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“Authorizing for oneself a place in the world”: Coming of Age in Jhumpa Lahiri’s and Mira Nair’s *The Namesake*

The Novel

As the first second-generation Indian-American to have gained a wide literary recognition, Jhumpa Lahiri’s advent on the American literary scene has been compared to that of Maxine Hong Kingston and *The Woman Warrior* (1975) some decades earlier, with her similar capability to bring to the attention of the mainstream – from an American-bred perspective – the experience of Asian immigrant groups previously neglected by the official historiography. Similarly to Kingston’s, Jhumpa Lahiri’s work enacts the immigrant gesture of writing oneself and one’s experience in the American grain, while conveying to a global readership the complex negotiations of living in diaspora. Already in *Interpreter of Maladies*, the collection of short stories and winner of the 2000 Pulitzer Prize that confirmed the author’s entrance into the canon, narratives about the second-generation Bengali-American appear numerous (“When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine,” “Interpreter of Maladies,” “This Blessed House,” “A Temporary Matter”). These transgenerational dynamics are further explored in her next work, *The Namesake*, a novel published in 2003, which centers on the coming of age of an Indian-American male protagonist, and takes place between Boston, Calcutta, and New York.

Jhumpa Lahiri’s first novel is a semi-autobiographical account of the migration experience of Ashima and Ashoke Ganguli, a Bengali couple transplanted to Cambridge, Massachusetts, from 1967 to 2001, and their

struggle with being away from their homeland, their family, and traditions. When Ashima and Ashoke's first child is born, the couple does not have a name for him – the name having to be ritually chosen by Ashima's grandmother via a letter that will never make it to America – and in order to be discharged from the hospital they spontaneously decide to call the baby Gogol, in honor of the Russian writer who had saved Ashoke's life when he almost got killed in a train accident in India. Ashoke's injured body could only be detected by his hand sticking out of the wreckage, holding a ripped page from the book of stories by Nikolai Gogol that the man was reading at the moment of the derailment.

Chosen as a *daknam*, the pet name that in the Bengali tradition is meant to be contained within the intimate boundaries of the Indian (American) home and family life, the name Gogol ends up being the only one by which the protagonist will be known in the “outside,” American world. As both name and namesake come to signal porous borders between the diasporic experience of his family and the outward American society, the constant impossibility either to draw clear storylines between the two or have them mutually recognize, fuels the existential crisis of the protagonist. During his adolescence and early adulthood Gogol is progressively distressed and oppressed by his name, especially after knowing that it bears his father's legacy of death and survival; he then decides to legally change it into a more neutral, “Americanizable” one, by consigning himself as “Nikhil” to the public dimension of American academia and work.

In Nikhil's anguish, therefore, emerges the ambivalent nature of a diasporic existence, wherein the feeling of connection to cultural and affective legacies – be these sustained by family and community gatherings, communication technologies, or actual travels to India – intersects with an awareness of physical and emotional disjunctures that blur any act of conveying a fluent meaning and coherence in the “here and now” of his American upbringing. For him, on either side of the hyphen, “Indian-” “American-” seem to perversely interact and hold him in an unsymbolized, “wounded attachment” (Munos 189) to a haunting homeland, India, that can neither be encoded in shared narrative memories nor in social experience. Uncanny “black holes,” unbridgeable communication gaps between political maps, and affective belonging in the novel are poignantly

signaled in the occurrence of “static” (Lahiri 44, 45, 63, 254), “barely recognizable” sounds through “holes of the receiver” (Lahiri 44).

Gogol, then, seems to bear the marks of his filiation through a symbolic void, at the crossroads between his parents’ constant emotional and cultural return to the homeland, and their contingent struggle with ongoing processes for adaptation in the American environment. Suspended in an “arrival-without-arrival” (Munos xxxviii), aptly symbolized by the grandmother’s lost letter that would have preordained and somehow stabilized a narrative around the protagonist’s Indian inheritance, Gogol’s life story is recast in an ambiguous struggle with the self, permanently estranged from who he “should have been” (Lahiri 96) if the chosen name from Calcutta had reached the American shores.

In dialogue with previous critical studies on the novel, I will highlight the narrative mechanisms in *The Namesake* that accompany the protagonist’s existential dilemma and disclose his difficulties in articulating his own perspectives on citizenship, belonging, and self. I will then engage in a comparative reading of *The Namesake* with the eponymous film directed by Mira Nair in 2006, and highlight the director’s interventions aimed at overcoming the protagonist’s alienation by way of a seamed cinematic texture. Nair’s intersectional lens, in fact, conveys a dialogic relationship between the Indian and the U.S. locations, both on a transnational as well as a on a trans-generational level, thus inscribing the Indian-American diasporic experience on a realm of collective recognition and shared history.

Involved with the narration of a *Bildungsroman*, the second part of *The Namesake* is centered on the protagonist’s transition to adulthood, through the failure of a long-standing relationship with an upper-class, white girlfriend and the premature death of his father Ashoke. It is only then that he begins to understand the real meaning of his father’s life path and choices, and to reconcile the distances between his existence in America and his parents’ ancestral heritage. Gogol’s agnition especially occurs in the aftermath of the divorce from his Bengali-American wife, Moushumi, a marriage that somehow had fulfilled the expectations of his widowed mother and the community of Bengali-American step-relatives. It is precisely at the turning point of the protagonist’s failures in love

and his reconciliation with the parents' genealogical lineage that a vexed relationship with national identities fully emerges in the novel.

While in the Anglo-American tradition of the *Bildungsroman*, the fulfillment of the male protagonist's individual destiny and his moral education tend to culminate in marriage and in his successful integration in the national social order, Patricia Chu argues that in Asian-American *Bildungsromane*, diasporic life-stories are characterized by ongoing detours that complicate the protagonist's potential integration in a national paradigm. In Asian-American realist narratives, marriage and romance plots tend to remain incomplete or collapse, because their successful development would also traditionally denote the "successful interpellation of the subject into the nation-state" (Chu 19); the occurrence of failed marriage plots thus tends to mobilize a thwarted desire for assimilation, which is also enacted in *The Namesake*. In the novel the genre of the realistic narrative is revised via the exposure of the male protagonist's displaced route towards becoming a well-married, overachieving Indian-American citizen, one that could eventually fit within both sides of the "model minority" loop – the endorsement of ethnic success and upward mobility *as* the fulfillment of the New American Dream.

As a matter of fact, Gogol's second generation experience is enshrined in that of those first immigrants who left behind their South Asian postcolonial realities and were able to successfully relocate in the U.S., thanks to Lyndon Johnson's 1965 *Immigration and Naturalization Act*, which favored the entrance of highly skilled, cosmopolitan professionals. Both with regard to the American nation-state and to the context of inter-ethnic relations, especially with other Asian minorities, the experience of the South-Asian American communities has always been located on several boundary lines: due to their relatively recent migration, "first generation" communities only began to form in the 1970s and the 1980s, at a time when the political demands of an "Asian American" national cultural identity had already weakened, and no second generation of South Asian descent could advance political claims for recognition on the basis of historical discriminations. Bearing the traumatic experience of the bloody partitions which carved three nations out of the subcontinent, India and Pakistan in 1947, and Bangladesh in 1971, the new South Asian diasporics tend to

show a consciousness of national boundaries as “shadow lines,” as evoked by Amitav Ghosh in his 1989 novel. Colonial and postcolonial legacies, thus, impinge upon “Indian” subjectivities abroad, and the close ties maintained between the South Asian nations and their global diasporics have intensified a sense of nation whose community is incongruent with national boundaries, yet inherently nurtured by a “national imagery” through language and cultural practices, shared codes of behavior and social organization.¹

Confronted with their parents' fresh experience of colonialism and postcolonial upbringing, most Indian-American children have grown up in the shadow of their historical legacies, and are often unable to confront their powerful life stories of community, strive and adaptation in a foreign country, and to enter the unsymbolized, but “intuited” traumatic aspects of their first-hand experience of migration. Their history is more often an engulfment, in Delphine Munos's terms, “in a reluctance or an impossibility, for characters like Gogol, ... to authorize for themselves a place in the world” (Munos xxxvii), as if permanently marked by a status of “migrancy by affiliation,” by forceful integration in the “paranational” communities of diasporics (Seyhan), who dwell on the American soil, yet in some instances linger in the interstices of both a civic allegiance to the host country and a cultural and linguistic attachment to India.

By choosing a name as the crucial mechanism engendering an ethnic American narrative, Jhumpa Lahiri complicates the general consensus that “culture” automatically provides the tools for renewed agency and self-determination, and stages a scenario where the idea of a diasporic nation, firmly sustained by first-generation immigrant cultural practices, memories and storylines, clashes against the misrecognition of their American-born offspring. However, it is precisely at the intersection of postcolonial, Asian-American, and global cosmopolitan concerns that her narrative unfolds the problematic relationship that a character like Gogol entertains with the contemporary American context, and especially with melting-pot ideologies (Grewal; Munos; Prashad). If, on one side, the issue around Gogol's name – its slippage from a supposedly “authentic” Indian ancestry – signals a detour in the “normalcy” of the pattern of upward mobility among the South Asian American communities and poses a

powerful critique to their cultural insularity, on the other it also foregrounds the protagonist's paranoid fears about an "exorbitant citizenship" (Koshy 597), which hints at the overexposure of the civic experience of Asian minorities by way of an easy, consumable ethnicity in the globalized milieu of contemporary America. Dependency on this "hypervisibility" also marks the status of writers like Jhumpa Lahiri, engendering alienation and the impossibility to talk for oneself only. The risk, in fact, is to be constantly and ambiguously spotlighted both within the dominant gaze of white Anglo-America and the institutionalized tokenism of U.S. multicultural discourses, often inadequate to accommodate the complexity of race and migrancy.²

This consciousness reverberates in the novel as a self-metacritical moment, when the college-aged Nikhil/Gogol faces independence from the family home and engages in the American institutional context. His entry in the public sphere is marked by the attendance to a panel discussion about Indian writers in English, in which it is declared that "teleologically speaking, ABCDs are unable to answer the question: 'Where are you from?'" Gogol then learns that "ABCD stands for American Born Confused Deshi. In other words, him. ... that C could also stand for 'conflicted'. ... that *deshi* means Indian" (Lahiri 118). Feeling charged with the unpleasant burden of the ethnic outsider in the American society, and not quite recognizing himself in it, Gogol is caught in the alienating core of those intergenerational, transcultural gaps "at work" (Concilio 103). Striking back at the perils of labels with an ironic stance, the narrator cannot but revert to parody to defuse the tension inherent in the dynamics of cultural expressivity.

It is Jhumpa Lahiri's refractive narration and elliptical critique, however, that strategically allows the emergence of the authorial effort to release both characters like Gogol and her own writerly subjectivity from a burden as evanescent and oppressive as that of the model minority, which is grafted upon the epistemic crises experienced by the first generation of immigrants, and transmitted with as much anxiety to their offspring. Not surprisingly, Gogol's vicissitudes, as well as other second-generation characters in Lahiri's overall work, tend to remain anchored to a visceral, inward-oriented "domesticity," but always based, nonetheless, on the

dialectical relationship between “home and the world,” marked, in Susan Koshy’s terms by “a critical awareness of the constraints of primary attachments, such as family, religion, race, and nation, and by an ethical or imaginative receptivity, orientation, or aspiration to an interconnected or shared world” (Koshy 594).

Hence, a narrative chiseled within interior settings, built on deceptively nonthreatening plots of ordinary existence unveils border anxieties encrypted at the threshold of the self, as well as of the public geographies in which Lahiri’s migrant bodies live on. It comes as no surprise that the only racial threat in the novel occurs through the haunting intervention of a quirky postal incident, echoing the same that somehow had sparked the protagonist’s destiny. The family mailbox one morning is found defaced, and the name Ganguli transformed into “Gan-grene.” The name alteration – a word that recalls “alterity” and “othering” – manifesting a condition of infected, “self-consumption,” also hints at the disturbing *disaggregation* from a presumed healthy and “whole” American national body.

At the end of the novel the protagonist finally understands that his namesake embodies the regenerative force that his father Ashoke discovered in a new land. But Ashoke’s patrilinear transmission to Gogol is not an inheritance of belonging, but a simple statement about his favorite author: “We all came out of Gogol’s overcoat” (Lahiri 79); with this the son is left to experience his own intimate epiphanies and recast them onto broad spaces of interpretation. The novel cyclically closes with an adult Gogol reading the book that his father had given him. As Akaky Akakyevich’s vicissitudes in “The Overcoat” evoke the shadows of his father’s struggles, a spatial and temporal intertextuality between the fictional characters is also established, “one that illuminates the historical production of transnational subjectivities” (Shankar 80). And as the son reads the story, he also endorses those “transgenerational workings” (Munos xxxiv), made up of the efforts of the Indian-American second generation to come to terms with a simultaneous living and meaning-making process, and engage in the self, “as a continuous organizing consciousness, beyond the power of words to describe” (Caesar 119).

The Film

By virtue of its own medium, Mira Nair's cinematic adaptation of *The Namesake* stunningly appeals to visual and aural senses to manifest the material reality of the South-Asian American diasporic experience, and anchors the narratives of people's multiple journeyings under globalization to earthly, mundane grounds. Released in 2006, four years after the publication of Jhumpa Lahiri's novel, Mira Nair's *The Namesake* is, from the outset, marked by an intimate, mutually constitutive collaboration between writer and director – with the author herself and her siblings briefly appearing in some shots. Nair's reading of *The Namesake*, therefore, enhances Jhumpa Lahiri's endeavors to release ethnic self-referentiality, and convey it further across a broader spectrum of human experiences. In novel form, *The Namesake* provides a compact, “common ground story” among people of Bengali descent living in the United States, as well as among South Asian diasporics at large (Bhalla; Bahri): the movie adaptation, by consigning the act of reading the novel, a quintessentially solitary one, to a publicly global audience (Lahiri and Nair 8), broadens the circuits of fruition and reception,³ and this is confirmed in the publication that followed the release of Mira Nair's movie, *The Namesake: A Portrait of the Novel*, where the writer herself intervenes to point out how “Books are earthbound entities, ordinary physical objects we hold in our hands and read when we have time. . . . Movies occupy a much more public place than novels do. They are publicly created, publicly consumed” (Lahiri and Nair 8).

At first glance the movie results in a reconfiguration of the spatial topography of the novel, but whereas the latter's narrative flow seems to navigate on the spatial and temporal fractures between America and India, Mira Nair's film aims at emphasizing a visual, as well as metaphorical, continuity between these locations and the people who transit and dwell between them. The spatial and temporal breach dividing the cities of New York and Calcutta, in particular, is seamed through a steady occurring of visual metaphors – shots of bridges, crisscrossing urban elements, transports – that poignantly enfold Ashima and Ashoke's upwardly-mobile narrative of immigration. Instead of staging Ashoke and Ashima's experience of

diaspora and nostalgia for the homeland through a sepia tinted lens, for instance, Nair's cinematic texture shows scenes of "home" – Calcutta – always as in a time-space continuum of reality, through a bleached bypass and fading shots, which simultaneously unfurl connections and sutures, but also expose tenuous, haunting linkages between locations, and the sense of alienation and disorientation that circumscribes the couple's early life in America (Dhingra 85-90).

Nair's technique, therefore, aptly translates the opening of the novel, where Ashima Ganguli is introduced in Boston as in labor with her first-born, Gogol. It is through her nostalgic thoughts during labor, through her sense of estrangement in America as a "lifelong pregnancy – a perpetual waiting" (Lahiri 49), that the reader of the novel learns about the Gangulis' previous life in Calcutta and their story of departure and relocation in America. The diasporic journey is then metaphorized through intermittence and discontinuity, literally embodied in Ashima's contractions, marking a leaping narrative movement, that uneasily "delivers" the disjunctures between the American and the Indian time-space, where the consumption of distant daily rites simultaneously takes place. Those very familiar and nostalgic scenes of home inspire Mira Nair's view of Calcutta, which, in a deconstructive move, is cinematically placed in a parallel comparison with the cosmopolitan and interethnic environment of New York, juxtaposed to the presumed centrality and advanced modernity of the North American metropolitan space. In a prismatic and complex refraction of the stories of struggle and adaptation of the South Asian immigrants in America, as well as of the second-generation, both cities are fully consigned as the stages of Gogol's progress, enveloped in a "comparative" – mutually evocative – transnational cinematic textuality.

Apart from cinema, photography also intervenes in the public recognition of the novel. The transmutation of *The Namesake* in different media genres further confirms the development of an international, comparison-ridden framework of reception and fruition. The photography exhibit (entitled *Namesake: Inspiration*) that coincided with the premiere of the film in New York in 2006, for instance, showed a collage of pictures by different contributors from all over the world, whose shots on migration featured abstract places and situations of movement and journeying, such

as airports, suitcases, and escalators. The temporal as well as geographical dissonances between the photographs was meant to be interposed with the theme of the novel and the movie: irrespective of class, race, and national origin, the inspiring shots were to somehow affirm and acknowledge the Indian diasporic presence in the United States, and the way the story of the South-Asian American migration is one that consistently negotiates national and ethnic categories of belonging, while at the same time posing a critique to universal notions of citizenship.

The expansive epistemologies set in motion by Mira Nair's cinematic intervention seem to find their kernel in the prequel scenes of Ashoke's almost fatal journey, which are offered as a subtle attempt to set the aesthetical as well as ethical principles of representation of the South-Asian American diasporic narrative. The very first scene of the film is a tight framing of Ashoke's luggage, a locked trunk on the shoulders of a train station *coolie*, himself one of the thousand migrants from the rural villages of India, the backbone of the urban workforce of Calcutta. This, and the subsequent sequences of extreme close ups, seem to gather Mira Nair's metacritical perspective on the postcolonial reality, the historical "point of departure" of the Gangulis' diasporic journeying. In a decision that echoes Lahiri's narrative metacriticism, the prequel scenes suggest the camera's strategic detachment from any attempt at deciphering the sociopolitical implications in the movie, thus to any enarmourment with critical boundaries apt "to illustrate how cinema not only cannibalizes the radical resources of postcolonial texts, by normalizing them through adaptation and global circulation through festivals, film houses and review systems, but also how [it] helps make postcolonial interventions sensitize the wider public to postcolonial issues" (Ponzanesi 6).

Well aware of the circuits of reception and critical analysis of her movie, Mira Nair's representational responsibility thus deliberately suspends enunciations about the sociopolitical and historical circumstances of the Indian nation-state, opting, instead, for a swift, realistic representation of the inequalities enshrined in postcoloniality, with the implication that transnationalism involves the mobility of certain subjects on behalf of others; the opening scene appears, on the contrary, to respond to the director's will for cohesiveness, to her attempts to visually, as well as mnestically, juxtapose

the Calcutta migrant worker to the mass transcontinental migrations of people like Ashoke and Ashima. This bonding is firmly maintained as, soon after the prequel culminating with Ashoke's accident, the opening titles signal the beginning of the diasporic narrative, with the interspersed names of the main characters appearing both in Bengali and in Roman characters, and slowly melting into each other in intermittent linguistic shifts. The bilingual process enacted in the credits, therefore, confirms the director's intention to have her movie function as a releaser of intertwined, juxtaposed narratives, across linguistic, national and generational divides (cf. Trivedi 46-48).

As the plot is progressively launched towards the diasporic journey a young, marriageable Ashima meeting with her future in-laws is then questioned by Ashoke's father about the perspective of a life abroad, and throughout the customary interview for a possible arranged match with Ashoke, her eligibility is tested by one single question, which simultaneously pre-determines "her" own experience of migration: "You won't get tired, will you?" This exposes the gendered aspect of migration, made of physical as well as emotional labor and alienation. The hint at Ashima's domestic role in America speaks to the core of a successful performance of ethnic identity in the U.S.⁴ and her culturally assigned role of upholding traditional ways positions her at the forefront of maternal domestic fortitude, as a powerful re/organizer and mediator of the spatial and cultural contours of both the Indian homeland and America. But while her dominant first-generation experience in the movie supports and paves the way to the formation of male Indian-American masculine subjectivities, primarily her husband Ashoke and then her son Gogol, the young women orbiting around Gogol's narrative in the movie, such as his sister Sonia and his wife Moushumi, seem to be expelled from the paradigm of the "nation" altogether. In the film they are seen as peripheral figures, sometimes slipping away or unable to fit into the frame of the camera: Gogol's sister Sonia, during a family trip in India, is seen staring numbly at the ceiling of the Taj Mahal, an appendix shot that follows the scene in which his brother, instead, is seen embracing the artistic grandeur of the monument, an epiphanic moment regarding his future as an architect. Similarly, Ashima's sister is seen motionless on the staircase

of her house in Calcutta, waiting for her sister to be introduced to her future husband: it is as if in Ashima's imminent marriage and departure – in the cinematic enactment of the diasporic journey – the camera carried along with it the visual debris of oppositional dialectic forces: movement/stillness, involvement/detachment, individualism/collectivity, to then roll on negotiating the rooting/routing narrations of the South-Asian American diasporic experience.

Gogol's love relationships, too, turn out as expulsions from the diasporic nation: his Indian-American wife Moushumi's eloping with a previous lover marks her exit from the movie, while the presence of his white American fiancée Maxine at Ashoke's funeral seems to further reinforce the dismissal of the young female characters – this being evident in Maxine's dark outfit, in stark contrast with the white garments worn by the other Indian mourners, and her intimate, improper behavior. But in her disruptive role Maxine also unveils the ambiguous conflict between the private and public spheres of the Indian-American immigrant life. Both in the novel and in the movie Gogol's crisis is somehow brought into the open via Maxine as a threatening exposure of the self, a locked self with its jumbled "belongings" – whether contained in trunks, rituals, or emotional affiliations. Her expulsion from the Gangulis' frame also marks the conflicting borders between U.S. mainstream perspectives on immigrants' public assimilation into one's landscape of perception and "right of property" (hence Maxine's tendency to appropriate Gogol's public *persona*) and the complexity of immigrant desires and aspirations. These latter often translate into a strict holding on to "diversity" – freely performed in the private domain of the domestic space – as a means of avoiding a contamination from outer values, as well as of shielding oneself from the gaze of the dominant society. Maxine's presence, in short, exposes the neoliberal mechanisms of U.S. social organization, in which the Indian-American second generation is left to strive for a relational understanding.

Mira Nair's thematic montage has thus the effect of displacing and eliding the transgenerational narratives of female (diasporic) subjects, who come to be represented in a limiting perspective, one whose "necessary" stillness somehow opens a channel to the central narrative of the father-son/male-male relationship in mobilizing narratives of diaspora and

community, and to the *ethnic* son's uneasy, negotiated return to a cultural heritage. *Young* women end up "arresting" the protagonist's diasporic engagement (as in Maxine's incapability to read between the lines of Gogol's life history) or get narratively frozen (with Gogol's sister Sonia being cast out of the narrative frame) or simply expelled as they do not fit (Gogol's wife Moushumi returning to an ex lover), maybe because they refuse to come to terms with, or simply because they are not meant to take "in" the "burden" of a diasporic heritage, experienced as engagement in a "labor," of constant acts of retrieval and reconciliation with both American and ancestral values.

"What I wanted to do was a deep love story about stillness," declares Mira Nair during an interview in the magazine *Mother Jones*. And the Gangulis' lifestory is paced by the stillness of the ritual performances interspersed in the movie and throughout the U.S./India spatial coordinates. In the way they are interwoven into the experience of the protagonist, birth celebrations, weddings and funerals not only function as powerfully evocative enhancers of an Indian ancestry, they also mark the different stages of Gogol's life in terms of "transition": transition, viable in terms of "introjection," with Mira Nair's camera silently witnessing and sharing those moments of both ethnic communal exposure and inward-looking self (fulfillment), and having them bounce back at the protagonist's life-plot as fruitful moments of self-creation. Deployed as cathartic narrative landmarks, the Indian rituals interspersed in the movie, therefore, are reminders of a "return" which is no longer a backward-looking and melancholic trope dominated by the first generations, but an outer-turning "inner gaze" visually, as well as emotionally, borne across global geographies.

In the movie Gogol's personal anguish and discomfort at bearing the mark of his father's life in India, therefore, is itself offered to express a dialectical relationship with the process of self-elaboration and the struggle towards a balancing point: Mira Nair's angle seems to accompany the protagonist along this process, and powerfully supports the emergence of his self-determination and sense of the future.

Notes

¹ The Indian American national imagery and diasporic experience echo Benedict Anderson's conceptualization of "imagined communities" (1983). National communities abroad establish a bond with the motherland both imaginatively and through institutions. This linkage, fostered by decades of active political intervention by the postcolonial Indian government enhanced the figure of the NRIs – the Non-Resident Indians – as transnational intermediaries between India and the U.S, and as "developmental resources" for both countries. See Shukla.

² On the impact of multicultural liberal agendas in the U.S. academy see David Palumbo Liu and Lisa Lowe.

³ In *Mercy in Her Eyes* Muir provides a commentary on the channels of production and distribution of the film, spanning from India (UTV – India United Television) to the United States (Fox Searchlight) and Japan (Japanese Entertainment Film). The film has been internationally acclaimed by awards and nominations in the USA, Bulgaria and the Philippines.

⁴ See, for instance, Chakraborty's analysis on Ashima's role and Bhattacharjee, Dasgupta, Mani about the gendered nature of the South Asian American experience. Prolific discussions on the issue started to emerge in the 1990s, in anthologies and mixed genre works, such as *Making Waves*, *Our Feet Walk the Sky*, *A Patchwork Shawl*.

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