & L. Chrisman (Eds.), *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory: A reader* (pp. 291–305). New York, NY: Columbia University Press (Original essay published 1992).
 141. Dirlik, A. (1994). The postcolonial aura: Third world criticism in the age of global capitalism. *Critical Inquiry* 20(2), 328–56. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.allegHENY.edu:2048/stable/1343914>.
 142. Gandhi, L. (2006). *Affective communities: Anticolonial thought, fin-de-siècle radicalism, and the politics of friendship*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
 143. Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. New York, NY: Routledge.
 144. Daiya, K. (2017). The world after Empire; or, whither postcoloniality? *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 132(1), 149–55. doi:10.1632/pmla.2017.132.1.149
 145. Dimock, W. C. (2006). Introduction: Planet as duration and extension. In W. C. Dimock (Ed.), *Through other continents: American Literature across deep time* (pp. 1–7). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
 146. Paul Gilroy (2003) suggests conviviality in place of multiculturalism. The term does not suggest the end of racism or “the triumph of tolerance.” Rather, “it suggests a different setting for their empty, impersonal rituals, which [...] have started to mean different things in the absence of any strong belief in absolute or integral races.” It also suggests a distance from “the pivotal term ‘identity,’” which Gilroy sees as a static and unhelpful container for categorizing people (p. xv). Gilroy argues that in the twentieth century, there is an “inability to conceptualize multicultural and postcolonial relations as anything other than risk and jeopardy.” Therefore, one has to be prudent in “producing a worldly vision that is not simply one more imperialistic particularism dressed up in seductive universal garb” (p. 4). In reviewing the racial conflicts within

- contemporary Britain, Gilroy urges us to consider that “dominance can carry its own wounds, even if they are veiled in colonial privilege and postcolonial melancholia” (p. 52). He revisits Fanon’s observation that “the colonizer’s abstract whiteness is never a parallel or complementary ‘white’ version of the culture, history, and consciousness that previously produced the natives’ abject ‘blackness’ as an object of anthropological knowledge, colonial exploitation, and racialized power” (p. 52). And, it subsequently leads him to suggest that the interpretation of political conflicts in multicultural societies could take on a very different cast if “they are understood to exist firmly in a context supplied by imperial and colonial history.” Such a historical situating provides “a store of unlikely connections and complex interpretative resources” that are important because they continue to “shape political life in the overdeveloped-but-no-longer-imperial countries” (p. 2). [See: Gilroy, P. (2003). *Postcolonial melancholia*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press].
147. Philosopher Zygmunt Bauman (2004) addresses the “moral panic” caused by the influx of refugees and exiles from non-western countries into Europe, examining how this, in turn, reflects a larger anxiety and alienation from the world’s poor and dispossessed, so that those at the margins are now feared as the ‘enemy’ or viewed as abject and therefore, rejected by the State and its acknowledged citizens [See: Bauman, Z. (2016). *Strangers at our door*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press]. In *Liquid Times* (2007), Bauman addresses the fluidity of contemporary modernity, in which the impermanence of social institutions do not provide individuals with the stable referential ground on which to build lasting relationships or long-term plans. Exigency and precarity determine how flexible and adaptive individuals must be in “liquid modernity”, so that, if the concept of an ‘open society’ originally implied “the self-determination of free society cherishing its openness,” then “it now brings to most minds the terrifying experience of a heteronomous, hapless and vulnerable population confronted with, and possibly overwhelmed by forces it neither controls nor fully understands; a population horrified by its own undefendability and obsessed with the tightness of its frontiers and the security of the individuals living inside them [...]” (p. 7) [See: Bauman, Z. (2007). *Liquid times: Living in an age of uncertainty*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press].
148. Spivak, G. C., & Butler, J. (2011). *Who sings the nation-state?: Language, politics, belonging*. New York, NY: Seagull Books. The authors examine what it means “to be at once contained and dispossessed by the state” (p. 5). In specifically attending to the plight of those who are temporarily or permanently “stateless” (refugees, exiles, political detainees, etc.), Butler notes that this category is “reproduced not simply by the nation-state but by a certain operation of power that seeks to forcibly align nation with state, one that takes the hyphen, as it were, as chain” (p. 12). Butler recalls the 2006 demonstrations by undocumented immigrants in Los Angeles, who sang the American national anthem in Spanish, along with the Mexican anthem. “It’s not just that many people sang together, which is true—but also that singing is a plural act, an articulation of plurality,” writes Butler. “If, as Bush claimed at the time, the national anthem can only be sung in English, then the nation is clearly restricted to a linguistic majority, and language becomes one way of asserting criterial control over who belongs and who does not. In [Hannah] Arendt’s terms, this would be the moment when a national majority seeks to define the nation on its own terms and even sets up or polices norms of exclusion deciding who may exercise freedom, since that exercise depends upon certain acts of language” (pp. 59–60). This point was forcibly brought home with the 2014 Super Bowl *Coca-Cola* commercial controversy. The commercial showed “a panoply of American faces, young, old, brown, white, straight, gay (it included what are said to be the first gay parents depicted in a Super Bowl ad), in cowboy hats and hijabs, playing, eating, and exploring all-American vistas”, as various voices sang “America the Beautiful” in many languages. There was a social media backlash by commentators who were clearly peeved that “America the Beautiful” was being ‘lost in translation’. Most of the angry outbursts equated being American with being able to speak (and sing) in English [Poniewozik, J. (2014, February 03). *Coca-Cola’s “It’s Beautiful” Super Bowl ad brings out some ugly Americans*. *TIME*. Retrieved from <http://time.com/3773/coca-colas-its-beautiful-super-bowl-ad-brings-out-some-ugly-americans/>]. The xenophobia demonstrated in the fallout from the *Coca-Cola* ad illustrates Butler’s point in the re-defining of the nation to decide who is ‘authentically’ American. Spivak, later on in *Who sings the nation-state?*, reinforces the point that the Indian national anthem, though written in Bengali, nonetheless has to be sung in Hindi: “The nation-state requires the national language” (p. 74).
149. Mitra, I. (1996). “Luminous Brahmin children must be saved’: Imperialist ideologies, “postcolonial” stories in Bharati Mukherjee’s *The Tiger’s Daughter*. In D. Bahri & M. Vasudeva (Eds.), *Between the lines: South Asians and postcoloniality* (pp. 284–97). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
150. Lewis, R., & Mills, S. (Eds.). (2003). *Feminist postcolonial theory: A reader*. New York, NY: Routledge.
151. Ahluwalia, P. (2004). Empire or imperialism: Implications for a ‘new’ politics of resistance. *Social Identities*, 10(5), 629–45. doi:10.1080/1350463042000294278. Here, Ahluwalia uses Hardt & Negri’s *Empire* (2000) as a starting point to explore how postcolonial theories may be useful in tracing where sovereignty resides, if not in the nation-state, and in examining the relations between individual bodies and the body politic within such a reconceptualization of sovereignty. Also, see: Ahluwalia, P. (2011). At home in motion: Evolving Sikh identities. *Sikh Formations*, 7(2), 95–109, doi:10.1080/17448727.2011.603186. In this essay, Ahluwalia uses Sikh culture and its global manifestations to address how post-colonial transformations are influenced by the “host culture,” as well as diasporic influences stemming from either “the age of colonization or the age of globalization” (p. 95).
152. Arvind Mandair (2004) explores the return of what he calls “political religion” and its clash with the secular politics of multiculturalism as this applies to the negotiation of contemporary South Asian identity [See: Mandair, A. (2004). The unbearable proximity of the Orient: Political religion, multiculturalism and the retrieval of South Asian identities. *Social Identities*, 10(5), 647–63, doi:10.1080/1350463042000294287].
153. See, Colás, S. (1995). Of Creole symptoms, Cuban fantasies, and other Latin American postcolonial ideologies. *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 110(3), 382–96. doi:10.2307/462934

154. Lee, S., Jan, N., & Wainwright, J. (2014). Agamben, postcoloniality, and sovereignty in South Korea. *Antipode*, 46(3), 650–68. doi:10.1111/anti.12070. The authors conduct a postcolonial analysis of how Korea's political present is the complex outcome of Japanese colonialism, the imperial interventions by the U.S., and the subsequent division of the country into two sharply differentiated political entities, namely, north and south Korea.
155. Moore-Gilbert, B. (2018). Palestine, postcolonialism and pessoptimism. *Interventions*, 20(1), 7–40. doi:10.1080/1369801X.2016.1156555
156. Fernández Parrilla, G. (2018). Disoriented postcolonialities: With Edward Said in (the labyrinth of) Al-Andalus. *Interventions*, 20(2), 229–42. doi:10.1080/1369801X.2017.1403347
157. Tomlinson, J. (1991). *Cultural imperialism: A critical introduction*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
158. Dirlik, A. (2008). Race talk, race, and contemporary racism. [Special Topic]. *PMLA*, 123(5), 1363–79. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25501941>
159. Comaroff, J., & Comaroff, J. L. (2005). Naturing the nation: Aliens, apocalypse, and the postcolonial state. In T. B. Hansen & F. Stepputat (Eds.), *Sovereign bodies: Citizens, migrants and states in the postcolonial world* (pp. 120–48). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
160. Amy Kaplan (2005) analyzes American popular culture and literature to reveal how U.S. imperial forays have imprinted the American cultural imaginary and the way in which Americans imagine the act of conquering to make a home in the world, as a sort of “manifest domesticity”. Consequently, Kaplan posits, “the notion of *domestic* policy makes sense only when distinguished from *foreign* policy, and *uncoupled from the foreign, national issues are never labeled domestic*. The concept of foreign policy depends on the idea of the nation as a domestic space imbued with a sense of at-homeness, in contrast to an external world perceived as alien and threatening” (emphases mine). It follows equally that foreign Otherness becomes necessary to determine the boundaries that separate what belongs within the sphere of the nation versus what needs to be kept outside (p. 25) [Kaplan, A. (2005). *The anarchy of empire in the making of U.S. culture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press].
161. Cash & Kinnvall (2005) discuss how sovereignty and governing techniques have expanded with new technologies: “In particular, it has come to include the notions of e-borders, virtual or biometric, and how portable borders constitute government techniques through which subjects are rendered mobile, predictable and/or threatening in relation to influential notions of belonging and apartness.” Postcolonial bordering also highlights “ontological insecurity as not only referring to subjects and identities but also to the embodied transpersonal movements that exceed individual subjects and bind together collectives in ways that create conditions of possibility for both the crystallisation of postcolonial structures and for their contestation” (p. 268). Cash & Kinnvall bring up psychiatrist R. D. Laing, who defines “an ontologically secure person as someone who has a sense of ‘presence in the world as real, alive, whole, and, in a temporal sense, a continuous person’” (p. 269). Anthony Giddens further expands on ontological security as “the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action,” that is dependent on a “sense of the reliability of persons and things” (p. 269). The ideological and material structures and formations that enabled imperialism have come under postcolonial scrutiny, and the authors point out that “this erosion of the old certainties and the many efforts to sustain them are prone to create confusion, anxiety and ontological insecurity. This has resulted in attempts to govern not only physical borders, but also ideational, emotional and embodied borders and boundaries—often through narratives of one kind or another.” In the process, temporal linearity, or a discourse that privileges “an homogenising process in subjective, spatial or territorial terms,” is abandoned, as “this ongoing conflict and tension generates a border politics filled with ruptures, ambivalences and insecurities, in which societies, identities and the postcolonial present are being redefined, reconstructed and reimaged” (p. 270). [See: Cash, J., & Kinnvall, C. (2017). Postcolonial bordering and ontological insecurities. *Postcolonial Studies*, 20(3), 267–74. doi: 10.1080/13688790.2017.1391670]. Political and International Relations scholar Jamie Allinson (2015) also covers the colonizing aspect of new surveillance and military technologies. The critique draws on the concept of Achille Mbembe’s “necro-politics”—the commandeering of the sovereign’s right both to decide who dies and how, and to ideologically ascribe meaning to the dead—to make the case that the discussions, about whether drones should be invested with the power to kill humans, are based on the foundational belief “that the current human operators of drones work outside of the context of racial distinction and colonial encounter in which they already make decisions to kill” (p. 113) [See: Allinson, J. (2015). The necropolitics of drones. *International Political Sociology*, 9(2), 113–27. doi:10.1111/ips.12086]. International Relations researcher Giorgio Shani (2017) argues that a “post-secular” appreciation of human security may open up useful ways of looking at ontological security within the seismic changes of contemporary globalization, especially given the growing importance of religion to postcolonial subjectivity [See: Shani, G. (2017). Human security as ontological security: A post-colonial approach. *Postcolonial Studies*, 20(3), 275–93. doi:10.1080/13688790.2017.1378062].
162. Hardt & Negri (2000) clarify that, “the concept of Empire presents itself not as a historical regime originating in conquest, but rather as an order that effectively suspends history and thereby fixes the existing state of affairs for eternity. From the perspective of Empire, this is the way things will always be and the way they were always meant to be. *In other words, Empire presents its rule not as a transitory moment in the movement of history, but as a regime with no territorial boundaries and in this sense outside of history or at the end of history*” (pp. xiv–xv, emphasis mine) [See: Hardt, M., & Negri, A. (2000). *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press].
163. See, for example, the 2014 exchange between Vivek Chibber and Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak in the *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* [See: Spivak, G. C. (2014). Postcolonial theory and the specter of capital. Book Reviews. *Cambridge*

- Review of International Affairs*, 27(1), 184–98. doi:10.1080/09557571.2014.877262; Chibber, V. (2014). Making sense of postcolonial theory: A response to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Book Reviews. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 27(3), 617–24. doi:10.1080/09557571.2014.943593]
164. While addressing her Party at its annual conference in 2016, UK Prime Minister Theresa May famously said, “[t]oday, too many people in positions of power behave as though they have more in common with international elites than with the people down the road, the people they employ, the people they pass on the street. [...] But if you believe you are a citizen of the world, you are a citizen of nowhere. You don’t understand what citizenship means” (qtd. in Bearak, 2016, October 5). And American President Donald Trump jumpstarted his post-election “thank you” tour by blaming globalization for taking away jobs from the United States, and making its borders less secure. “There is no global anthem, no global currency, no certificate of global citizenship. We pledge allegiance to one flag and that flag is the American flag,” Trump hammered home. “From now on it’s going to be America first, okay?” (qtd. in Stephenson, 2016, October 5). James Bridle (2018), in his thought-provoking essay in *The Atlantic*, details how in addition to the rise in “populist, identitarian movements across the globe, identity itself is being virtualized, too. It no longer needs to be tied to place or nation to function in the global marketplace.” Bridle offers the example of Cyprus’s golden-visa scheme which offers the advantages of becoming a member of the European Union, without even needing to visit or live in Cyprus. One can carry out the entire transaction of purchasing virtual real estate and therefore, rights to the golden-visa, by investing two million Euros through the right channels. “This is the new era of virtual citizenship, where your papers and your identity—and all the rights that flow from them—owe more to legal frameworks and investment vehicles than any particular patch of ground where you might live,” Bridle writes. And Atossa Araxia Abrahamian in her book, *The Cosmopolites* (2015), investigates the pact between the small East African country of Comoro islands and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for the former to issue passports and give “citizenship” to some forty-thousand “Bidoon” who are considered legally stateless in the UAE because of their tribal/ethnic origins, or the fact that the State sees them as not being “true Emiratis” (Abrahamian, 2015, pp. 52–53). Such an “economic citizenship” scheme has earned the Comoran island at least \$200 million, or one-fourth of the annual Comoran gross domestic product, for naturalizing about four thousand *bidoon* families alone (Abrahamian, 2015, p. 42). The troubling aspect to this is that it has enabled the UAE to cover up the problem of the statelessness of anywhere up to a million Bidoon (Abrahamian, 2015, p. 56) who, once they have these passports, are allowed to temporarily reside and work in the Emirates, but are now classified against their will, as “foreign nationals,” and expelled from the UAE for critiquing the state (Abrahamian, 2015, pp. 15–16). It also raises the unanswered question of whether these new Comoran passport holders will ever have the right to physically reside on the island if they need to. Abrahamian also quotes Edward Kleinbard, a tax law scholar at the University of Southern California, who researches “stateless income” or the money offshored by multinational corporations, using tax loopholes and “creative accounting” so that it appears to have “no discernible country of origin.” Kleinbard expresses his outrage that “stateless persons wander a hostile globe, looking for asylum,” while, “stateless income takes a bearing for any number of zero or low-tax jurisdictions where it finds a ready welcome” (qtd. in Abrahamian, 2015, p. 56) [See: Bearak, M. (2016, October 5). Theresa May criticized the term ‘citizen of the world.’ But half the world identifies that way. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/10/05/theresa-may-criticized-the-term-citizen-of-the-world-but-half-the-world-identifies-that-way/?utm_term=.6951ddc6a2fe; Stephenson, E. (2016, December 1). Trump takes populist message to U.S. heartland in ‘thank you’ tour. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-idUSKBN13Q5HT>; Bridle, J. (2018, February 21). The rise of virtual citizenship. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2018/02/virtual-citizenship-for-sale/553733/>; Abrahamian, A. A. (2015). *The Cosmopolites: The coming of the global citizen*. New York, NY: Columbia Global Reports].
165. See, for example, Banerjee, S. (2000). *Warriors in politics: Hindu nationalism, violence, and the Shiv Sena in India*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press; Wariavwalla, B. (2000). Religion and nationalism in India: Ram the god of the Hindu nation. *The Round Table*, 89(357), 593–605. doi:10.1080/003585300225223; Varshney, A. (2002). *Ethnic conflict and civil life: Hindus and Muslims in India*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; Bhatt, C. (2006). The fetish of the margins: Religious absolutism, anti-racism and postcolonial silence. *New Formations*, 59(1), 98–115; Asthana, S. (2008). Religion and secularism as embedded imaginaries: A study of Indian television narratives. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 25(3), 304–323. doi:10.1080/15295030802191998; Patil, T. (2017). The politics of race, nationhood and Hindu nationalism. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 45(1–2), 27–54. doi:10.1163/15685314-04501002
166. See, for instance, de Grazia, V. (2005). *Irresistible empire: America’s advance through twentieth-century Europe*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; Weiss, L. (2014). *America Inc.? Innovation and enterprise in the national security state*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. Paul Moody (2017) makes an interesting case in exploring the role of American embassies in global film policy from 2003 to 2010 and how the US State Department has used Hollywood to support American foreign policy aims. In Through such endeavors, Moody argues that “not only does Hollywood rely on the network of US embassies to extend and maintain its global dominance, but also that at the turn of the century, it became a more important agent than it had ever been before in the wider pursuit of America’s international interests” (p. 1063) [See: Moody, P. (2017). Embassy cinema: What WikiLeaks reveals about US state support for Hollywood. *Media, Culture & Society*, 39(7), 1063–77. doi:10.1177/0163443716686673]. This link between the military industrial complex and U.S. culture industries has been explored in scholarship that points to the normalization of the idea of the pervasiveness of the U.S. military industrial complex and the idea of American hegemony through the overlap of imagined worlds and real military interventions abroad. Such works include: Lenoir, T. (2000). All but war is simulation: The military-entertainment

- complex, *Configurations*, 8(3), 289–335. doi:10.1353/con.2000.0022; der Derian, J. (2009). *Virtuous war: Mapping the military–industrial–media–entertainment network*, 2nd ed. New York, NY: Routledge; Dyer-Witherford, N., & de Peuter, G. (2009). *Games of empire: Global capitalism and video games*. Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press; and Stahl, R. (2010). *Militainment, Inc: War, media, and popular culture*. New York, NY: Routledge.
167. Dibyesh Anand (2012) turns to the examples of India and China as *postcolonial informal empires* (PIEs). These have, “at the core of their polity, center-periphery relations of power that minoritize borderland ethno-nationalist communities within the large nationalist project, that reluctantly accept cultural difference and autonomy but reject any compromise on military and political control and deny political agency to the borderlands minorities. They see themselves as continuations of historical, great civilizational empires, which sets them apart from some Western hegemonic powers, such as the United States” (p. 73). Furthermore, PIEs link “discourses of past and future glory.” They seek to build the foundations of their neoliberal nation-states by summoning the “strong historical memory of being great empires in the not-too-distant past and striving to regain their rightful place soon.” If anything, the future is regarded “in terms of a historical continuity” of what had been a temporary decline in civilization, produced either by contaminating invasions or internal political dissent that therefore must be guarded against. As Anand notes, “[c]ivilizational identity becomes salient here, for the reference point of continuity is not a preexisting nation-state but a civilizational polity” (p. 75). [See: Anand, D. (2012). China and India: Postcolonial informal empires in the emerging global order. *Rethinking Marxism*, 24(1), 68–86. doi:10.1080/08935696.2012.635039. Also see: van der Veer, P. (2012). Religion, secularism and national development in India and China. *Third World Quarterly*, 33(4), 721–34. doi:10.1080/01436597.2012.657429; Chatterjee Miller, M. (2013). *Wronged by Empire: Post-imperial ideology and foreign policy in India and China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press].
168. Ambar Basu addresses how “everything growth is now Hindu and everything Hindu is growth” in *India Inc*. Consequently, the “seductions of neoliberalism are also the seductions of postcolonial arrival, narrated in diaspora spaces of aspirations in the North (the Silicon Valley, Madison Square Garden, Manhattan examples you give above) and in cosmopolitan sites of desire within the global South (think Dhaka, Bombay, New Delhi)” (qtd. in Dutta & Basu, 2018, p. 81) [From: Dutta, M. J., & Basu, A. (2018). Subalternity, neoliberal seductions, and freedom: Decolonizing the global market of social change. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, 18(1), 80–93. doi:10.1177/1532708617750676].
169. Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche recognized that “the so-called drive for knowledge can be traced back to a drive to appropriate and conquer,” a tendency that he therefore referred to as “the will to power” (qtd. in Spivak, 1976, p. xxii) [See: Spivak, G. C. (1976). Translator’s preface. In Derrida, J. *Of grammatology* (pp. ix–lxxxviii). (G. C. Spivak, Trans.). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press].
170. See: Helgesson, S. (2017). Post-anticolonialism. *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 132(1), 164–70.
171. International political economy scholars such as Stephen Shulman (2000), Rawi Abdelal (2001), Eric Helleiner (2002), and Andreas Pickel (2003), among others, posit that economic nationalism “is best seen as a facet of national identity, rather than a variant of realism or a ‘protectionist’ ideology.” What this entails is an investigation into “how national identities and nationalism shape economic policies and processes” (Helleiner, p. 221). What earlier thinkers about economic nationalism, like Friedrich List in the nineteenth century, clarified is that the difference between this approach and political economy lies in the centrality of “‘nationality’ rather than advocacy of tariffs.” In fact, List was critical of economic liberals who, in their enthusiastic support of global cosmopolitanism and capitalism, failed to acknowledge “the economic significance of nations,” limiting themselves to seeing “individuals as mere producers and consumers, not as citizens of states or members of nations’ (List [1841] 1904, 141)” (in Helleiner, p. 222). In his discussion of Britain’s “free trade ‘empire’ in the nineteenth century,” List noted that unlike the “[i]nfant industry” protectionist policies of Germany and the United States with regards to their agrarian sectors, economic nationalism in colonial Britain manifested itself as a strong championing of free trade. The primary reason for doing so was not to improve the economic lot of humankind, but “because it would give their country ‘a world manufacturing monopoly’ that would bolster British wealth and international power.” In List’s words, the British colonial advocacy of global free trade was “‘one of the most extraordinary of first-rate political manoeuvres that have ever been played upon the credulity of the world’” (qtd. in Helleiner, p. 224) [See: Helleiner, E. (2005). The meaning and contemporary significance of economic nationalism. In E. Helleiner & A. Pickel (Eds.), *Economic nationalism in a globalizing world* (pp. 220–34). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press; Shulman, S. (2000). Nationalist sources of international economic integration. *International Studies Quarterly*, 44(3), 365–90. doi:10.1111/0020-8833.00164; Abdelal, R. (2001). *National purpose in the world economy: Post-Soviet states in comparative perspective*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press; Helleiner, E. (2002). Economic nationalism as a challenge to neoliberalism? Lessons from the 19th century. *International Studies Quarterly*, 46(3), 307–29. doi:10.1111/1468-2478.00235; Pickel, A. (2003). Explaining, and explaining with, economic nationalism. *Nations and Nationalism*, 9(1), 105–27. doi:10.1111/1469-8219.00077]
172. It is worth remembering the *old world order*, brought to bear at the close of WWII, which resulted in the setting up of the UN Security Council (UNSC) with its five vetoing powers (the US, former USSR, UK, France, and Taiwan) to decide matters of international security. The creation of the Bretton Woods institutions—the International Monetary Fund to fend off the devaluation of currencies and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) to help with the rebuilding of war-ravaged European economies—was followed by the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) in 1975, which was renamed the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995. Its primary purpose was to monitor multilateral trade. With the US being the largest stakeholder in these various organizations, the twentieth century came to be called the “American Century” or “Pax Americana.” Indian diplomat

- Neelam Deo (2018), notes that in 1944–45, India was a British colony that was fighting for its independence, and its economy “was a meagre \$30 billion as compared to that of the US (\$300 billion, 10 times bigger than India) and the UK (\$60 billion, twice the size of India). Not only was it not at the table when decisions were taken,” writes Deo, “it was not in a position even to articulate its own concerns. Even the British, who were supposed to uphold the interests of the colonies, did not do so.” There have been several tectonic shifts since 1947, when India became a postcolonial nation. More recently, the end of the Cold War in 1989 reunited Germany and broke up the former USSR, changing the international political landscape and balance-of-power, as did the 1991 Kuwait War, and the later invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan that were in response to the 2001 Twin Tower attacks on US soil. These wars have caused long-term instability in western Asia, alongside the ongoing tumult in Libya and Syria fueled by a failed Arab Spring. Meanwhile, there has been no inclination to include emerging powers like India, Brazil, Germany and Japan as permanent members of the UN Security Council, “whereas former colonial, but now declining powers, like UK and France, retain their veto in the UNSC” (Deo, 2018). Not surprisingly, with the liberalization of world markets, emerging economies Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa formed BRICS in 2006 as an alternate decision-making body outside of the Euroamerican dominated institutions that have typically called the shots when it comes to international trade and policy making as well as global security decisions. The ascension of China as a new economic force to be reckoned with (given an almost 49-fold increase in its GDP since 1978), the push for Brexit in Europe, and the unpredictable moves of President Trump in the US with regards to immigration, trade tariffs, and foreign policy, have set the stage for a *new world order*. Deo believes that China is the heavyweight when it comes to trade relations with the world’s major economies, including the US, Germany, Japan, South Korea etc., and is also “the largest investor in most Asian, Arab, African and Latin American countries. Clearly the Chinese have judged that their moment has arrived.” President Xi Jinping declared at the 19th Communist Party Congress in October 2017, that, “It will be an era that sees China moving closer to centre stage and making greater contributions to mankind.” Deo concludes her thought-piece for the Gateway House: Indian Council on Global Relations, by emphasizing India’s strength in this changing global-scape: “Although we are used to operating in the existing West-dominated global order, it has not necessarily worked in our favour,” she concludes. But, she adds, “[w]e are better positioned to influence the new institutions that are being created because we are a member of many of them, such as G20, BRICS, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and New Development Bank. Also, in our favour are the size of our economy at \$2.85 trillion, the attractions of our large market, including as buyers of energy resources, and the high quality of our professional services and skilled labour. These attributes will at least put us on the rule-makers’ table, if not yet in a position to determine every outcome” [For a more detailed account, see: Deo, N. (2018, July 17). India has a unique opportunity to shape the emerging global order. *Quartz*, India. Retrieved from <https://qz.com/1329573/indias-unique-opportunity-to-shape-the-emerging-global-order/>]. Chicano performance writer, activist, and writer Guillermo Gómez-Peña (1996) has suggested the metaphor of the *new world border* to replace the *new world order*. Declaring hybridity to be the hegemonic defining feature of global culture, Gómez-Peña also sees the concept’s drawbacks, acknowledging that “precisely because of its elasticity and open nature, the hybrid model can be appropriated by anyone to mean practically anything. Since the essence of its borders is oscillation, these boundaries can be conveniently repositioned to include and exclude different peoples and communities” (1996, pp. 12–13) (in Kraidy 322) [See: Kraidy, M. M. (2002). Hybridity in cultural globalization. *Communication Theory*, 3(12), 316–39. doi:10.1093/ct/12.3.316].
173. Krishna, S. (1994). Cartographic anxiety: Mapping the body politic in India. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 19(4), 507–21. doi:10.1177/030437549401900404
 174. Lakshmi, R. (2012, November 23). India and China quarrel over their maps on passport and visa stamps. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2012/11/23/india-and-china-quarrel-over-their-maps-on-passport-and-visa-stamps/?utm_term=.7f766ed08ff4
 175. Olusoga, D. (2017, March 19). Empire 2.0 is dangerous nostalgia for something that never existed. *The Guardian*, UK. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/mar/19/empire-20-is-dangerous-nostalgia-for-something-that-never-existed>
 176. Michael Kenny & Nick Pearce (2015) describe the rising popularity among “a growing number of conservative-inclined Eurosceptics” of the idea of the “Anglosphere.” This ideology is rooted in the belief that Britain’s strength lies in developing closer alliances with countries that share very similar “political structures and systems; and that also tend to cherish the values of parliamentary government, individual liberty, the rule of law and the free market.” These partner countries vary according to the advocate in question, but central to this ideological formation (called the Canzuk concept) are the “English-speaking “Five Eyes” countries of Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States” *that were also former British colonies*. They have thus, already been shaped by British ideologies, culture, and institutions. What is of greatest significance though, is that this strategic *Britain Unchained* vision is designed to help a post-Brexit Britain “prosper in a global economy dominated by the rise of Asia. Liberated from the EU and allied with the rest of the Anglosphere, the argument runs, *Britain could reinvent its open trading heritage, harnessing its colonial history to integrate itself into the new global economy of the Asian century*” (emphasis mine) [For more on this, please read: Kenny, M., & Pearce, N. (2015, February 10). The rise of the Anglosphere: How the right dreamed up a new conservative world order. *New Statesman*, UK. Retrieved from <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2015/02/rise-anglosphere-how-right-dreamed-new-conservative-world-order>].
 177. David Davis, the former British government’s Brexit secretary declared in a 2016 speech on the referendum: “This is an opportunity to renew our strong relationships with Commonwealth and Anglosphere countries. These parts of the world

- are growing faster than Europe. We share history, culture and language. *We have family ties*. We even share similar legal systems. The usual barriers to trade are largely absent” (qtd. in Kenny & Pearce, 2018a, July 13; emphasis mine). This allusion to a biological connection between the former colonizers and ex-colonized is all the more glaring because of the fetishization of racial difference that had justified the project of Empire in the first place. In fact the nineteenth century British historian and political essayist Sir John Robert Seeley famously argued that India’s “enormous population” had “no tie of blood whatever with the population of England” and could therefore not be absorbed into Great Britain. He attributed this to India’s lack of political coherence and a sense of unified nationalism (“indeed it was not *India* at all”), that made it easy for India to be conquered by Britain (in Kenny & Pearce, 2018b, p. 13). Kenny & Pearce also note in their book, *Shadows of empire* that in “making a distinction, common in late Victorian Britain, between the settler colonies, united by race with the mother country, and the countries of the subject populations of empire,” Seeley and his fellow historians supported the “*fin-de-siècle* drawing of a ‘global colour line’, dividing the white from non-white world” (2018b, p. 13) [For more, see: Kenny, M., & Pearce, N. (2018a, July 13). Britain, time to let go of the “Anglosphere”. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/13/opinion/donald-trump-uk-visit-anglosphere-brexite.html>; also, Kenny, M., & Pearce, N. (2018b). *Shadows of empire: The Anglosphere in British politics*. Medford, MA: Polity Press].
- 178 Kenny, M., & Pearce, N. (2018a, July 13). Britain, time to let go of the ‘Anglosphere’. *The New York Times*.
179. Hartcher, P. (2018, July 09). Australia on the front line of clash with China, says Steve Bannon. *The Sydney Morning Herald*. Retrieved from <https://www.smh.com.au/world/asia/australia-on-the-front-line-of-clash-with-china-says-steve-bannon-20180709-p4zqfi.html>
180. Richmond, A. H. (1994). *Global apartheid: Refugees, racism, and the new world order*. Toronto, Canada: Oxford University Press. Nicholas De Genova (2018) observes that the “moral panic” produced by the colored bodies of the influx of refugees and exiles from non-western parts of the world into Europe, has resulted in them being repeatedly presented “not merely as an ‘integration’ dilemma or an affront to national (or European) ‘culture’, ‘values’, or ‘civilization’, but also as an outright menace to law and order and, to one degree or another, a security threat that purportedly legitimates a state of emergency” (p. 1778). Noting that not all Europeans (“those who may pretend to the status of not being ‘of migrant background’”) are equally “European” or “white”, and nor are they “‘white’ in the same ways,” De Genova draws attention to the fact that “the homogenizing character of a racial formation of ‘European’-ness (or European whiteness) is precisely devoted to obfuscating and suturing what are otherwise profound and consequential differences and inequalities” (p. 1779). And, he hopes we may therefore realize, that ‘European’-ness “has historically acquired a spurious semblance of integrity or coherence solely based on its presumptive derision for and subjugation of whatever is produced as non-European. Consequently, the production of ‘Europe’ through the refortification of borders has become synonymous with the utter disposability of black and brown lives” (p. 1779) [See also, De Genova, N. (2018). The “migrant crisis” as racial crisis: Do *Black Lives Matter* in Europe? *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 41(10), 1765–82. doi:10.1080/01419870.2017.1361543].
181. Omi, M., & Winant, H. (1994). *Racial formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: Routledge.
182. Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994) argue that *absorption* “reflects the realization [by the state] that many demands are greater threats before they are accepted than after they have been adopted in suitably moderate form” (p. 86, parentheses mine). *Insulation* is the process by which the state limits the demands to specific “terrains that are, if not entirely symbolic, at least not crucial to the operation of the racial order” (pp. 86–87).
183. Hegde, R. S. (2005). Disciplinary spaces and globalization: A postcolonial unsettling. *Global Media and Communication* 1(1), 59–62. doi:10.1177/174276650500100114
184. Appadurai, A. (2000). Grassroots globalization and the research imagination. *Public Culture*, 12 (1), 1–19. doi:10.1215/08992363-12-1-1. In his characterization of globalization as defined by “objects in motion” that include “ideas and ideologies, people and goods, images and messages, technologies and techniques,” Appadurai suggests that these various “flows” are marked by “relations of disjuncture”. This is especially so since “the paths or vectors taken by these kinds of things have different speeds, axes, points of origin and termination, and varied relationships to institutional structures in different regions, nations, or societies.” What is more, these disjunctures produce specific conflicts and tensions in different contexts, and it is thus, “the disjunctures between the various vectors characterizing this world-in-motion that produce fundamental problems of livelihood, equity, suffering, justice, and governance” (p. 5).
185. Gimenez, M. E. (2002). The global fetish. [Special issue]. *Latin American Perspectives*, 29(6), 85–87. doi:10.1177/0094582X0202900608
186. Beck, U. (2001). Interview with Ulrich Beck. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 1(2), 261–77. doi:10.1177/146954050100100209
187. Peters, J. D. (2008). History as a communication problem. In B. Zelizer (Ed.), *Explorations in communication history* (pp. 19–34). New York, NY: Routledge.
188. See, for example, Shome, R. (2016). When postcolonial studies meets media studies. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 33(3), 245–63. doi:10.1080/15295036.2016.1183801; Shome, R. (2009). Postcolonial reflections on the “internationalization” of cultural studies. In M. Morris & H. Wright (Eds.). [Special issue] *Cultural Studies*, 5–6, 694–719. doi:10.1080/09502380903132322; and Hegde, R. S. (2005). Disciplinary spaces and globalization.
189. Foster, H. (2012). Post-critical. *October*, 139, 3–8. doi:10.1162/OCTO_a_00076
190. Spivak, G. C. (1999). *A critique of postcolonial reason: Toward a history of the vanishing present*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

191. Indian political psychologist and critic Ashis Nandy (1998), comments on another form of professional disciplining of the non-western postcolonial critic, namely writing in English, which is based on the assumption that it is necessary to do so, in order to gain legitimacy and reach the “right” audience (read: western academic scholars and publishers). He observes that, “[t]he West’s centrality in any cultural dialogue in our times has been ensured by its dominance over the language in which dialogue among the non-Western cultures takes place. Even when we talk to our neighbors, it is mediated by Western assumptions and Western frameworks. [...] [H]owever apparently open and non-hierarchical the existing official mode of dialogue, its very organization ensures that, within its format, all other cultures are set up to lose. They cannot—dare not—bring to dialogue their entire selves. They have to hide parts of themselves not only from others but also from their own Westernized or modernized selves” (qtd. in Shome, 2009, p. 711).
192. A recent 2018 Pew Research Center report shows India to be among the bottom ranks of the internet usage-to population ratio, despite having the world’s second-largest internet population and the most booming smartphone market, after China [Poushter, J. Bishop, C., Chwe, H. (2018, June 19). Social media use continues to rise in developing countries but plateaus across developed ones. *Pew Research Center*. Global attitudes and trends. Retrieved from <http://www.pewglobal.org/2018/06/19/social-media-use-continues-to-rise-in-developing-countries-but-plateaus-across-developed-ones/>]. However, 2018 survey data from repeated rounds of the Lokniti-CSDS Mood of the Nation (MOTN) survey indicates that the reach of the mobile app WhatsApp (owned by *Facebook*) has taken a sharp upward curve over the past few years. Lokniti is a research program at the Delhi-based Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS). The survey found that the percentage of daily users of the app jumped from 14% to 24% between 2017–18. But these numbers do little to help us appreciate the widespread public impact possible despite low levels of media penetration. For example, at least twenty-four people have been reportedly lynched and killed by mobs since May 2018, following rumors of child kidnappers that spread across WhatsApp (accessed by at least two hundred million Indians), and resulted in the stranger attacks. In one of these attacks, the man was a local government official in the north-eastern state of Tripura who had been traveling around villages to contest the rumors on social media. Police discovered that viral messages spread on WhatsApp messages, forwarded fake information about child kidnappers being in specific areas that triggered almost all the attacks. Following pressure from the Indian Government, WhatsApp had to release full-page ads in major English and Hindi dailies in a major media literacy effort to make people aware of how to spot fake news. The tips included cross-checking information with other more credible news sources, being aware that photographs and videos can be edited or altered, and not forwarding messages if unsure of the source or the validity of the information. WhatsApp has also added a new feature which will tag a forwarded message so the receivers know that it is not created by the sender [See: Rahman, S. A. (2018, July 12). ‘Fake news often goes viral’: WhatsApp ads warn India after mob lynchings. *The Guardian*, UK. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/13/fake-news-whatsapp-ads-india-mob-lynchings>].
193. Mosco, V. (2009). *The political economy of communication* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. (Original work published 1996)
194. Parameswaran, R. (2002). Local culture in global media: Excavating colonial and material discourses in *National Geographic. Communication Theory*, 12(3), 287–315. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2002.tb00272.x>
195. Shome & Hegde (2002) helpfully explain that “[...] [p]ostcolonial scholarship is not driven by any particular method. Because its questions emerge from larger social contexts, its method is therefore shaped by the questions posed by the contexts. Thus diverse methodological perspectives from ethnography to textual criticism can fall under its rubric. In this sense, postcolonial theory is committed to rigorous interdisciplinarity. Further, postcolonial scholarship is not shaped by any one philosophical tradition. Perspectives in Marxism, feminism, deconstruction, and psychoanalysis have all been used to understand the varied dimensions of historical and contemporary colonial conditions” (p. 258) [See: Shome, R., & Hegde, R. (2002). Culture, communication, and the challenge of globalization. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 19(2), 172–89. doi:10.1080/07393180216560].
196. Hall, S. (1992). Cultural studies and its theoretical legacies. In L. Grossberg, C. Nelson, & P. Treichler (Eds.), *Cultural studies* (pp. 277–94). New York, NY: Routledge.
197. Spivak, G. C. (2003). *Death of a discipline*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
198. Driscoll, M. (2004). Reverse postcoloniality. *Social Text* 78, 22(1), 59–84. doi:10.1215/01642472-22-1_78-59
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201. In July 2018, the IMF predicted a growth rate of 7.3 per cent in 2018 and 7.5 per cent in 2019 for India (down by 0.1 per cent and 0.3 per cent respectively from its April projections). “India’s growth rate is expected to rise from 6.7 per cent in 2017 to 7.3 per cent in 2018 and 7.5 per cent in 2019, as drags from the currency exchange initiative (demonetisation) and the introduction of the goods and services tax fade,” according to the International Monetary Fund’s latest World Economic Outlook (WEO) update. Despite this, India continues to be ahead of China, while Growth projections have been revised down for the Eurozone, Japan, and the UK [See: Press Trust of India. (2018, July 16). IMF downgrades growth rate for India in 2018 and 2019. *The Indian Express*. Retrieved from <https://indianexpress.com/article/business/economy/imf-downgrades-growth-rate-for-india-in-2018-and-2019-5262313/>].
202. In the case of a seventeenth territory, that of Western Sahara, with Spain withdrawing from the region and therefore surrendering all responsibility for overseeing its administration in 1976, the people of Western Sahara were informed

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