LITTLE INDIAS, PLACES FOR INDIAN DIASPORAS

WHEN AAMIR KHAN, producer and star of *Lagaan*, the first major Bollywood film to be nominated for an Academy Award, was looking for India in the United States in 2001, he went straight to Jackson Heights, New York.[1] There he found over a thousand admiring fans who spilled out onto the street from a music store to create a notable traffic jam in an area known for its congestion. To promote an Indian project for which he had actively solicited funds and viewers from abroad,[2] Khan quite logically sought to make an appearance within the symbolic space of diasporic Indianness that a place like Jackson Heights could offer. Part of what made this moment spectacular was the odd (and engineered) feeling of India coming home to the diaspora. But borders, of nations, of cultures, and of the practices of cultural membership, were not altogether transparent. The financial success of a movie founded on a fable of a small Indian village overcoming the unfair taxes of the British empire (self-consciously likened to the French comic *Asterix*), Khan admonished, would depend on stemming the widespread practice within Indian migrant commerce of distributing pirated copies of Hindi films and music. One could hardly miss the ironies of this Bollywood star articulating such warnings in Jackson Heights, a U.S. community space built on free, almost unregulated traffic in Indianness, where it is always easy to find cheap videotapes of current movies.

On this occasion, it seems that all the conceptually diffuse and physically dispersed productions of diaspora have come to settle on a place. And yet the meanings for culture, community, nation, and space, and the relationships therein, continue to emanate outside the geographical coordinates of the several block radius of that which has come to be associated with the "Little India" of Jackson Heights. In other words, this place is an urban locality, with translocal significations. Beginning to comprehend that set of structural paradoxes, this chapter suggests, is essential to a deeper inquiry into the nature of Indian diaspora.

Indian diasporas, and diasporas more generally, have come to exist with particular force and energy in postwar cities like New York and London. A backdrop of the discussion that will appear here is the postwar transformation of a variety of urban economies by intensified processes of globalization. As sociologist Saskia Sassen has made manifest, there is a distinct character to the capital flows and accumulation patterns that have remade

and newly centralized cities as part of a service-based and free-trade-dependent world economy. Points of concentration, such as London, New York, Paris, and Tokyo, are marked as "global cities" in this scheme.[3] Sassen orients her very important discussion of global cities to changes that began in the 1960s, including the decline of older forms of economic arrangements and the rise of the informational industries that are central to the broader trajectory of globalization. It is those processes, and the different interrelationships they have engendered, that form one aspect of the categorical difference between "world cities" (of an older form of empire, presumably) and "global cities." Of course, as a space caught within the always incomplete transition from colonial to postcolonial arrangements (economic, political, and cultural), particularly as it exists for a population like Indians who are similarly enmeshed, a city like London might be seen as a site of mediation: of the colonial-imperial and postcolonial, of the industrial and deindustrializing, of the modern and postmodern, and of the world city and global city. More squarely within the model that Sassen elaborates is the city of New York that is inhabited by Indians.

The term "global city" has a particularly wide reach for the imagination. In its evocation of the porousness of boundaries, the fluidity of capital, peoples, and goods, and the situatedness of each point in a broader circuitry of influence, the global city may approximate the cosmopolitanism that is basic to the contemporary experience of urban life. Aamir Khan's address from Bombay to New York, which evidences his own subjectivity as a citizen of the world, does not seem so unusual when viewed alongside other everyday occurrences in so many cities. Just as important to the conception of the city is what changes in world economies have enabled, if not compelled: the massive migrations of peoples from Asia, Africa, and Latin America and the consequent constructions of diasporic cultures. The efflorescence of restaurants where international foods are served, the growth of neighborhoods where there are few advertisements in English, and the proliferation of business partnerships between U.S. or British citizens with those in other countries all indicate a new urban cosmopolitanism. The "first world" cities of New York and London have been changed by formerly "third-world" peoples, and consequently the conception of a singularly national space has been troubled. When being black and from Brooklyn is seen, for example, to connote having recent origins in the Caribbean, we might say that a quintessential "American" urban site has been transformed. And when the Little Indias of Jackson Heights and Southall are claimed by Indians all over the diasporas as "theirs," conceptual boundaries of the state have become exceptionally porous.

And so the meanings for New York and London have become increasingly multiple and heterogeneous.[4] This has meant a breaking up of repre-

sentational totalities that were formally if not tenuously held together as central cities of the nation-state. Cities like New York and London became divided, or differentiated, with component parts sustaining discrete social and cultural lives.[5] And that process has had a mutually generative relationship with diaspora formation. While the formation in and through diaspora of the postwar enclaves that I will discuss here have become particular kinds of spaces for the nation-state, ethnic enclaves and racial ghettoes themselves are hardly new. They have existed as differentiated spaces within the modern city for as long as there has been international trade and the movement of peoples around the world. Black or Jewish ghettoes, Chinatowns, Little Saigons, or Koreatowns and the like have contained migrant or minority populations and have also been spaces for tourism and consumption of otherness.[6]

There has long been an imperative to create, in Michel Laguerre's terminology, "minoritized space."[7] Central to the conceptual architecture of that kind of space, suggest Laguerre and others, is a built association between race and place. All of the many responses to either a racialized minority, like African Americans in the United States, or an immigrant group, like Chinese or Koreans, that constitute an epistemology of otherness, correspond to the specific territory, simultaneously physical and symbolic, of those peoples, like a Harlem, Chinatown, or Koreatown. This relationship becomes central to the apprehensions of those outside and, to some extent inside, the groupings. In a wonderful study of Vancouver's Chinatown, Kay Anderson discusses how the relationship between the category of Chineseness, and the site of Chinatown, has been produced in a racializing imaginary of whiteness and that which is "other" to it.[8] Anderson notes that in this process there is "an object for a subject."[9] And similarly, Laguerre writes: "The production of the minoritized subject is concomitant with the production of minoritized space."[10] The way in which a notion of minoritized space establishes a connection here between the place and the individual-group subjectivity, of blackness or Chineseness, is essential to understanding how any of these places conjure forth Orientalist or racialized images for popular consumption and also dynamic sets of social and symbolic relationships within a particular population, and between those populations and a wider society, both inside and outside the nation.[11]

That complex web of relationships is what this chapter seeks to unravel for two "Little Indias," Southall, London, and Jackson Heights, Queens—spaces in which, through which, and for which Indianness is being made. Southall and Jackson Heights thus make vivid the *production* of social space that Henri Lefebvre has theorized.[12] The territory that these places cover is always and already representational as their status as "Little Indias" might imply: connected to the symbolics of diasporic Indi-

anness, bearing the weight of transformations in first-world urban landscapes and their economies, and mapping the enclosure of lived experiences of migrant inhabitants. The cosmopolitanism of Southall and Jackson Heights is at once the cosmopolitanism of the cities of London and New York and the cosmopolitanism of a set of diasporas. And yet, there is a specificity of locality, of what might be provisionally termed as place.[13] What becomes a problematic of place might be cast in this question: What does it mean to be Indian in New York, and what does it mean to be Indian in London? The problematic quickly becomes a deeper dilemma when we consider how to describe such a difference, without reducing the difference to place. Locality can be seen in the languages of indentity, race, ethnicity, and nation, and may not always be fully synonymous with place. In some respects the temporal unevenness of the development of Jackson Heights and Southall permits a sidestepping of the trap of place as ultimate difference.

Jackson Heights and Southall have held together diverse elements, and each in its own way has become a site of community formation for Indian migrants. Beginning in the late 1950s, mostly working-class Indian migrants lived and worked in Southall to build a veritable ethnic enclave, with political organizations, shopping establishments, and the use of public resources. It was not until the early 1970s in the United States that Jackson Heights developed as a sign of Indianness, through the rapid emergence of Indian-owned stores and restaurants on a few blocks in Queens, but with the noticeable absence of large Indian residential populations. What is important to foreground here as a similarity between Southall and Jackson Heights is the association between place and a conception of Indianness, for the migrant subjects themselves and others. But the very dissimilarities, of class, nation, and nature of relationship to the place (residential, wage work, entrepreneurial), may help distinguish how community is lived in the two examples. Group identities are constructed and performed through events specific to each place just as they might appear to be resolutely "Indian."

As nodal points in the Indian diaspora, New York and London are quintessential urban sites to contain the communities of Jackson Heights and Southall. For many years, Indian migrants have made New York and London their homes, places of work, and centers of cultural reproduction. These cities have figured centrally in both the social experiences of Indians and the imaginary of the Indian diaspora, as stories about Indian migrant life circulate around the world. Significant concentrations of Indian migrants in both places have also impacted the public discourses of these cities, as it has become impossible to speak of New York or London urban cultures without in some way acknowledging either the popula-

tions themselves or the foods, art, or musics of India as being integral to the social mix.

But though New York and London each have significant and perhaps even competing importance in formations of migrant culture, they do not exist on the same plane: these cities are differentially located in terms of the time and space of the Indian diaspora. As the seat of the British empire, London was most real to potential migrants, while New York, symbol of the American dream, appeared later in the field of possibilities for those Indians who would not or could not go to England. Looking at these places side by side gives the temporality and spatiality of the "Indian diaspora" a kind of depth that would be missing were we to look only at one period, or at one country; doing so serves the important function of guarding against any temptation to conceive of diaspora too literally, as one large Indian community that would ultimately flatten out the particular and contingent ways Indian migrant culture is lived.

It should be evident by this point in the development of the disciplines of history and sociology, as well as anthropology, that the very term "community" is a deeply contested formation. In the past it has been a unit of analysis for social group formation, and also acquired the connotations of geographic territory, of bounded place. Locales were perceived to create groups of people, just as those groups molded the place. But many have rightly asserted that indeed groups spill over the boundaries of their locales, and the meaning of the locales cannot be solely derived from the internal logics of peoples defined as a group. Nor do overt expressions of commonality mean that groups within a formation necessarily see themselves as linked. Community, then, is a provisional and flexible term at best, and often uttered with some degree of irony. And to be sure, globalization has conferred a special contingency to notions of community.

Perhaps if we can conceive in the stories of the making of community the production of a representational space, then something more dynamic, and transformative, can be found. As Lefebvre has noted: "Representations of space are shot through with a knowledge (*savoir*)—i.e. a mixture of understanding (*connasisance*) and ideology—which is always relative and in the process of change."[14] For unraveling that knowledge, I think that we can read Lefebvre as offering a method of historical reading: "Representational spaces, on the other hand, need obey no rules of consistency or cohesiveness. Redolent with imaginary and symbolic elements, they have their source in history—in the history of a people as well as in the history of each individual belonging to that people."[15] For Southall and Jackson Heights, the production of social space that is a notion of community may be read through the processes by which ethnic, racial, national, and other identities are formulated. Again, the subjectivity of "Indianness" is essential to understanding the place. The argument is not,

of course, that we can extract full meaning from a place, nor that such a place will have any precise correlation with "community," but simply that the question of what happens when place becomes a conceptual site for Indianness, even when it is spilling over, will enable a sharper view of diasporas. In many ways, the limits of multiplicity are elaborated, because the meaning is always in excess of the stories told and the politics enacted. Most of all, this process of reading the *production* of Jackson Heights and Southall will pluralize community, place, and diaspora.

Communities, places, diasporas, and nations, too, become conflated when Southall and Jackson Heights are represented, in shorthand, as "Little Indias." The term "Little India" suggests at once the reproduction of a national (Indian) formation elsewhere, as well as the building of an ethnic enclave within the United States or Britain. "The notion of an India" within first-world countries may assume the aura of the exotic, and, at the very least, the foreign. But in England, a land in which India is thought to be known and in which there is the memory of possession, a "Little India" testifies to the inclusions of empire, though here, of course, the structure is inverted: India is part of the whole, inside rather than outside Britain. In the United States, the discursive production of an Indian immigrant community in the 1970s as a "little India" more closely resonates with that of other ethnic Asian communities, especially Chinatowns. New York and San Francisco Chinatowns always functioned metaphorically for local populations as the other within, and were attended with imaginings of a necessarily exotic origin, in the Far East. Yet they also referred to significant immigrant populations that grew to have a stake in extant understandings of the United States as a multicultural unity. Ambivalences surrounding this idea of the exotic other as both a part of America and from another place outside the nation structured local perceptions of Chinese enclaves, just as they did Irish, Italian, German, and other immigrant ghettoes. In the dominant political language of the United States, the inclusions are not of British empire, but of America. Of course America has always been an empire of a different sort at various critical junctures of racial formation, too. Though open discourses of nation-building, of the "land of immigrants," may obscure histories of exclusions, within and without, postwar U.S. hegemony constructed for itself an imperial role in the world that has had an impact on all its peoples.

Both Southall and Jackson Heights present profound complexities for the question of political and cultural citizenship. Discursively, is being part of a "little India" to be part of Britain, the United States, or India? The equivalence between territory and collective experience that is the basis for the social architecture of Southall and Jackson Heights has different renditions in each case. Largely this difference has to do with the

specificities of place. A transnational subjectivity has been generated from Southall and its particular arrangements of race and class, while that Indian subjectivity itself has created Jackson Heights. Being part of the nation-state of India and feeling affiliated to the United States or America or Britain are propositions influenced by a relationship to the community space, which certainly changes over time. Images of Southall and Jackson Heights transmitted home to India, and the participation of the Indian state in discussions about its migrants in specific places around the world that amount to a kind of claiming, further muddle not only the citizenship of Indian subjects but also the nationality of specific Indian communities.

Southall and Jackson Heights also exist as places with goods to offer residents and visitors. These veritable marketplaces, replete with Indian restaurants, food stores, sari stores, beauty salons, record stores, and the like, evoke images of an exotic bazaar, or of a self-sufficient ethnic community, and perhaps both, through which India as fantasy is made real. The presence of new migrants in areas of London and New York where others have dwelled and continue to live further corporealizes these Indian spaces and produces the negotiations and conflicts that inevitably arise when neighborhoods change. Jackson Heights to a large extent and Southall only a bit less so are spaces of consumption. Indians meet there, eat there, and buy and sell there, and essentially perform an Indianness that functions to consolidate their migrant subjectivities. Through these multiple acts of consumption, migrants become citizens of the local space, of Southall or Jackson Heights (and London and New York), of England and the United States, of the diaspora, as their experiences have a life outside immediate boundaries and perhaps too of India, and as this sense of becoming culturally Indian is translated into maintaining Indian political activity. If in the postwar and perhaps postmodern age consumption qualifies as participatory citizenship, then Southall and Jackson Heights become ideal sites in which to comprehend how nations function, and function differently, for distinctly diasporic actors. When these sites become spaces for ethnics' own tourism, the picture becomes even more complicated.

The production of identities in Southall and Jackson Heights works first in the various constellations of race, ethnicity, and peoplehood in which Indian migrants appear and to which subjectivity is articulated, and second in a diaspora that is a collection of images and a circuitry of movements. In a very basic way, Indianness here in these two communities is indexed, as always, to what is possible in England and the United States, to who else is a minority and why, and how color, class, and citizenship have been historically manufactured through specific contexts. As Southall and Jackson Heights become part of the lore and lived realities of the Indian diaspora, be it in a film like *Wild West* in which local second-

generation Indians caught in a web of social expectations in Southall aspire to country music success in Nashville,[16] or in the plans that travelers from India make to stop off at Jackson Heights to pick up inexpensive goods en route from Kennedy Airport, there are broad diasporic fields that create a sense of what it means to inhabit these two communities.

Jackson Heights and Southall are very much Indian places that signify something for Indians migrants, a range of British and American residents and Indians all over the diaspora, including in the homeland. Multiple and often contradictory meanings have created community spaces that are tenuously held together and in a state of continual formation. Even as Jackson Heights and Southall, for Indians, may connote Indianness, the names of these spaces may circulate in other diasporic imaginaries as locations for, respectively, Colombian-American cultural formations or Somali refugee settlement. Rather separate worlds compose any community and perhaps even more so these two postwar, multi-ethnic, and highly globalized sites. These places may enable us to think about difference, multiply represented, as a defining feature of urban life, just as we comprehend the local as always being constituted by citizens of the world. While places of Indian diasporas may at first glance seem geographically fixed, interpreting their spatiality creates a sense of boundaries and symbolic meanings as always in the process of being crossed. Those crossings, along with their necessary limits, are at the heart of this chapter.

Urban-Suburban Enclaves Both

The origins of the bustling urban-ethnic areas of Southall and Jackson Heights in sleepy rural and white enclaves might give contemporary observers and inhabitants alike a great deal of pause. Early histories of these two areas just outside London and New York seem wholly disconnected from the realities that are experienced in the postwar period. But if we commit to considering the formation of Indian communities in these spaces as historically contingent, the *development* of Southall and Jackson Heights, in which Indian migrant presence comes to have a special role, becomes of great significance. In the case of Southall, the shift from one kind of place to another, in terms of the organization of physical and social space of the area, is one that is submerged in both official local accounts and insurgent and politicized histories of Southall. So, too, do stories of early Jackson Heights, and later more multicultural Jackson Heights, read as narratives of entirely different entities. How and why those divergences exist tells us something about a variety of experiences of place.

Developments of Southall symptomatized transformations of the industrial city. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, developers built a new canal to link the village of Paddington to the main body of London and to stimulate new economic activities in a vast and integrating city.[17] With this canal, manufactured goods from recently developed industries could now be distributed a long way from their production site, and previously self-sufficient villages and towns could now be economically (and socially) linked to central London in efficient ways. Even more important for the formation of the town of Southall, to the west of Paddington, was the construction of a railroad line between Paddington and western England in 1838; the Southall station opened in May 1839.[18]

Prior to these developments, Southall was little more than an isolated hamlet with an intensely local social and economic life. Its integration with larger commercial networks accelerated the shift to a more modern and self-sufficient town. The late Victorian period in Southall was characterized as much by rapid economic and social consolidation as it was by the formation of an intrinsically local, genteel middle class. And through a great number of local histories that constructed Southall as the prototypically bucolic "community,"[19] we can see a palpable anxiety about the area changing and being "corrupted" by influences of the city. As early as 1907, in the book *Middlesex*, local historian A. R. Hope Moncrieff wrote: "There was a Southolt once, which, corrupted by the evil communications of the high-road, has changed its name as well as its nature. I can remember Southall when it could still be called a pleasant country nook, half village, half distant suburb; but in one generation it has waxed to what it is now, a somewhat commonplace outgrowth of London, which for a time was the train terminus."[20] The competing impulses of the romanticization of the local space and the voicing of alarm at its established course defined Southall like they did many other towns and cities that were experiencing rapid cultural and economic change during this period. Over the next few decades, Southall's distinction as a center for progress seemed to flow almost organically from its beneficial location—close to London but not within London city limits—and a tacit acceptance of the role of this area in the economic development of the larger county of Middlesex soon followed.[21]

By the early 1900s, Southall had become a highly industrialized town with a variety of large enterprises, including chemical and foodstuff production. One of the largest Southall industries was a margarine factory.[22] Accompanying these economic developments in Southall were other physical and social changes characteristic of urban centers; people from outside the isle of England began to slowly head to this part of Middlesex County with its increasing job opportunities and perceptible economic progress. In the midst of a depressed economy in the 1930s, Welsh people

and others from western England came to the area in search of employment and diversified a still predominantly white population; later, post–World War II labor shortages attracted some Irish, Polish, and West Indian workers. Changing fortunes after the war as well as the return of area servicemen contributed to a problem of overcrowding. Though a county council proposal to send people and industries to different towns outside of Southall was at first mildly effective, heterogeneity of workers and residents had already become a defining characteristic of the area, even before the massive immigrant waves of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

On the opposite side of the Atlantic, Jackson Heights was part of another kind of urban trajectory. In 1898, the five boroughs of Queens, Brooklyn, Manhattan, the Bronx, and Richmond were consolidated to become the City of New York. The expanding and sprawling metropolis of New York became a site for new forms of industrial production, major population increases through the movement of people from more rural areas toward New York, and the subsequent rise of land speculation for the area. New York became a symbol of progress, as well as of corruption and iniquity.

At the time of consolidation, many of the areas outside Manhattan were still mostly rural enclaves of the landed gentry. Six or seven wealthy families owned land in the area of the borough of northern Queens and in the Trains Meadow section of Newtown that would become Jackson Heights. But rapidly developing industry in Long Island City and the prospects of new transport links between Queens and Manhattan recommended this part of Newtown for commercial and real estate ventures. The planned Queensboro Bridge between midtown Manhattan and industrializing areas of Queens and anticipated extensions of the Long Island Railroad and IRT through East River tunnels produced a frenzy of land speculation and farmer buyouts in northern sections of Queens during the early 1900s.[23]

While Southall's development of residential arrangements had a more organic relationship to changing industrial fortunes, Jackson Heights's social space was deliberately planned. In 1909, Edward A. MacDougall and a number of other prominent New York investors formed the Queensboro Corporation and purchased six farms that totaled 325 acres. They gave their new holding a name: Jackson Heights.[24] Over the next several years, the Queensboro Corporation directed itself primarily and aggressively to the task of making a place out of these newly associated lands. The planned community of the Queensboro Corporation and Edward MacDougall expounded on a specific class vision by serving as an alternative to high rent areas in Manhattan, but catering to those who worked for high salaries in

the city and wanted a comfortable and safe residence for their families. The community envisioned, then, was a highly exclusive one.

But in contrast to suburbs that had begun to be built through swank single-family detached housing, Jackson Heights was developed into a site for the "garden apartment." Built around a large interior garden, the first apartment complex in 1917 was intended to maximize area and yet provide a community space. Indeed, as housing shortages in the second decade of the twentieth century arose, the Queensboro Corporation promoted its apartments as "homes" that could and should be owned; though at first they named it the "Collective Ownership Plan," they later changed it to "Cooperative Ownership." Local historian Daniel Karatzas notes that this name switch was probably made to avoid the socialist implications of the original term.[25]

MacDougall developed and expanded his goal of the planned community in Jackson Heights by shrewdly navigating the social and economic changes of the 1920s. After World War I, the United States economy began to expand, and in the 1920s local Queens industries as well as residential housing grew to unprecedented levels. Changes in Jackson Heights during this period reflected and responded to regional and national developments; Queensboro Corporation efforts succeeded in transforming this area into a vital residential and commercial space. The interests and activities of the corporation had also been fused together with those of the "community." Early issues of the *Jackson Heights News*, a local paper, read like promotional material from the Queensboro Corporation; for example, Edward MacDougall's private business ventures were frequently described as being in the interest of Jackson Heights. An article on the first page of the *Jackson Heights News* in 1929, entitled "Brief History of Jackson Heights from the Investment Point of View," recounts the early history of the area and then concludes: "With such a history and such prospects, it seems safe to predict that real estate investments made at Jackson Heights are both safe and sound and that the immediate future holds out great prospects of continuing the rapid increase in values which has been so marked in the immediate past."[26] The Queensboro Corporation stimulated a variety of economic changes in Jackson Heights in an effort to diversify and develop a "town"; the commercial area around the 82nd Street subway stop, for example, greatly benefited from the corporation's work. The corporation also helped to form a community board to oversee the development of institutions such as churches, theater groups, and civic organizations.[27]

In 1929, the Queensboro Corporation opened new executive offices and celebrated its twentieth anniversary. On the occasion, Edward MacDougall, by now acknowledged to be the founder of Jackson Heights, commented on the area's progress to date: "Jackson Heights is the result

of both a sound financial plan and a housing ideal. It is one of the few examples of these two elements being yoked together successfully."[28] He also laid bare the intentions and effects of the by now twenty-year-old venture: "The Queensboro Corporation is closely related to every resident. Our interests are inter-dependent. Those things which are beneficial or harmful to one are beneficial or harmful to the other. . . . The purpose in the development of Jackson Heights was to provide a restricted home section in New York City where discriminating families could secure homes."[29]

Interdependent interests had purposely created an exclusive and exclusionary upper-middle-class community; the discourse, interestingly enough, was silent on the matter of occupations and work life. In a Queensboro Corporation list of the "Reasons Why Jackson Heights is the Most Attractive and Important Housing Development in New York City," the compilers cited, in addition to "Location," "Transportation," and "Appearance," "Values Protected": "The Queensboro Corporation has followed a policy of reasonable restriction in accepting tenants thus bringing together tenants having ideals and living standards in common."[30] This "restriction" was a euphemism for outright racial discrimination aimed at African Americans, Jews, and probably other white ethnics such as Italians and Greeks. In 1925, MacDougall was known to have told visiting urban planners from abroad that because of the well-planned system of "cooperative" development, "undesirables" could be kept out.[31] But when the Depression slowed down the housing industry, MacDougall could no longer exercise such strategies of exclusion.

When the Depression hit Jackson Heights, the Queensboro Corporation responded with various tactics to stay afloat. They formed the Jackson Heights Merchants Association to organize and consolidate business interests and to shift responsibility for neighborhood maintenance to private businesses. Even more important, huge and luxurious apartments that had held exclusive interest for the moneyed upper and upper middle classes were now marketed for other groups. Apartments were broken up into less extravagant living units and rooms were rented.[32] Though the area eventually recovered financially, the intersection of economic difficulty and general social changes in New York at this early point in the 1930s made Jackson Heights, like most sections of the city, a place of changing demographics and self-descriptions. It is this aspect of the early history that seems to fade in contemporary expressions of nostalgia for another Jackson Heights.

While economic pressures made Jackson Heights more accessible following the Depression, the general vision of a "suburb in the city" remained undisturbed. MacDougall died in 1944, and his son took over as president of the Queensboro Corporation.[33] Despite the change in leader-

ship, the corporation's articulation of community interests persisted in similar form. In 1947, the New York City Housing Authority's efforts to develop public housing in Jackson Heights were roundly defeated by citizens' protests. Residents claimed that such a proposal would have caused the original MacDougall to "turn in his grave."[34] Through the 1950s, with the expansion of an already established commercialism of the area and with generational shifts, many older residents moved out to newer suburban areas in Long Island and Westchester and younger families moved in to replace them.[35] Jackson Heights, like many urban-suburban areas, entered into a new phase of transformation.

It bears repeating that nations and their cities are never fully complete; they are always in a process of formation. The idea of a historical shift is useful less for its proposition that change has occurred than for a description of how and why a particular change enables a new way of seeing. So it is with the "postwar period" of world history that does the work of signifying development on a national level in terms of economic and political transformations, and of suggesting how such changes are articulated to the aftermath of a war that took place in the global arena. And the postwar world is also a postcolonial world, most especially for those in and from India.

As Indians began to newly experience nationality after 1947, the economies of Britain and the United States underwent significant changes. Despite the quasi-isolationist efforts of many United States policymakers and the desire to retrench in British political circles, economic expansion and fissures in national ideology all helped to put cities like New York and London on the road to becoming even more complex, international, cities than before. New York and London already figured prominently in the imagination of the world as cosmopolitan points of destination for peoples, cultures, and capital. The social architecture of these spaces had been anything but static; as cities constantly in formation, London and New York inspired movements of peoples and development in residential and work space that became distinguishing features of what was urban in both countries.

But in the 1950s, London and New York expanded to accommodate industry and residential populations differently. What happened in Jackson Heights's planned community much earlier, which was at that time so distinctive, became in both New York and London a more generalized strategy for containing and controlling the organization of space. Models of cities as composed of cores and peripheries were reworked to support the development of suburbs, residential (often called "bedroom") communities for those who worked in the industrial and financial centers but wanted to live outside them. Increasing populations of nonwhite peoples in the city proper accelerated the appeal of cultivating outlying areas,

particularly for the middle classes. Into the 1960s and 1970s, this would become a more pronounced phenomenon, referred to as "white flight."

We might situate Southall and Jackson Heights at the meeting point of a range of these urban transformations. In areas outside the "centers" of London and New York, these two communities, and their formations, enliven changing notions of the relationship between the core and the periphery, precisely because they contained some of the elements thought to be essential to the city, like multiclass residential life, industry, self-sufficient economic enclaves, and, perhaps most of all, immigrant and minority groups. Beginning in the early 1950s in Southall, and in the middle to late 1960s in Jackson Heights, massive migrations of third-world peoples would further emblematize just how urban these areas were.

Southall—A New Indian Community

British Bobby
Before I came to this country
I heard about this person
This 'British Bobby the Best'
And admired him from a distance

But then I saw him here
In his smart uniform so dear
Killing Blair Peach, my colleague in Southall
Prowling with SUS in hand on blacks innocent
His image still such serene, so versatile
Embodied on his community role;
What happened to that adorable image?
How was it tarnished? I wonder at all.

In my eyes he's still that majestic
Though wounded physically, strong yet in heart
He knows his difficult job well;
Don't despair, dear Bobby, you're still the envy of the world.[36]

This poem by Balwant Naik, a Gujarati-Ugandan immigrant to Britain, expresses the ambivalences of migrant life: effects of the transmission abroad of romantic visions of English icons like the "bobby," the contradictions of British policing of the world as well as the domestic space, and the specific connotations of the police in communities like Southall. And in Naik's mention of Southall a broad set of images are meant to spring to mind—images of immigrant presence, nativist backlash, and community

organization—those that starkly contrast with textual productions of a sleepy rural enclave. But making Southall over as a new kind of social space is very precisely a story that belongs to Indian migrants.

Migrants from India began to arrive in the area around 1957 and permanently changed the face of greater London. Many major industries in the city, and those of Southall in particular, had found themselves with a shortage of workers for their prospering production plants. Woolf's rubber factory in Southall ingeniously began to procure workers from Punjab and presumably the news that work was generally available in Southall was then quickly disseminated outside those initial networks.[37] Heathrow Airport, a short bus ride from Southall, also provided jobs for new residents, as it continues to do to this day. And it was not long before a wide range of Southall area factories that produced plastic, foodstuffs, and textiles began to hire only Asians for particular tasks, and specifically for low-wage, unskilled jobs.

Most Indians of this first stage of migration were Punjabi Sikh, and from the two areas of Jullundhur and Hoshiarpur. Ethnically, then, there was a homogeneity to the arriving population that faciliated both consolidation and continuance. Punjabis who arrived in London during this early period sought to settle at first with other Punjabis; family connections or affiliations of region, language, dress, and culture proved to be a comfort in a still deeply stratified and discriminatory London. Though many might have chosen to go to the United States instead, those Indians in particular who had participated in political activities like student movements faced obstacles above and beyond already strict U.S. immigration regulations, where very strict quotas were still in effect. Activists and others found it much easier to migrate to England in the late 1950s and early 1960s and the flow to Southall continued. As Piara Khabra, later a Member of Parliament, described it: "It was hard to get a visa [to the United States], especially for the ones who had participated in student movements. There was a network of spies who knew. . . . Some people said go to the U.K., from there apply to go to the U.S. . . . Friends picked me up in the airport and brought me to Southall. I became a victim of circumstances and stayed in the U.K."[38] By the early 1960s, then, Southall had become a popular destination for Indians who had been agricultural laborers as well as for middle-class professionals, like Khabra, previously a schoolteacher in Punjab. Most, however, discovered that factory work was the easiest to find and maintain at a time when Indian institutional credentials were thought to be substandard; and so a moderately diverse group of Punjabis became more occupationally concentrated upon arrival in London.

Until 1962, when the Commonwealth Immigrants Act severely curtailed immigration, the Indian population in Southall greatly increased. In figures from the 1961 census that tell a story of dramatic, almost sudden

change, 1,678 Southall residents were Indian-born and an additional 2,500 to 4,500 were British-born Indian children out of a total population of 53,000.[39] The 1962 act theoretically prohibited new immigration, but a massive rush just before institutionalization of the policies and subsequent immigration by dependents, relatives, and brides and grooms of pre-1962 migrants contributed to the development of majority Indian populations in two voting districts of Southall by 1977.[40] That specter of a new majority, with prospects for representation, was certainly one motivating feature of the explosion of responses to make competing claims on the territory of Southall and the narrative production of the space. Groups emerged as new participants in this expanding social arena: the Southall Residents' Association, in association with the British National Party, was founded in 1963 to object to the rapidly increasing Indian population in the area and also to the large numbers of Indian children in Southall schools.[41] More complicated if not more subtle responses can be gleaned from the personal recollections of R. J. Meads, a longtime Southall resident who wrote a number of highly nostalgic and romantic local histories of the borough. In the introduction to his last (1983) book, *Southall 830–1982*, Meads wrote: "The whole of Southall has become badly run down. Our new citizens seem to love bright colours which shows when they decorate their houses—some very good, but not all—and add to this, the rubbish left on the front gardens has a very bad effect on our terrace type streets."[42] Meads focused on garbage left on the curb, and more generally on dirtiness, to denigrate the immigrants. An ethnocentric address utilized the language, and lament, of change, of the main thoroughfare, of the face of the streets, and of other effects of growth. Transformations of the physical and social spaces were linked in this local historian's diagnosis of the times.

What would come to be understood as the cultural dominant of Southall emerged not through studied negotiations between the new and the old, but instead through huge increases of the Asian population and, subsequently, from the ways that these new residents defined Southall life on their own terms. While the Indian and white populations employed a number of strategies to define themselves and react to change, "integration" was curiously absent from that repertoire of means for substantial community transformation.

Despite the difficulties and complications of migrating, by the late 1960s Indians (and South Asians in general) had established a large and formidable presence throughout the whole of England. Labor opportunities in areas like London as well as constraints on economic advancement in a depressed Indian economy had made the process of migration appealing and the pattern of settlement predictable. In a little over ten years, Indians had developed majorities or at least significant minorities in a

number of neighborhoods not only in London but also in other places with large manufacturing sectors, like towns and cities in northern England.[43]

Such rapid changes in the physical appearance of the British population should also be seen in the context of world historical developments, in which the demise of British colonialism had left behind huge populations around the world with a complicated history of national and cultural identity formation. Indeed, one of the many effects of colonialism was the categorization of "brown" and "black" peoples as British subjects, and in effect *as connected* to the British state. The possibilities of "postcolonialism" gave those third-world peoples not only a sense of mobility, but also the occasion to exist in the West while retaining their own national subjectivities. This rich but contradictory historical moment gave rise to manifold complications, including a deep and unprecedented uncertainty on the part of the British state about denying former British subjects entry to the erstwhile center of the empire. Compounding these ambivalences were the actual Commonwealth passports that many of these diasporic migrants still held (in places like Kenya and Uganda), and more broadly the extant claims to Britishness that black populations expressed through a range of activities.

A number of national social and political agendas emerged in the middle to late 1960s to respond to the population changes and new patterns of race relations. They might be broadly categorized under the headings of "race relations management" and "immigration restriction." During this period, ensuring that the rate of growth in the black, or immigrant, proportion of the British population did not increase coincided with and corresponded to the elaborate efforts to assimilate into the English polity those immigrants who could not practically be sent back. Complicated and often contradictory sets of strategies were employed against the backdrop of periodic race riots and insurgent political organization.

National tensions manifested themselves locally in the sphere of education, where the political ideologies necessitated a new praxis. The espousal of a vision of multiculturalism, and of its possibility that many cultures and races could constitute the nation, was new for this era of British history but had its roots in the very colonial empire itself. While in the late 1800s inclusion referred to a country's position as a colony, in the 1960s it served the general objective of the immigrants' assimilation into British culture. And so Southall schools, like those of many districts, introduced new materials on immigrant cultures into the educational curriculum for the general aims of reformulating the nation and facilitating the process whereby immigrants could become "British" (residentially), if not "English" (ethnically).

In purported support of this general goal and in response to other pressures, the local authorities of the Borough of Ealing (into which Southall

had been incorporated in 1965) developed a system of "dispersal" to distribute immigrant students such that no particular schools would have large concentrations of those populations and in any case would have no larger a proportion than 40 percent.[44] Ealing authorities had clearly aimed this measure at the populations of Southall; commonplace wisdom held that busing Indian students out of Southall would prevent the possibility of majority Indian Southall schools and consequently the consolidation of certain areas as "Indian areas."

The ideologies behind the dispersal plan were far more complicated than a cursory glance at the policy would suggest, in ways that come alive in stories about this school experience. By the late 1960s, the British state found itself in the position of having to address vastly different interests. The state's approach to the immigrants came out of tried and true traditions of the colonial empire that employed both the purported protection of culture and more generalized paternalism. Responding political strategies effectively converged around two specific aims: the prevention of segregated schools and the assimilation of the non-natives by instructing them in English ways through the mastery of the English language. The effects of these programs are perhaps even more ambiguous as Sukh Sandher, a local resident who came of age during this period, describes it. He notes that in this 1960s policy of distributing Asians, "there was ESL [English as a Second Language] at first and so the Asian kids ended up in the same classes and afterwards hung out together."[45] Sandher's point highlights the problematic nature of integration in general, as well as the high degree of cohesion in the Indian community in Southall.

Given concurrent struggles across the Atlantic by "liberal" forces against the evils of segregation and "conservatives" allied against the plan to bus children, the British case is interestingly divergent. The government authorities in London that argued for mixture rather than separation occupied a "conservative" and "racist" position in the perspectives of Indian minority communities. In the United States, both black and white students were bused out of their communities to make all the schools in a town or city more integrated.[46] In England, however, the Borough of Ealing bused only Indian students out of Southall to prevent more than 40 percent in those schools. Effectively, the authorities did not require any white children to attend school outside of their communities; the problem was perceived to solely accompany the presence of Indian children. Many said that this policy of dispersal stigmatized Indians and was ultimately racist in its methods and objectives. In 1973, after several years of dispersal, the Ealing Community Relations Council, comprising teachers, social workers, neighborhood activists, and scholars, produced a report that recommended the termination of the dispersal program. One of the reasons cited for restoring the neighborhood-based schools was that: "fear of almost all-immigrant schools is less now among teachers. . . . Educationally, a

Figure 6. A new Southall? (photograph by author)

school consisting only of immigrant children can be as good a school as one containing only "white" children. Most of the immigrant representatives on our committee feel that the attitudes of many of those who insist on dispersal undervalue the immigrant cultures. As one member put it simply: "'to preserve one's culture is an honourable aim.'"[47] That the council-supported commission described opposition to the program of dispersal in terms of "cultural preservation" in some ways mirrors the overall ideological objectives of the state at this time, in the interests of a multicultural England. Teachers and the authorities no longer feared the clustering of these communities. Another reason cited for abandoning the "dispersal" policy was that, to make it fair, white students would also have to be bused (as in the United States) and English parents would certainly protest such a plan.[48] Keeping things separate, it seemed, would maintain the most peace with the native white and immigrant communities.

This moment is also a key to another kind of shift: from the goal of assimilation to the acceptance of strict divisions between residential racial communities in the city. The exaltation of the city as a space with shared meanings across a range of social groups had effectively been worn down, and what emerged in its place was a sense of multiple, even contestatory meanings for what was urban: differentiation (see fig. 6). The transformation, indeed the destruction, of conceptions of the city as a collectivity was activated by new racialized minorities from former colonies. In this

way, third-world and postcolonial peoples were beginning to have a real role, not simply in occupying places of a city in the seat of the former empire, but in giving those very important spaces meaning.[49] The correspondence between race and place, in that notion of a "minoritized space" like Southall, in its locatable Indianness, was now a fact of life that a range of interests coped with.

The significance of the dispersal issue itself extended far beyond the actual process of busing, or not busing, children out of the area; it was a window onto the struggles over the representation and constitution of a community of local concentrations of migrant peoples. Many leaders from a variety of community organizations described the beginnings of their political development through the consciousness of the enormity of political stakes attending the issue of dispersal.[50] Though a number of obstacles were cited, including the long commute to another school and the stigmatization of bused children in the schools themselves, much more important was the manner in which this formalized scattering was employed to dilute the strength of the growing and rapidly consolidating Punjabi Indian community in Southall. Members of that community built arguments centered on both the preservation of immigrant culture and also the power of immigrants to determine the place of their children's schooling.[51]

Given the publicity of matters having to do with education and immigration, the issue of dispersal gave Southall national media attention. The new problems and issues of the urban space—immigration, race, racism, and community incorporation—all came to bear on Southall as part and parcel of London and stimulated an intense focus on the area. In metonymic systems of the popular imagination, Southall became "the city," much as other black areas in London, like Notting Hill, had once been.[52] This marks an important shift in the history of London as well, because Southall had previously been considered to be technically outside the city of London. What was, in many respects, a physically liminal space now became symbolically central. Changes in the kinds of languages used to describe the urban entity and in its actual existence as a geographical space, from more strictly defined cities to large sprawling metropolitan areas, took place around the world; similar changes occurred later in the United States, as the example of Jackson Heights demonstrates. In Southall, however, it is noteworthy that Indians were central to the process whereby new notions of what was urban were being created.

Connections between the "local" space of Southall and the urban space of the nation were continually being made. On November 5, 1971, Member of Parliament Enoch Powell, who was associated with virulent anti-immigrant racism because of his "Rivers of Blood" speech, came to Southall to speak to the Chamber of Commerce. Both the Chamber's decision to invite Powell and Powell's use of that podium to make a number of

general programmatic and controversial points further reflected the centrality of Southall to debates surrounding issues of race and immigration at the time. Powell began his talk with a quote from a *Daily Telegraph* article from 1966: "The best I dare to hope is that by the end of the century we shall be left not with a growing and more menacing phenomenon but with fixed and almost traditional 'foreign' areas in certain towns and cities."[53] Powell then proceeded to compare the British racial situation with problems in contemporary U.S. race relations; he raised the specter of events in Detroit and cited "Black Power" as a real possibility for England. As Powell was suggesting that the name of the British analogue to Detroit "could be Bradford, or Birmingham, or London," a person in the audience shouted "or Southall," to which Powell replied, "Somebody in the audience has said 'or Southall,' and of course you know it's true."[54] Powell's comments continuously moved between local "racial" circumstances and international reference points. For him and others, immigration reworked notions of what was foreign in its collapsing of the spatial divisions of "inside" and "outside"—divisions studiously maintained during the British empire but those that were no longer possible, as Indians and others now occupied places in London.

And social and political developments around the world did affect the shape of the Indian population of Southall in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The particular contours of nationalism in African countries that had recently liberated themselves from colonialism excluded Indians; in 1967 a number of Kenyan Indians left to come to London and eventually settled in Southall. In 1972, Ugandan leader Idi Amin expelled Asian Ugandans following several years of class and racial conflicts between them and black Africans. Because of its role in the settlement of Indians in Uganda and the particularities of Commonwealth citizenship, the British government was forced to accept into England thousands of Asians who held British passports, but this time not without a great deal of public debate.

Like the city of Leicester that already had large Indian populations, the Ealing authorities tried to prevent expelled Ugandan Indians from settling in their borough. In this and in many other racial conflicts during this time, the political lines between "progressive" and "conservative" forces proved hard to draw: overwhelming opposition to additional immigration constructed a set of voter interests to which both the Conservative and Labour Parties were compelled to respond. The main local paper for Ealing that served a largely British white constituency, the *Middlesex County Times and West Middlesex Gazette*, on August 11, 1972, reported on the Ealing-Southall Conservative Association's "call to the Government to halt all further immigration, from all parts of the world, except for the immediate family of people already here. . . ."[55] Another article in the same local paper that day noted that Sidney Bidwell, a much re-

nowned Member of Parliament from the Labour Party who had been touted as being sympathetic to the interests of Indians, was "concerned at the possible effects of increasing numbers coming into areas such as Southall."[56] Later in his 1976 autobiography, Bidwell made explicit the political exigencies of his position, noting that "natives . . . have a fear that further immigration will result in more overcrowding. . . .They fear the social effects. Naturally this has been reflected in the views of many Labour councillors . . . who take the brunt of any problems that arise."[57] The Southall Tenants Association actively tried to stem growing tides of Indians; in August 1972, they warned: "You can't squeeze an extra sock into a full suitcase."[58] But despite the consensus against increased immigration, the East African political situation and its special complexities vis-á-vis the British state could not be resolved in the contemporary public sphere; it had to be administered on another level. Ultimately, the British government was forced to admit thousands of Ugandan Asians; some went to Leicester and others eventually made their way to Southall.[59] And by 1973, the borough of Ealing, which had tried so hard to keep Asians out, would have the highest percentage of the Indian-born population in Greater London.[60]

Discourses of Race, New Formations of Southall

A number of important phenomena converged in middle to late 1970s England to produce a historically specific politics of race: a rise in xenophobia fueled by the growing numbers and prominence of Indian residents in the area, a virulent and explicit racism that manifested itself in physical attacks on Indian youth in particular, and a growing degree of organization of Indians through both cultural and political associations and the daily life of a geographically concentrated and economically interdependent community. What emerged from these many and complicated developments was a city space starkly divided by race and political interest.

During this period, Southall had become, for many, Indian. Not only had Indians achieved sizable populations in a number of Southall districts, but they had also developed a cluster of business activities in a number of the main streets like King Road and the Broadway. Restaurants, sari shops, and news stands, owned by Punjabi Sikhs as well as middle-class Gujaratis from Kenya and Uganda, serviced the growing Indian population and replaced white-owned enterprises in the central areas of town. Consumption was an important shared practice, but it did not fully define the space. Southall had a social life, with theaters, religious institutions, and recreational clubs; it also had work and residential lives. Sikh, Hindu, and Muslim inhabitants maintained discrete cultural spaces so that by no

means was Southall homogeneous. But increasingly, a broader, if not more simplistic production of "Indianness" became correlated to this physical space by worlds outside, including the city of London, the British state and national media, and the Indian diaspora. In the languages for identity that were available within British society at the time, community was territorially defined, and Southall could comfortably exist within such a framework as a majority "minoritized space."

An Indian public, in India, too, gazed upon Southall as an Indian place. In a July 1976 article in the *Illustrated Weekly of India*, Manohar Singh Gill discusses the differences between his first visit in 1967 and another eight years later. He charts, with considerable admiration, the ways that Indians have come to occupy the space. Of 1967, Gill remarks:

> As one came to Southall Broadway, one was confronted by a remarkable scene. While the backdrop was indubitably English—the shops, the chimneyed houses, the grey asphalt footpaths, even the lowered sky and constant drizzle—the actors who moved against this canvas were from another clime. The sidewalks in front of the shops were peopled by every hue and colour of turbans. . . . Most of the shops were English owned, but already the odd board could be seen proclaiming Banarsi saris, Indian home provisions or jewellers. Many signboards preferred Urdu and Punjabi to English.[61]

Here, Englishness is the "backdrop" and Indianness interrupts the homogeneity of the image, popping up as periodic points of color. But by 1976, Gill encounters a rather different spatial organization:

> Much had changed. . . . Nearly the whole of the Southall Broadway is Indian owned. Southall has also acquired a reputation as a bit of a gourmet place. Over the years the Indians have weaned the English away from their insipid food. Today almost all of them love the sight of a curry or a tandoori chicken. There is hardly a town without an Indian restaurant. London is full of them. Peter Sellers has been known to help promote the sales of one.[62]

The importance of this place of Southall being Indian-owned seems to be that it has transformed the canvas that Gill earlier outlined. Indianness is now fully in the foreground, not only physically but also symbolically when British actor Peter Sellers acts in its service. Southall's impact, then, lies beyond its specific territory, into a broader field of signification by which the author, too, is interpellated. What is clear by the end of the piece, however, is that there is an underlying anxiety about multiplicity that remains mostly suppressed but momentarily reveals itself. Gill's closing comment is about a competing discourse:

> When all has been said, Southall remains a complex phenomenon. . . . There are many who are anxious to make Southall a truly cosmopolitan community. This may seem an odd hope in the current situation, but I will point only to

> a single sign for the future. I went to see the Southall school. . . . The Headmaster was English, the most popular teacher a turbaned Sikh from Amritsar. To his West Indian, English, Pakistani and Indian students, he did not seem a strange creature. . . . I asked a little Pakistani boy newly arrived from Karachi how he felt. He was happy as a bean. Why? I asked. "They don't beat you here as they do in Pakistan," he replied.[63]

The question of cosmopolitanism makes a good deal of sense coming from an author in India, where debates about multiplicity have always had a particular force. And yet the answer, in a glib celebration of diversity, seems deeply ironic when read in context, when a young Southall resident had been stabbed to death but a month earlier, and when tensions were in the midst of blowing open. Given the extended process of publication, presumably this article that appeared in July was already in press; and the complete absence of questions of racialization may indicate how profoundly dramatic the changes in the discourse about Southall were to be.

Insurgent political organizations all over London turned their attention to Southall as a site of important conflicts over immigration, race, and community, and reproduced the discursive connections that gave the place a particular kind of meaning. The Campaign Against Racism and Fascism wrote of Southall's uniqueness in the 1970s: ". . . . Nowhere else in Britain does an Asian community now have what Southall provides—its own cinemas (two show only Indian films), travel agents, marriage bureaux, banks, grocers, insurance agents, cafes and clothing and jewellery stores. . . . Asians from all over Britain, and even from Europe, look to Southall for their household, social and cultural needs. Asians feel at home there; it is their town in a very real sense."[64] What this text and others highlighted was the lived experience of an "ethnic enclave"; Indians now lived, worked, and consumed goods within the general boundaries of the area and were seen to inhabit that place.[65] Southall was becoming known to both its own residents and outsiders as a "Little India."[66] As such, it became a haven for Indians as well as a threatening embodiment of the presence of outsiders for native English people, a classic dualism of any minoritized space.[67] The formation of Southall as "Indian" was in production and constantly in transition, because casting it thus marked out territory in what many whites thought of as a space that they owned materially, socially, and culturally. Southall bore the representational weight of geopolitical transitions that were much broader than the changing consumption patterns of the Broadway; they were about national boundaries and postcolonialism.

Two events in the late 1970s represent both the intensity of racial tensions in Southall and the ways in which the negotiations and conflicts in this area produced the insurgent political discourses of a community. The 1970s were a time of deep and violent racial confrontation; it was quite

common for Asians and West Indians to be physically attacked when walking on their own streets of residence, say many. National political leaders of both parties fanned the flames by pointing to immigration as a central problem in English society and declaring their commitment to aid white residents in the struggle to retain the basic principles of "English society," in effect, policies limiting the ability of people from formerly colonized areas to enter Britain. That the climate was racist, then, should be understood as having a number of manifestations in daily political and cultural life, of which only the most obvious were outright physical assaults on minority peoples.

And at this moment a new discourse of community and race was developing, one that is illuminated in an occasion of dramatic conflict: in June 1976 when a young resident, Gurdip Singh Chaggar, was stabbed to death by a gang of white youths just outside the Dominion Cinema, a Southall theater that showed Indian films and hosted community events.[68] Chaggar's death was a flashpoint in the development of Southall and the British Indian community as well. Angry Southallians, and Indians throughout Britain, were incredulous that such a thing could happen how and where it did, outside an institution owned by a respected community organization, the Indian Workers Association. One account, from *India Weekly*, outlined the importance of this event in a charged political context: "Ours is not an immigrant journal; its range of interest is at once more specific and wider; however, the growing insolence of the racialists lobby in this country and the consequential increase in violence against members of immigrant communities, of which the murder of Gurdip Singh Chaggar in Southall last Friday night is a gruesome reminder, are matters of international, not least Indian, concern."[69] Even a relatively conservative Indian newspaper that concerned itself with political issues in India to the exclusion of problems facing immigrants in England saw it as important to comment on this seminal event.[70]

But the moment also exposed cleavages in the community itself, between younger and older Indians and, to some degree, between the different political strategies available to and desirable for those groups. Generational differences began to appear in a community that was no longer recently from India, but now a mature immigrant population with offspring that had been schooled largely if not wholly in England. The youth of this community were Indian *and* British and struggled for a number of political causes with the intention of seeing them through in rather different ways from those in which their fathers and uncles had approached political conflicts in an earlier period, both in England and in India.

An important symbol of the early political organization of the Indian community in Britain was the Indian Workers Association—Southall.[71] The IWA—Southall was formed in 1956, just as the very first Indian immi-

grants began arriving in Southall.[72] The group expressed its original mission in race and class terms: "The IWA was established. . . in response to the white racism facing Asian workers in post war Britain." In its early years, the IWA supported a number of major strikes by black (both Asian and Afro-Caribbean) Southall workers at Woolf's Rubber Factory, Rockware Glass Company, and Chignalls Bakery. Established white unions, including the Amalgamated Engineering Union and the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), turned a blind eye to those strikes and even at times expressed outright opposition to them.[73] Thus the IWA provided a space for ethnic-class politics that no other institution at the time was able to provide.

Beginning in the late 1960s, the IWA expanded their activities to deal with the more general problems that black and particularly Indian immigrants faced in British society. The IWA campaigned against various immigration bills during this period and insisted upon stronger race relations bills. The group also helped to mobilize the community against the busing of Indian children for the government's dispersal policies in the area. Indeed, by the time of the murder of Gurdip Singh Chaggar in 1976, the IWA had become the central organization of the Punjabi community in Southall; its ownership of the Dominion Cinema (beginning in 1967) symbolized IWA's cultural importance in the community. When the IWA planned demonstrations against the murder and against the increasing levels of racism, the organization was acting much as it had over the last twenty years—protesting strongly against local and national governmental institutions and building grassroots support around organized political demands.

But segments of this community had varying experiences of the same event, derived from divergent understandings of what it meant to inhabit this space. Younger Southall residents rebelled against the slow political process in which they perceived the IWA to be engaging. Having suffered the effects of racism on the streets at the hands of both marauding white English youths and the police, the youth organized themselves to act in a manner that was very different from, if not antithetical to, the tactics of older leaders of the IWA. They stoned police vehicles and shops, conducted sit-downs, and took on the responsibility of defending their own community, rather than waiting for the police to play that role.[74] They assumed the proud emblem of the lion, a Sikh signifier for bravery; and their call to struggle became "We shall fight like lions."[75]

Rather than relying on existing political organizations like the IWA, these youths started their own group, the Southall Youth Movement (SYM). Some founding members of SYM cite the initial membership as 2,500 almost at the very start.[76] Composed of informal gangs as the period of "Paki-bashing," or violence against South Asians, came to an end, the

group discussed the problems that remained unaddressed by both existing community organizations and the authorities. As one of the leaders notes: "We were always aware of the patriarchal nature of the community for everybody. . . . [There was] a very real threat of being unemployed [and we were] not prepared to work in our mothers' and fathers' shops, like our elders. We were black British."[77] The subjectivity of "black Britishness" was rather different from that which had developed out of the experience of migration from Punjab to Southall; like their older counterparts, these youths saw themselves as racially marked, both with regard to other white English residents and with respect to the state, but their stance was confrontational and also articulated with struggles of other black peoples, of West Indians in the British context, and of peoples of color around the world.

A more contemporary form of racialization within urban culture was central to the process of differentiation for young British Asians, as well as for the wider public in the 1970s. Particular discursive productions of otherness were drawn on to cope with a whole set of national and local transitions. As hysteria and panic about immigration thrived in many urban areas including London, the image of the young black criminal developed to buttress claims of internal-domestic "crisis." The Asian and West Indian youths therefore walked the streets in a state of vulnerability, not only to white racist gangs but also to the authorities who, in the name of "policing," brutalized and unfairly accused them for crimes that amounted to "disturbing the public order."[78] These youths were doubly vulnerable in this respect. Being "black" at the time, for Asian men, was a response to specific events, a set of ideological apparati (of the state, particularly), and a conjunctural historical moment. It might be thought of as the development of political consciousness in this respect; it certainly has been narrated as such by those who participated in the youth movements of the time.

A number of very complicated and precariously balanced tensions climaxed in April 1979 in what came to be called the Blair Peach incident. The last several years had seen the growing strength of the National Front, a racist and anti-immigrant organization, throughout the whole of England and in London especially. Given the explosiveness of such issues and the unresolved nature of the Gurdip Singh Chaggar murder, the news that the Tory-led Ealing borough council had approved the reservation of Southall Town Hall on April 23 for the National Front catalyzed a host of violent political eruptions in the area. Though a number of organizations protested the event to the authorities in advance of the date, the council claimed that it had no legal reason to deny a rental to the fascist organization and turned a blind eye to the insensitivity and insult of the National Front holding a meeting in a building in the very center of Southall.

Armed with the knowledge that the National Front would indeed be present in Southall on April 23, the IWA held a meeting on April 11 for over one hundred representatives from a variety of political groups in the area to help develop a community strategy.[79] The meeting resulted in plans for a peaceful march on April 22, with all Southall businesses closing at 1:00 P.M. that day, and a peaceful protest at 5:00 P.M. on April 23.[80] While a number of groups disagreed with parts of the strategy, there was a general consensus on the overall objectives and the planned demonstrations.

Until the morning of April 23, all activities proceeded as planned. What followed afterward, however, became legendary for Southall activists and nonpolitical residents. The "actual" events inspired a proliferation of discourses, around community consciousness, questions of history, and desires for autonomy as well.[81] Though groups like the IWA and SYM had had extensive negotiations with the police regarding their activities and plans for peaceful action, the police responded as if such meetings had not taken place. Beginning on the morning of April 23, hundreds of policemen occupied the main arteries of Southall,[82] making any demonstration as well as any movement by residents impossible. The tension surrounding this aggressive act, that trapped people at various points in downtown Southall, the frustration of organizations that had been planning peaceful demonstrations, and the refusal of the authorities to communicate with activists who wanted to defuse the situation contributed to a siege-like atmosphere in Southall. As activists and residents reacted, the police became more aggressive, arresting and brutalizing a wide variety of people. This violence culminated in the death of Blair Peach, a member of the Anti-Nazi League. Whether Peach was knocked over or hit directly in the head by police remains unclear.

In the days following, the mainstream media and the government emphasized the fact that Blair Peach was white and a member of the Anti-Nazi League for two possible effects: to portray the agitation as produced from the "outside" and to draw attention away from the state's role in that violence. Whether the objective was a calculated one or not, it seems clear that possible divisions in the Southall community could only help subsequently to mute anger and possible protest. But the power of Peach's death in the midst of the Southall community, and in the context of an anti–National Front protest, could not be manipulated by the state; it spectacularized the tensions, fears, and disappointments that had been building up for a long time on a number of fronts. The uniting of a number of Indian organizations and the appropriation of Blair Peach as a symbol for wrongs committed against Southall signified "the community's" efforts to see itself within broader fields of race relations *and* resistance. After April 23, huge memorial services for Blair Peach were organized in

Southall and many local as well as national groups began investigations into Peach's death and all issues that related to the violence in Southall.

This event made a huge impression on the Indian diaspora. The dramatic confrontation between community residents and the police underscored the embattled position of not only Southall Indians, but of the Indian population in Britain as well. The immigrant newspaper *Asian Post* asked rhetorically: "What went wrong at Southall on April 23? Is it that the whole idea of a multi-racial society in Britain is wrong? . . . No doubt, the events in Southall have left a sour taste in the mouths of the Asians in Britain."[83] Major newspapers in India, like the *Times of India*, reported on their front pages the incidents in Southall as straightforwardly being about racism.[84] Some newspapers reproduced the language of insurgent identities in England, using the term "black" to apply to all immigrants. The Indian government made a show of trying to enter into discussions with British officials about the treatment of Indians in England, negotiating the fine line between being connected to or appearing to protect its citizens abroad, and intervening in the affairs of another nation-state with which it was seeking to maintain working relations, all of which had a broader public audience, in the geopolitics of the nonaligned movement and other international groupings.[85] Nonetheless, the Indian minister of state for external affairs did meet with the president of the IWA. While in years past, the representation of the situation of Indians in Britain had not been free of racial content, it had also comprised powerful imagery of immigrant success.[86] But by 1979, a discourse of racial crisis had settled on Indians in England. If the murder of Chaggar in 1976 could be linked to scattered killings of immigrants in East London and other parts of England and could, in a sense, be individualized, the events of 1979 suggested a community under assault; this was an image and story that greatly impacted Indians around the world. Many Indians, in fact, drew on knowledge of these 1970s occurrences to justify their decisions to migrate elsewhere, especially to the United States.[87]

Indian Worlds of Jackson Heights

The Little India of Jackson Heights came into being during the period when Southall became a symbol of Indianness abroad in the 1970s. Jackson Heights would also assume the status of an Indian place, though rather differently from Southall, and can be creatively posited as an alternative to a set of images emanating from London. The development of Indianess in Jackson Heights emerged from a particular field of U.S. race

relations, immigration, and national ideology that is in its own way important for migrant cultural formation.

By the 1970s, Jackson Heights was no longer the relatively homogeneous garden apartment community that its founder, MacDougall, had tried so hard to cultivate and maintain. The political and social changes of the 1960s transformed Jackson Heights even more dramatically than the Great Depression or the 1950s, generating issues of racial and ethnic formation and debates on community membership that had previously been suppressed, particularly, and surprisingly, around relations between African Americans and whites. Conveniently enough, Junction Boulevard effectively divided African American and white ethnic populations in Corona and Jackson Heights, respectively. Of this physical manifestation of social separation, Lee Dembart wrote in 1969: "I've yet to see a black face in that playground, though there are now a few in the schoolyard of PS 149 in the Northridge co-op project. Of course Northridge is close to Junction Boulevard, the Mason-Dixon line of Queens."[88]

Demographic shifts wrought by the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act could not be contained in the same way. After 1965, migrants from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia began to arrive in large numbers to urban areas of the United States. New York City became home to many of these peoples, and the expensive rents of Manhattan recommended areas like those in Queens, in which there were also two major airports. By the early to mid-1970s, Columbian immigrants had established a strong presence in Jackson Heights and built up new sections of the local business scene. During the same time, Jackson Heights became a primary site for the more informal economy of the drug trade; many Colombian drug cartel leaders were found to be in Jackson Heights and the area was colloquially described as "Coke City, USA."[89] Structural changes in the economy made the drug trade more attractive, most especially as companies like Bulova, a large Jackson Heights employer, closed down in 1978. The simultaneity of the entry of drugs and immigrants into Jackson Heights produced deep hostilities among older white residents and created some fodder for new forms of racism, in which the figure of the (now, brown) immigrant became commensurate with crime, filth, and drugs, both for people who lived in the area and for the city as a whole. The "ethnic mix" was perceived to be no longer working, if it ever had, in places like Jackson Heights. One longtime resident used language familiar to students of urban change when he described the area in 1975: "It used to be a very refined section with a very fine class of people. It's deteriorating, that's the right word for it."[90]

A countervailing factor in this Queens racial formation was the middle-class status of many Latino migrants. The transformations that Colum-

bians and others from Latin America became attached to in Jackson Heights also exemplified changes in the urban economy. Recent arrivals built stores and restaurants rather than factories, and they did so on a scale that surpassed the capacities of the few "Mom and Pop" shops that had been owned by local white residents in the past. One young Jackson Heights resident, Martin Gallent, put it this way: "People just assumed that they were undesirables, at the bottom of the social scale, because they spoke Spanish. But these people are middle income. Make no mistake about it—they have money."[91] Race, ethnicity, and class were arrayed in new ways for post-1965 immigrants and for the relations that resulted between older and newer residents of Jackson Heights. As former citizens of the third world, these new arrivals were racialized in ways that prevented their inclusion in narratives of "whitening" into which longtime Jewish or Greek inhabitants had already been incorporated. Yet in terms of class position, all these groups bore some resemblance to one another. Racial conflicts over space that occurred in Jackson Heights in the 1970s would bring about languages different from those developed in other historical black-white spaces, like the transformations of Harlem at the turn of the century.

New middle-class formations in the Latino population were echoed in the development of an Indian business concentration in the 74th Street area of Jackson Heights. This particular "ethnic enclave" represented a different kind of Indian community from the Southall example, precisely because it was structured around the ownership and development of commerce in the area. From the very beginning, the development of the community there came not through working-class organization but from the aspirations and imperatives of middle-class formation. Especially in the 1970s, Indians in the United States could not readily inhabit established racial categories of "Asian" or even of "minority." Formation of the place of Jackson Heights, then, resonates imperfectly with the idea of "minoritized space."

After the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act, people from India, too, arrived in New York City in large numbers.[92] But Jackson Heights, unlike Southall, was not the first point of destination of Indian immigrants to the country. Many of the earlier immigrants were students and professionals who settled in and around the Manhattan area. A number of Indian areas sprung up, particularly in midtown Manhattan, in the Lexington and 26th–28th Street area and lower down in the Canal Street area.[93] But the residential concentrations began to shift by the early 1970s, from Manhattan to Queens, to many different areas across the borough including Jackson Heights, Flushing, and Elmhurst.[94]

The emerging ethnic market of Queens Indians was different and distant from the Manhattan providers of Indian goods on Lexington Avenue

Figure 7. Sam and Raj—a legend in the diaspora (photograph by author).

and Canal Street. One story, of insertion into and a kind of production of the space of Jackson Heights, distills a number of specificities of Indian migration to New York, and to the United States more generally. In 1973, Subhas Ghai and Raj Gandhi started an electronics store, Sam and Raj, on the corner of 74th Street and Broadway in Jackson Heights (see fig. 7). This store would become legendary for Indians all over the diaspora, functioning as a kind of shorthand for easy access to Indian goods. The location and specifics of the store were hardly arbitrary; indeed, the two engineer founders deliberated over where to undertake their business venture for a long time and finally decided that Jackson Heights's convenience with regard to the subway would draw in the increasing Indian populations from all over Queens. Ghai says that the rapid move of other Indian stores like India Sari Palace and Sinha Appliances to the area was also envisioned from the very beginning: "It was our dream."[95] Interestingly, the planned nature of the Indian community on 74th Street in the 1970s was not unlike MacDougall's dreams of the early 1900s. Jackson Heights, perhaps like America itself, provided a place in which to realize fantasies of development and community, for a range of actors who had specific class resources and who therefore could tap into a tradition of entrepreneurialism. The contrast between social formations in Jackson Heights and those of Southall at this time are also striking. Just as immigrants in Southall in the 1970s were developing a racialized understand-

ing of themselves and their space, Jackson Heights merchants were planning to make money.

Sam and Raj was wildly successful, marketing and selling highly desirable 220 volt electronic goods that could be used in India and Europe. Electronic goods had a particular appeal within a community that came of age and was consolidated during the rapid increase in communications all around the world and in particular between "third world" regions such as the Indian subcontinent and places like the United States and Britain. Many nations, such as those in South and Southeast Asia, declared their participation in a global economy in the late 1970s and early 1980s through competent and efficient production of electronic and computer goods. In addition, electronic equipment has had an important place in the history of this community with a complicated relationship to the homeland and place of residence. Electronics has allowed migrants access to visual and oral ethnic pleasures, like videos of Hindi films and tapes of Indian music, and enabled cultural commerce both to and from India. It is a kind of "symbolic good," with a range of purposes beyond its literal usage. Ghai and Gandhi in 1973 were brilliantly prescient. What is also evident is how Jackson Heights as a consumer space worked very differently from Southall. Never did electronics goods, even in the 1970s, figure so prominently in the broader patterns of visitors or inhabitants going to the Southall marketplace. Southall was better known, as the 1976 *Illustrated Weekly of India* article suggested, for restaurants. In a more contemporary moment, in the 1990s to the present, Indians continue to think of Jackson Heights as a place for reasonably priced televisions, DVD players, and the like, while that image does not have the same relevance for imaginings of Southall.

By 1980, the majority of the 74th Street block between Roosevelt Avenue and 37th Avenue housed South Asian shops. Because the goods—food, clothing, jewelry, and electronics—had relevance for the cultures more widely of people from Pakistan and Bangladesh as well as from India, non-Indian South Asian merchants also occupied stores in Jackson Heights, and almost all the businesses began to market themselves to "Indo-Pak-Bangla" constituencies. The area eventually included over a hundred stores in the area (on the block itself and a few surrounding blocks) that were South Asian–owned, and/or had almost exclusively South Asian clientele.

While some Indians lived in the immediate Jackson Heights area, they did not originally make up a residential majority or even a significant minority in the extremely diverse area, which to this day continues to have large Jewish, Greek, Italian, Colombian, Korean, and Japanese populations. The 2000 census registers 6.1 percent of the Jackson Heights population as Indian, with 1.4 percent Bangladeshi, 1.1 percent Pakistani,

and an additional 0.1 percent Sri Lankan.[96] Over the years, certainly, more Indians and other South Asians have moved to Jackson Heights, perhaps partly drawn by the Indianness already in the area; more than that, however, it is clear that South Asian increases in the nearby population have to do with general demographic trends, of more South Asians on Long Island.[97] From Jackson Heights's early years and into the present, most shop owners have lived on other parts of Long Island or in more well-to-do areas of Queens, while their employees (those not related to the owners), have come from other parts of Queens. The resident and working population in the area that has frequented the shops is not necessarily consonant with the actual day-to-day running of 74th Street, most strikingly in its phase of "becoming Indian."

The more homogeneously concentrated population of Indians existed (and continues to exist) on shopping days; in that way, the "community" is both transitional and transient. The interests converged around the distribution and sale of consumer goods (like saris and appliances) and services (such as those in an Indian beauty salon). The market was an ethnic one, almost completely South Asian and in large part Indian; it was at once specific to the Queens Indian population that could most readily access the area and dispersed, extending outward to reach Indian populations throughout New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Indian migrants and their children in the tri-state region, particularly those from suburban areas where Indians are more dispersed, often speak of visits to the area to experience Indianness.[98] And because of its proximity to both LaGuardia and Kennedy International Airports, Indian travelers en route to India and other places in the diaspora stop off at Jackson Heights to pick up goods. Thus the local space of Jackson Heights could also become a point in the more international circuitry of mobile Indians, of the diaspora.

Just as Sam and Raj gained international name recognition and seemed to symbolize one trajectory of Indian migration—to the U.S.—and one that is entrepreneurial in nature, so too did Jackson Heights become a famously "Indian" area, a place that has substituted for broader historical and social experiences. The representation of 74th Street, even to the locals, has always had a broad, diasporic meaning. Popular renderings of such an "Indian community" occurred with reference to both the shopping area and to the shoppers that existed there every day and most especially on the weekends. Indian and American shoppers alike are surprised to hear that Indians did not make up the residential majority in the area. This space of Indianness diverges greatly from communities built by workplace or residence, and the social life that is normally an indicator of shared interests. And importantly, the power of Jackson Heights for outsiders lay in its evocations of an exotic otherness. Representative articles in the *New York Times* about the area carry titles such as "Bazaar

with the Feel of Bombay, Right in Queens" and "India Casts Its Subtle Spell on Queens."[99]

The production and consumption of ethnic goods in Jackson Heights shuts off at six or seven o'clock. The community—a "virtual community," perhaps—is akin to a kind of performance, with a beginning and an end, and regulated by the customs of U.S. consumer capitalism. Ethnic production is based not in local investments, in the city blocks or the residential neighborhood, but in symbolic and material renderings of India for the most part and of Pakistan and Bangladesh secondarily. International references shape the consumer experiences in Jackson Heights and construct a set of identifications for all parties involved. The temporary, almost fleeting nature of that consumption of Indianness in Jackson Heights has made for a very different type of ethnic community from that of Southall, or even Italian or Irish neighborhoods in Brooklyn and Queens. In the ways that consumption defines this space, the place is itself commodified and turned into spectacle.

The reaction of Jackson Heights's older white community members to the rather rapid commercial development of this Indian area has been, if not always overtly hostile, then certainly never altogether welcoming. Community members have been quick to notice the increase in traffic on 74th Street and the surrounding blocks and have highlighted the resulting parking problems. Given the high volume of people going through the area and the prevalence of restaurants and more "fast food" establishments, white residents have complained most about the trash left behind by a business sector that by and large leaves at night. The language of censure, then, reserved for immigrant presence in Jackson Heights, has code words at its core that are familiar in descriptions of the "racial other": overcrowding and dirtiness. In Jackson Heights itself, Indians have met with stereotypes that Colombians encountered less than a decade earlier. And, despite the huge differences between the Indian presence in Jackson Heights and say, Southall, there are strong descriptive similarities in the responses from older white communities across national boundaries. That the older resident population may be more heterogeneous in Jackson Heights does not necessarily unmake the equation; in this case, ethnically diverse communities—Jewish, Greek, Italian—become consolidated as white, in response to forms of otherness with different racial content.

While Colombians in Jackson Heights were assumed to perpetrate crimes and engage in drug activities, the Indians there were held responsible for attracting a certain measure of crime to the area. The presence of highly valuable goods such as gold jewelry made the area vulnerable to

Figure 8. 74th Street, the Gold Corner (photograph by author).

burglary (see fig. 8).[100] In the mid-1980s, a rash of break-ins and thefts were largely ignored by city authorities and in 1988 an important set of realizations and misunderstandings arose around a particularly egregious robbery.[101] Various merchants felt that the police did not come in time, that the investigation had been far from thorough, and that this shortfall of attention was related to the area being composed mostly of South Asians. As one merchant noted: "We thought as immigrants we were not being heard."[102] Unspoken, perhaps, in this lament, is the phrase "and as nonwhite residents." Though there was an emerging critique of the relationship of this Indian area to the whole of Jackson Heights, and particularly of its racialized nature, migrants were loath to identify themselves as racial subjects, preferring the term "immigrant" to capture the complexity of their feelings of disempowerment. In conversations in the early to middle 1990s, many merchants specifically avoided the term "racism," largely because they saw themselves as different from Indians in places like London. It does seem by this time that Jackson Heights shop owners, and Indian immigrants in the United States more generally, have become more accustomed to languages of race, particularly as those languages have become more nuanced and complex in recent years. The complicated development of responses of Indians in Jackson Heights to questions of race illuminate the way that the Indian diaspora in the United States more generally has been very much caught up in the transition, if

not transformation, of what the relationship between class, color, and nation would be.

While shop owners may have shunned race as a marker of identity, they were willing to participate in more collective action as a result of the 1980s robberies. They founded the Jackson Heights Merchants Association and went to the police station in a procession to protest the police inattention. The organization bears little resemblance to the one created by the Queensboro Corporation in the early 1930s, yet apparently uses the same name unknowingly. And it is different from the Indian Workers' Association in Southall, certainly in its origins. The Jackson Heights Merchants Association was founded as—and continues to be—a local "ethnic organization" composed of South Asian merchants with stores in the 74th Street district whose interests revolve around the smooth flow of commerce in the area. This investment in the workings of the market has not precluded "political" activities; the march to the local police station is just one instance of a willingness to be confrontational with established authorities. The Jackson Heights Merchants Association's ethnic interests originated in migrant subjectivity; formulations of migrants in response to questions about an agenda describe the need to develop a "voice" and "unity." These interests were further structured around economic power and interests; one merchant was quite direct about how the group had consolidated: "After all, we pay high taxes."[103] The ways in which early markers of community, through participatory and representative institutions, developed in Jackson Heights and Southall enlivens the difference between these two spaces. As migrant and merchant subjects organized around commerce in Jackson Heights, a commercial organization would come to best represent their interests. Indian migrants who built a community in 1960s Southall were *workers*, whose first institution was working-class in nature. Though each space appeared to be one for Indianness, evoked even as "Indian community," what originally held Southall and Jackson Heights together were very different modes of being: class, race, and social life on the one hand, consumption and commerce on the other. That these modes become more confused in time testifies, perhaps, to the very basic tenuousness of the notion of community itself.

The Jackson Heights Merchants Association developed a clear sense of the outlines of *its* community, hiring private security people to guard against car break-ins (which had become a barrier to encouraging people to come into Jackson Heights from wealthier and presumably safer suburbs) and also to provide area information on where to obtain certain goods or services. And the organization also spoke to the anxieties of local residents by exhorting members to keep the sidewalks outside their stores clean and have their garbage properly carted away.[104] In these ways and others, the organization laid specific claims to the territory it inhab-

ited; it maintained and protected the streets and guided people through its own vision of what that space was for. It did so in a model of a planned and almost gated community, though the Indian area of Jackson Heights existed in the midst of tremendous diversity. The ethnic boundaries erected by residence and workplace in Southall did not appear in Jackson Heights, and therefore more deliberate means had to be employed for the project of delimitation.

The Jackson Heights Merchants Association established itself politically in a range of ways, acting as an interest group in local and city politics by developing relations with the police, administrative bureaucrats, and members of congress, and by encouraging authorities to look upon this area as highly profitable in terms of tax revenue and as highly marketable for its presentation of "Indianness" in a multicultural landscape. Members of the organization, like many Indians of middle- and upper middle-class status, now cite these positive aspects of the 74th Street enclave continuously in response to any insinuations of their having been the victims of racism. Significantly, the intersection of immigrant consciousness and business perspective produced the imperative to be seen ethnically, and yet to willfully disregard any implication of having been victimized racially. In this model social harmony is presumed to emerge spontaneously from "doing business," a rather time-worn cliché of American life.

Recent proposals to develop a more formal identity for the 74th Street area of Jackson Heights have further complicated some of these issues. For a number of years, the area's shop owners and customers have supported a plan for the city to officially name the area "Little India"; and when Mayor David Dinkins visited Jackson Heights in 1992, he declared his support for the motion.[105] The merchants and residents see the proposal as positive, in a way that speaks again to the specifics of Indian ethnic formation in the United States. Indian Americans applaud the growing public acknowledgment of their presence. This reveals as much about the current, and hegemonic, discourses of U.S. multiculturalism as it does about the particulars of this Indian place. Having a "Little India," for the merchants, is commonly seen as a step in the direction of recognizing Indian American interest groups and Indian American localities within the political and social fabric of the United States.[106] One shop owner remarked that the area becoming a "Little India" would "give [the occupants] some image and sense of belonging."[107] What this formulation suggests is that despite the fact that the term "Little India" conjures the exotic India, and the structure of another nation, the formal establishment of an enclave proffers membership in the United States. If this "Little India" is a minoritized space on the level of a Chinatown of years past,

the term "minority" seems to acquire positive rather than negative connotations in the construction of merchants.

It is clear in discussions with those who occupy, if not literally inhabit, Jackson Heights, that models for citizenship are being actively reworked. Here, commerce and consumption become important modes for being part of a place, even of a nation, but construct only one field in which desires for a place in the world are worked out. Connections with India indeed figure centrally in the lives of those post-1965 Indian migrants who *trade* in Indianness, who provide goods that are Indian, as well as in the imaginative worlds of those who go to Jackson Heights to eat Indian food or buy Indian clothing. While platitudes abound about the essentially American aspects of this correlation between capitalist commerce and cultural identity, it is hard to overlook the fact that the fundamental reference points exist in a place far away from the United States. In fact the very diasporic cultural citizenship evinced by a place like Jackson Heights results from the special characteristics of postwar and post-1965 migrations as well as through new consumerist and service economies that define Sassen's "global cities."[108] The idea that to consume is to belong to a place is unsettling to a whole range of popular observers and scholars alike, particularly as what is "public" and what is "private" comes into a sustained interdependency, through the structures of the marketplace that create and satisfy personal and group desire.

Even though Jackson Heights seems less territorially defined, the sense of belonging that merchants have elaborated and the claim to the space that was activated in 1973 with the first electronics shop have led to discord, suggesting that ownership of the area still matters. During David Dinkins's visit to 74th Street, many Indians remember longtime white residents shouting, "Indians go back."[109] These "locals" continued to actively oppose the development of a "Little India," saying that this area was also theirs and that to call it "Little India" would obscure that fact. Older white residents largely constituted the Community Board, which is the main bureaucratic apparatus responsible for approval of a neighborhood appellation; the board cited parking problems and the lack of cleanliness in the area as reasons for stalling approval of the proposition.

In 1988, several of these local residents founded the Jackson Heights Beautification Group. Its activities, including neighborhood cleanups and programs to remove and prevent graffiti, converged around the general goals of "beautification" and "preservation." More directly, members sought to develop a community to revive, in their own words, "Edward MacDougall's vision of an urban suburbia in Jackson Heights."[110] The organization supported the development of a central section of Jackson Heights (that did not include 74th Street) to be designated as a historic district. But the group also rather emblematically opposed the naming of

74th Street as "Little India." At stake in the contest between those for and against the designation were two very different social and aesthetic visions of the city: a particularly commercial type of urbanization, on the one hand, and on the other, the nostalgic rendering of what was old, stately, and pristine. Here we might see the residue of an age-old American quandary: support for free (and even reckless) enterprise, but a desire to ban such commercialism from "private" lives. When asked why "Little India" would not be a positive development for the area, an active member of the beautification group noted that tour buses and the like would only contribute to the traffic problem.[111] The development of an Indian enclave in Jackson Heights, then, proceeded with a troubled and rather distant relationship to these nostalgic and aggressive stories of the future of the area. Indian commerce on 74th Street, like Latino and Korean markets to the north of the area, symbolized to white residents "deterioration"[112] and formations deviating from a more established and palatable history of their place.

A resident noted that these kinds of conflicts enable the media representation of an Archie Bunker racism in Queens communities like Jackson Heights.[113] To what extent the existence of divergent narratives of this space is evidence of racism might be considered from a number of different perspectives. Contemporary distaste for the influx of new immigrants and the consolidation of space for ethnic activity certainly has had a rather different content from the outright housing discrimination of the past that prevented Jews and Italians from renting in the original garden apartments. The coordinates have changed: the racial other is a group perceived to be economically advantaged; immigration has joined racial mixing as a persistent urban fear; and the subject himself is now "brown" rather than "black." Nonetheless, the language founded upon inside/outside metaphors (rather than models of assimilation), employing code words like "filth" and "overcrowding," contains a kind of fear and loathing that is at the heart of both older and newer forms of racism. Recent adaptations of racist ideologies include both a change of terminology and also a shift from assertions of biological inferiority to critiques of behavior of the group in question. While no white resident would claim that Indians or Colombians are lesser people, at least in public, they would and do criticize the cosmetic changes (trash and garish signs) that immigrant presence has brought to their places.

It is this new form of racism, more subtle perhaps, but nonetheless steeped in familiar metaphors of xenophobic distaste, that dominates contemporary urban and national politics, in the name of immigration controls and the further isolation of poor communities. And yet, simultaneously, there is an increase in racial attacks, a not altogether unfamiliar product of deep racial conflicts in society. Perhaps even more significantly,

the immigrant (and African American) middle classes are the targets of this new racism, which is often but not always distinct from racisms faced by the working-class "other" (in Southall, for example) or the poor African American. In these cases, contestations over symbolic space and territory recast the black-white problem and the immigrant problem as influenced by the intense intermingling of cultures, as in Jackson Heights, rather than the attitudinal dysfunctions of modern society, as seen in the television series *All in the Family*.[114] But much as the Jackson Heights resident's efforts to distance his community's responses to the new immigration from the kind of crude racism of an earlier period ring hollow alongside an obvious anxiety about new residents, so too should the demurrals of Indian merchants to a kind of racial subjectivity be placed in a context in which identities are often conferred by broader social conflicts rather than freely chosen.

Changing Communities, Changing Nations

The space of community, nation, and diaspora was continually being made in Southall and Jackson Heights; stories about these places, like those about all places, perhaps, were thematized by change. We can see Southall and Jackson Heights as important symptoms of transforming postwar social relations. Constructions of Indianness in both Southall and Jackson Heights were temporary and open to greater flexibility and contestation, particularly because all sorts of differences were provisionally subsumed in that conceptualization of subjectification, be it Punjabi or Sikh in Southall, or, in the case of Jackson Heights, hailing from Bangladesh or Pakistan. As England, the United States, and India, too, experienced new forms of nationality based on complex models of coherence and division, Southall and Jackson Heights bore the marks of difference. Any sense of community therein, like Indianness, was always in a fragile state, threatening to come apart, just as it had come together.

Coming out of the very dramatic events and rapid developments of the 1970s and early 1980s, Southall was a web of political and social organizations that were commonly self-identified as "community groups" but that constituted an incredibly complicated and variegated field of resistance. In addition to the 1979 conflict between the police and the Southall community in the Blair Peach incident, as well as the flurry of united political action at that time, the turn of the decade brought to light a number of social and cultural changes that had been taking place in Southall. Southall had become a good deal more diverse in socioeconomic terms. It was no longer a mostly working-class community as it had been in the 1950s and 1960s; instead it was diversified, and divided, by the

growth of a business class that owned shops and small industries in the area. The relative prosperity of Southall with regard to outlying areas (as well as the consciousness of "difference") produced in a number of sectors of Southall a kind of self-sufficiency and insularity. But on another level, the increase in women and the coming of age of a new generation raised in Britain had taken place in the context of social and political developments in London that included youth and feminist movements as well as the onset of a deep economic recession. New Southall populations that were constituted by interests other than the original migration, or the class position of that first group, developed identities that were assertively articulated with both the British context and also with nations and social formations outside England. Various groups in Southall developed both ethnic and diasporic understandings of themselves.[115]

The Southall Black Sisters, was formed in November 1979, seven months after the Blair Peach incident, out of concern that questions of Asian and Afro-Caribbean women's oppression were not being adequately addressed in other black political and feminist organizations.[116] As Gita Sahgal, a founding member, describes it: "The group was born in the heart of the struggle that followed the murder of Blair Peach by the police. It was a (rare) moment of community unity in the face of attack by fascists and the police. Yet, by founding a black women's group, we challenged the right of male community leaders to speak for us."[117] The Southall Black Sisters addressed a range of women's issues and, in particular, domestic violence in the community. Their actions in a number of key cases involving the physical abuse and/or death of women in violent households often placed female members in opposition to established male-dominated organizations. More broadly, these women critiqued an idealized vision of a cohesive and unified community. By interrogating the definition of "community," the Southall Black Sisters was one of a number of groups that exposed fissures and differences in Southall itself. And by consciously drawing on solidaristic notions of "blackness," and appealing to multi-ethnic and multiracial constituencies, this group participated in the broader production of new identities that departed from regionally specific (Punjabi) or nationalistic (Indian) forms of difference.

The story of the development of the Southall Black Sisters has had reverberations through a range of political communities all across England and even the Indian diaspora. In one narrative of progressive black feminism, a group that emerged from local circumstances was transformed into having national importance, able to negotiate the deeply charged political landscape of race.[118] The maintenance (to this day) of the term "black" as a signifier not necessarily for identity but for coalitional political activity explicitly distinguishes this kind of politics from a national-ethnic focus on being Indian, Punjabi, or a religious minority, that which

is more familiar in a more contemporary moment. There is a surprising familiarity with the Southall Black Sisters in the Indian diaspora, especially among South Asian diasporic communities in North America invested in questions of solidarity.[119] The way in which Southall Black Sisters could move into a political-symbolic space beyond locality may be another indication of the porous boundaries of Southall itself.

In the early 1980s, two progressive groups were created to deal with the persistence of racial discrimination and the need for information on immigrant rights, the Southall Monitoring Group and the Southall Law Center. While the Southall Law Center handled more legalistic issues, the scope of the Southall Monitoring Group was broader and included all kinds of casework such as domestic violence, immigration, labor issues, racial attacks, political campaigns, and emergency service. In confronting all these issues, the Southall Monitoring Group experienced the limits of locality, too, as it discovered that basic services and support as well as a political language to address questions of racial violence were needed at a national level.[120] In changing its name to the Monitoring Group more recently, while retaining its offices in Southall, leaders and members made connections between places, like west London, Birmingham, and northern England, and spaces, such as those of the racial subjectification of middle-class Punjabi Indians and violence directed at Pakistani Muslims.

While there were many consciously activist organizations in the 1980s, the emphasis of the IWA in Southall shifted. By 1980, the IWA was widely considered to have become primarily a service organization, geared to questions of social welfare and linked to the goals of the Labour Party.[121] And certainly, recent utterances by leaders of the IWA created narratives of change that stressed "pragmatic" goals and issues centering on the day-to-day needs of immigrants with regard to local and national government regulations.[122] As Piara Khabra noted: "The IWA [could] not remain organizing marches, lobbies, etc."[123] Balraj Purewal, later an IWA board member, was more forthright: "The majority had a socialist agenda [in the past] and now it is increasingly more capitalist."[124]

For several years, Khabra has been the general secretary of the IWA, as well as a Member of Parliament from the Labour Party for the Southall area; other members of the executive board of the organization, however, include those loyal to the Conservative Party. A large percentage of current IWA members are owners of small Southall shops as well as larger area companies. The increasingly diversified constituency of the IWA signifies not only the organization's political shifts, but also changes in what were once called community interests. Attention to race and ethnicity, as the two have become increasingly conflated in that space, has been decoupled from a pro-worker agenda. Directed toward immigrant issues, the IWA still stands in opposition to many functions of the entry-regulat-

ing British state and to local authorities who continue to unfairly distribute government resources. The persistence of frank racism in such spheres of activity formulates and concretizes IWA members' identities as Indians in a country that is perceived as hostile to difference. The historical and discursive relationship between that ethnic identity and a particular class position effectively glosses over the transformations in Southall and in England as a whole that have made the easy correspondence between Indians and workers spurious.

According to Purewal, the label that empasizes the Indian *Workers* Association has been retained for national and international name recognition, but I would argue that there are other important ideologies of British class and racial formation at work in this choice. The experience of being an immigrant, and a racialized immigrant at that, often overrides what might seem to be a relatively privileged position financially in the host society. Ideas of class position for those immigrants as well as for others emerge from the contradictions inherent in what may be experienced as disempowerment rather than capital advantage. Rethinking models of class formation to encompass immigrant social experience helps us to understand the situation of Indian shop owners in Jackson Heights too, who often describe themselves as workers of some sort or another. For many immigrants from the third world, who no longer work in heavy industry and who may have access to small sources of capital to start their own businesses but whose actual wages may be lower than even minimum wages in first-world countries like the United States and Britain, traditional groupings of the working and middle classes may seem constrictive. But it may also be true that categorical spaces become better defined when recent Indian immigrants in a city like New York increasingly appear in formally working-class occupations, like construction and factories, and when they populate the low-wage service economies, such as staffing the restaurants at Kennedy Airport. In England, too, poorer Indians have arrived on the scene to diversify a high-income population. Though these demographic shifts might make it easier to identify class position, they make more difficult any attempt to establish the parameters of belonging to a particular kind of place.

Multiple ways of envisioning life in Southall came to a crisis in the late 1980s around the emergence of youth gangs.[125] At the time, older residents of Southall and local state authorities began to identify the presence of informally organized groups of youths in Southall. The description of these gangs took a variety of forms. Some local activists tried to recover these occasions of youth culture for progressive purposes, other political groups were worried about the impact of highly masculinist and sometimes violent forms of organization among disenfranchised youths, and the state embarked on a campaign to racially and culturally pathologize

this emerging Southall generation.[126] The youth of Southall, as a generation, had indeed suffered in a number of ways the pressures and possibilities of the building of "community"; as an editorial essay in a publication from the Southall Monitoring Group suggested, "An entire generation of our youth has grown up in the shadow of police penetration and saturation, in addition to the pressures which their parents have experienced of racist harassment and violence on the streets and racist discrimination . . . . In addition, they have . . . emerged into life in Thatcherite Britain to experience mass unemployment, the dismantling of the welfare state, and the institutionalising of repressive trade union, immigration and civil liberties legislation."[127] The development of gangs and the reading of all insurgent (and perhaps Westernized) youth as potentially threatening set in motion another phase of stereotyping this community, as it has for other minority communities in economically depressed societies.

Indians' connections with India have grown, not only in Southall but all over Britain. While Southall Asians had always maintained a range of affiliations at home and abroad, the struggles around community empowerment in the 1960s and 1970s necessitated local forms of ethnic and racial identity, which foregrounded the importance of a specifically racialized immigrant experience in England. Various shared experiences of place within the Southall Indian community had facilitated the development of oppositional solidarities in groups like the Indian Workers Association. But greater diversification in terms of class and Indian origin opened up space for new kinds of affiliations in the 1980s, and produced a shift from race to nation as a mode of subjectivity, particularly among certain segments of the Southall Indian population.

These local developments coincided with India's increasing role in the activities of migrant communities all through the diaspora. The international activities of Indians in Southall had a broader context outside Britain. Issues of communalism and religious fundamentalism took hold in the area. In 1984, following Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's storming of the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab, and her subsequent assassination, movements for the creation of Khalistan, a Sikh homeland, as the political ideal was called, erupted into a global domain. Khalistani groups were very active in Southall and produced deep rifts in the local population, leading to the murder of a newspaper editor and other violent acts.[128] Many Sikhs supportive of Punjabi sovereignty articulated a more diasporic set of interests that disassociated them from broader Indian constituencies in Britain, from other Punjabis in Southall, and also from issues specific to the community that had once been so powerful, like racial and ethnic discrimination. Communalism has certainly impacted second- and third-generation Sikh, Muslim, and Hindu British citizens. Older migrants profess shock at incidents of violence, at pubs, and on the streets

during religious holidays and other social events, between youths of different ethnic groupings, speaking nostalgically if forgetfully of a time when such tensions did not exist. Expressed divisions, however, have achieved a particular intensity in the last couple of decades, as youths have become isolated and alienated by continual economic downturns and have turned to religious identities as a salve (however deceptive).[129]

The continuing influx of new populations into Southall in the 1980s served to make the area much more diverse. Growing numbers of Somali refugees have settled in Southall, and the black African and largely Muslim characteristics of this population have introduced a number of complications into both internally produced spatial identities (Southall's sense of itself) and images of Southall from the outside (see figs. 9 and 10). The move from a mostly Indian to a more multicultural self-definition has not yet taken place; the Somalis are poorer and politically unorganized and many established Indian organizations have been slow to see themselves as responsible for what may be new and different interests.[130] On the first level, there is a wide gulf between the category that these newer, mostly Somali, but also some South Asian Southall residents occupy, that of "refugee" or "asylum seeker," and the term "immigrant," which was applied to Indians, even to East African Asians who had come to England to escape discrimination in black nationalist nations.[131] Embedded in the different lived experience of those categories is the fact that Somali refugees, while able to receive government benefits, are unable to work; in a community space originally built by an association between work, residence, and race, this creates a distinction around the new minority, and interrupts one possible form of membership. On another level, Somalis are black African Muslims and therefore are necessarily racialized differently from Indian and Pakistani residents. In an "Asian" space, Somali refugees are "other." Unlike other recent immigrants from India and Pakistan, Somalis can never fully assimilate into that space as it is currently defined.

Responses of older Southall residents to new populations, Somali and other South Asian, expose the limits of the discourse of tolerance and multiplicity.[132] The most common language creates a bounded spatiality, maintaining that an already overcrowded Southall cannot absorb asylum seekers.[133] Resonances of this contemporary set of reactions with earlier anxieties of white residents around the entry of Indians into Southall remain submerged, or at least unacknowledged. Many Southall Indians now fully seem to "own" their space and lament encroachment by others. New populations that also include poorer South Asian workers are seen to contribute to the cheapening of Southall; several residents pointed to the quite evident proliferation of cheaper imports from places like China, brought and facilitated by younger male Indian and Pakistani arrivals, displayed in stores along the main streets of the area. Some residents note

Figures 9 and 10. New populations, a changing "Little India" (photographs by author).

that this development has created a form of consumption that used to be the mainstay of other less affluent areas of London. Interestingly, these comments demonstrate a contemporary identification with Southall as a middle-class rather than working-class space, despite a history of an association between this place and working-class life and politics.

Life cycles have created obvious changes in the stories told about Southall. While the youth generation always receives more discussion in scholarship about changing communities, the elderly in Southall are an important new category that also deserves attention. The British government and local authorities fund institutions for older residents, like the Southall Day Centre and the Milap Centre, where men and women meet to create their own communities, rather different from the ones outside. A women's discussion and activities group at the Milap Centre provides a primer on the heterogeneity of Southall, including a Gujarati leader, members from East Africa and Punjab, and a variety of Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims.[134] Jostling about sustained ethnic differences, including very serious discussions about caste identity, gives way to a pronounced attachment to Southall as a shared community space, particularly when the issue of recent arrivals arises. In those moments, the most common story told is a nostalgic one about the former shared interests and ethnic harmony of Southall; moments of discord drop out of that narrativization, through a sense of racial otherness—mostly around being "Asian" or "Indian,"—and a profound alienation from British society remains embedded in understandings of how the space of Southall was built.[135]

What is changing in Southall, then, is not just the balance of populations, but also the sense of what the space means. As groups within become even more differentiated,[136] and as different categories of identity (being Hindu, or Sikh, or Punjabi, or a refugee) obtain purchase on the imaginations of residents, the cohesion implied in a "Little India" threatens to disintegrate. But moments of cohesion or the production of a community in the face of British racism or immigration policy or cultural alienation were always ephemeral and constructed for very particular conjunctures that quickly passed. Constitutively, or thematically, then, this is not really very different from the performances of community that a site like Jackson Heights might suggest. Cutting through these spaces are alternative desires for membership, one form of which is illustrated by the responses to a survey by Southall's planning board four years ago asking whether residents wanted another grocer or something else in the area. Overwhelmingly residents noted that they wanted the (prototypically) British department store Marks and Spencers. Rather than see this moment as a desire for assimilation, we might consider how respondents may be articulating a sense of the alienation of their locality from a national space, particularly in historical circumstances where certain forms

of consumption are akin to membership in a broader collectivity. Similar debates have taken place around the demands among Harlem residents for chain grocery and clothing stores and movie theaters in their community. And decreasing attention to Southall is evident in the fewer urban resources that are being allocated to the area, resulting in a visibly shabbier public space, and, necessarily, a re-ghettoization.[137]

The further development of "Little India" in Jackson Heights has, like Southall, experienced greater diversification and ever more complex renderings of identity production. Most important for the case of Jackson Heights is the changing demographics of South Asian communities in the area. Originally, largely Indian-owned shops serviced mostly Indian customers; later the market was expanded to include other South Asians, as both distributors and consumers of ethnic goods. But as more middle- and upper-middle-class Indians have moved to suburban areas outside New York City and developed new residential and commercial enclaves there, the Jackson Heights market has apparently shrunk, at least in the eyes of some merchants. Over the last decade, Edison, New Jersey, has become host to its own commercial-social enclave with all the goods and services of Jackson Heights, including higher-cost items like designer clothes and more expensive restaurants, the very goods that may be particularly well suited to the middle-class Indian populations in the tri-state area.[138] A similar development can be seen in the decreasing importance of Devon Avenue, an Indian area in Chicago, for the rapidly suburbanizing population.[139]

In the mid-1990s, many predicted that the "Little India" of Jackson Heights would disappear, just as Canal Street and Lexington Avenue faded as important commercial centers for Indians. At that point in time, the proposal to name the area "Little India" could be read as a strategy of survival in the face of such demographic shifts; the designation could have helped to develop a commercial monopoly. Certainly it has helped that Jackson Heights has broadened its constituency beyond middle-class Indians who moved out to New Jersey to include more recent Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslim immigrants, whose economic position has not changed as quickly as that of their Indian counterparts and who still by and large live in urban areas around Jackson Heights.

But surprisingly, just as the strength of Jackson Heights's commercial markets has been somewhat on the wane due to the dispersion of ethnic consumption, the representational power of the space of Jackson Heights as a "Little India" has increased, indeed has become more centered. When Sakhi for South Asian Women marched against domestic violence, it did so in Jackson Heights.[140] Protests against discrimination against South Asians, particularly after September 11, 2001, have been held in Jackson Heights; a whole range of political organizations—mainstream and pro-

gressive—spend time talking to people on 74th Street. Aamir Khan's visit is but one instance of the sense of Jackson Heights as an important symbolic space for a range of South Asians. The development of that representation, again, lies in the particularities of the place.

It is significant that Jackson Heights was never racked by the same kinds of ethnic cleavages or religious fundamentalisms that so divided Southall. The shift from an Indian consumer constituency to an explicitly "Indo-Pak-Bangla" market occurred almost soundlessly. No Muslim or Hindu merchants express unwillingness to work in the unified interests of the Jackson Heights Merchants Association. No Pakistanis or Bangladeshis have even publicly declared opposition to officially naming the business district "Little India." A 1999 article in the Indian immigrant newspaper *India Abroad* on the marking of the Hindu holiday Diwali in Jackson Heights depicts the area as specifically resembling Indian landmarks: "Seventy-fourth Street between 37th Road and 37th Avenue . . . took on the look of New Delhi's Chandni Chowk on Oct. 17 when the Jackson Heights Merchants Association (JHMA) presented its first annual Diwali Festival."[141] It is striking that the Jackson Heights Merchants Association had not celebrated Diwali until 1999, despite an obvious investment in being seen as Indian, in cultural terms, since the early 1970s. The rise of religious identities within Indian communities may be seen to have played some role in this relatively recent shift in the Jackson Heights Merchants Association's strategies, as well as having a probable social-psychic effect on individuals who constituted the group. Indian jeweler V. N. Prakash's remarks, that "although Diwali is identified as a Hindu festival, Pakistani and Bangladeshi businesses took part,"[142] may imply that there is little threat of a serious conflict in publicly celebrating a Hindu holiday.

But nonetheless, given the high pitch of religious and national conflicts in immigrant South Asian communities in the United States as well as the membership of many shop owners in nation-based ethnic organizations, like the Federation of Indian Associations, such a seamless web of common ethnic interests in Jackson Heights is astonishing. The explanation lies in the most apparent difference between this type of immigrant community and that of Southall; as Jackson Heights coheres around economic advancement, regional, cultural, and religious differences are subsumed by a kind of aggressive capitalist democracy. Unlike the confluence of residential, cultural, and political affiliations that draw out a focus on subnational identities in Southall, the singlemindedness of a group like the Jackson Heights Merchants Association keeps at bay any possible interruptions to the smooth flow of commerce.

In a twist, the easy interactions among South Asian business people in Jackson Heights may be seen to echo colonial contentions of the democra-

tizing effect of the marketplace. None other than J. S. Furnivall wrote in 1948: "A plural society is no ordinary business partnership. In form it is also a political society and is, or should be, organized for 'the good life,' the welfare of the people. . . . its function is solely economic, to produce goods as profitably as possible. . . . As a social institution also it has an economic aspect, and is concerned with both production and consumption, supply and demand."[143] Merchants in Jackson Heights do indeed have both economic and social functions, as do those who consume goods and perform Indianness there. The wonder of this spectacle of a "Little India" lies in the blurring of boundaries: of commercial and psychic and of public and private. And, like colonial formations, Jackson Heights is constructed through a certain diasporic sensibility; the space exists between and through being Indian and American, too. Pakistani and Indian merchants may live apart and have little reason to socialize together during the Muslim holiday of Ramadan or the Hindu holiday Diwali, but they do come together to reap the rewards of the American dream, as do those consumers who wield dollars to buy all kinds of goods in an unrestricted fashion.[144] And much as local residents might evince distaste at the particular form in which these blocks of Jackson Heights appear, and the city-state apparatus might have contradictory approaches to the space, how can one deny that this bustling Indian entrepreneurial community that serves as a meeting place for some of the most affluent immigrants in the region is a ringing testament to ideologies of American ascent?

So amazingly, this "Little India" seems to hold together even as it continues to diversify within a dynamic and stratified racial context. This is not to say that Indianness in Jackson Heights does not undergo processes of transformation; in fact, it may be the very transformations that give the space a continued life. A recent article in the New York newspaper *Newsday* cites merchants' laments on the cultural decline of the sari, which has cut into sales of traditional goods, among Indian women and their children who must be cast as potential customers.[145] But more working-class South Asians who require different clothing, second-generation Americans who seek alternative goods from their parents, and a greater number of non–South Asian Americans all now visit Jackson Heights and create different meanings for this "Indian" space. Jackson Heights is still the major site for the consumption of musical and video entertainment; on any given weekend day, South Asian Americans of a variety of backgrounds, middle and working class, with roots in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Guyana, and Trinidad, flood the audio and video stores to purchase the latest bhangra tapes and compact discs. And the resident population of Indians in the area seems to be growing; on the one hand, immigrants are attracted to this place for the ethnic conveniences it offers, and on the other, they are simply increasing their numbers here as they are in other

Figure 11. Jackson Heights theater (photograph by author).

places in New York. The future of Jackson Heights, then, lies in the multiple and new meanings that changes in the migrant diaspora, in the United States and all over the world, will construct.

Nodes of New Diasporas

In the 1992 film *Wild West*, British Indian actor Naveen Andrews and Indian American actress Sarita Choudhary portrayed young Southallians intent on starting a country music band. The fable ends with their trip to Nashville to make an unusual dream come true. And in May 1999, I watched a World Cup qualifying match between Peru and Chile, with a fully Latino audience, at a Jackson Heights movie theater devoted to showing Bollywood films (see fig. 11). What these cultural moments rep-

resent, in rather fantastic form, is that the physical or imaginative borders of any site of the Indian diaspora are not fixed, stable, or unitary. Even the "Little Indias" of Southall and Jackson Heights cannot fully contain the "Indian communities" for which they serve as loose metaphors. Walking around the "Little Indias" of Jackson Heights or Southall today, one can perceive boundaries, of Indianness and of community, being permeated by otherness. Though on one end of Southall, on the Broadway, one still sees mostly Indian residents and shoppers, a closer look reveals clothing and other goods that seem Indian but were made in China and young male workers in those shops recently hailing from all parts of the subcontinent. Shifting to the King Road side of town, what is first apparent are several cafes filled with Somali refugees, and large groups of Muslim men spilling out of mosques. In Menka, the first Jackson Heights beauty salon to offer a variety of "Indian" services, like henna application and the threading of unwanted hair, one hears as much Spanish spoken by the clients as any South Asian language; Latina women in nearby areas have heard of these now fashionable practices and crossed streets that were previously rigid markers of "Indian" territory, entering into another cultural space. And more and more African immigrants seem to be going in and out of jewelry stores, looking for the reasonably priced twenty-two karat gold that is the fetish of many Jackson Heights third-world cultures. Both Jackson Heights and Southall are, yet again, in a moment of transformation at the beginning of the century.

These constantly shifting spaces illuminate the fact that Indianness is never a completed process, and that simultaneously ethnic, racial, and national formation is always being constructed alongside other cultural possibilities, of multiplicity. And so it is rather unsurprising that the places associated with Indianness too refuse to stand still. Though the specific sources of change are cast differently in each case—in Southall the major issue seems to be about asylum seekers, and in Jackson Heights new South Asian populations is the most obvious—the underlying problematic seems to be diversification. And in each case, diversification is simultaneously ethnic, racial, and class-based. What makes that structural and historical conjuncture so interesting is the fact that Jackson Heights and Southall were built through such divergent processes of urban development, migration, and race and class formation. It seems perhaps that globalization, which might be seen as the backdrop for transformations in each place, has created a simultaneity across differential Indian diasporic space and time.

Nonetheless, this chapter has shown how it is important to consider the ways that New York and London have offered Southall and Jackson Heights alternative forms of diasporic cultural possibilities, not only because they have been different kinds of cities, but also because they have been differently embedded in the time-space of the Indian diaspora. Those

distinctions have enlivened not only specific histories of movement but different processes of becoming Indian. Agency is a complicated question here, as Punjabi Indians first claimed Southall as theirs, and Sam and Raj made good on their dreams in Jackson Heights, while all migrants were caught up in the trends of the postwar, postcolonial world. Functioning as "Little Indias," Southall and Jackson Heights have served as important if hastily assembled representations of the nation abroad, for non-Indians and Indians alike. These places are invested with a range of meanings that converge on this terminology and that may seem flattening or reductive of complexity. For those people looking for a place for Indianness, I have suggested in this chapter, here are the localities of Jackson Heights and Southall. But nothing is solely produced at the local level: such sites always have translocal significance and meaning.

I would propose that these Little Indias affirm *and* challenge other nations. An intense attachment to locality in Southall militated against a particular conception of Englishness, precisely because it actually remade the practice of inhabiting a British urban place in race and class terms. Jackson Heights affirmed America through its self-inclusion in stories of entrepreneurial success and the community of marketplace, while at the very same time it reinstated Indianness as a primary source of identification. In this way, it produced a transnational sensibility of what it might mean to be American, a sensibility that has become increasingly common among post-1965 migrant-minority populations within cosmopolitan cities like New York. Both "Little Indias" might be multiply mobilized, to explain the question of what role postcolonial migration may play in the more general and complicated representation of race and ethnicity in postwar histories of the United States and Britain, to ponder the limits of any space of community, and to realize a fantasy of urban cosmopolitanism. In other words, the places of Jackson Heights and Southall do some of the cultural and theoretical work of the space of diaspora itself.