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CHAPTER 16

Diasporic Longings

Bakirathi Mani

This chapter theorizes diaspora as a social and political construct that dynamically shapes the form and content of Asian American literature. Using diaspora as a framework for reading Asian American literature expands the geographical and temporal contours of what it means to be Asian American. Rooted in the Greek words "to disperse" or "to scatter across," the word "diaspora" is frequently applied to immigrant communities who share a cultural or national origin and who are located in multiple parts of the world: for example, one can speak of Chinese diasporas across Latin America, Southeast Asia, Europe, Australia and North America.[1] Yet the experience of diaspora is differentiated across class and gender, sexuality and language, voluntary and involuntary migrations. There is no single construct of diaspora, nor is there a unified experience of what it means to be in diaspora. Indeed, it is precisely the heterogeneity of immigrant experience that makes "diaspora" an important point of entry into Asian American literary studies.

To speak of Asian Americans as diasporic subjects is to consider the transnational relationships of memory and history, capital and community that shape first-, second-, and third-generation Asian immigrants in the United States. Rather than sharply differentiating between first-generation immigrants who leave their countries of origin (who may be identified as "Asian") and second and subsequent generations who are born in the United States (and are thus named "American"), rewriting immigration as a story of diaspora emphasizes the social, economic, political, and psychic ties that immigrants construct to Asia *and* to the Americas. Such real and imagined ties change over time, and immigrants' understanding of their own identities (as documented or undocumented immigrants, as exiles or resident aliens, as US citizens or as national subjects of one or more countries) changes as well. Diaspora reconfigures who and what we know as "Asian American," moving away from linear narratives of departure and arrival, toward transnational categories of belonging and

citizenship. As Anita Mannur and Jana Braziel write, "part of the value (and necessity) of thinking about different diasporas in transnational settings is that it offers an alternative paradigm for national (or multinational, transnational, and even postnational) identification."[2]

In Asian American literary criticism, "diaspora" has been used since the 1980s and has circulated widely as an analytical construct since the 1990s. Whereas late-twentieth-century US popular and political culture was marked by multicultural ideologies of American citizenship (in metaphors such as the "melting pot"), "diaspora" captures another way of thinking about Asian Americans: as immigrants who are subject to multiple projects of nationalism, and therefore as immigrants who embody diverse forms of citizenship. The increasing prominence of diaspora as a method of thinking through Asian American social formation emerged in tandem with the changing demographics of Asian immigration. While the 1965 Hart–Celler Act is often cited as inaugurating a wave of middle-class, professionally trained Asian immigrants, the arrival of Southeast Asian refugees following the US war in Vietnam, along with adoptees from China and South Korea, as well as an increasing number of Asian immigrants who arrived through family-sponsored green cards during the 1970s and 1980s, created a socially and economically diverse population of Asian Americans. The construct of diaspora enables us to think of these multiple forms of immigration as co-constitutive and as a dynamic process of movement over time. Asian American diasporas are created through histories of war, nationalism, and decolonization in Asia; through the desire of some Asian immigrants to participate in, or return to, their homelands; and through acts of memory, as immigrants remember and dream of family members elsewhere. The overlapping social, political, and affective relations that immigrants embody in relation to countries in Asia and to the United States shape the terrain of diasporic longings.

Immigrants also create new narratives of identity and community through the production of diasporic locality. Locality is "the practice of establishing relations of affinity with those seen as similar to oneself, often through a series of shared experiences and rituals."[3] The production of locality highlights how immigrants from a variety of national, linguistic, and ethnic origins create new forms of community that are based on shared experiences of racialization as Asians in the United States. Reading Asian American literature for narratives of diasporic locality enables us to understand how immigrants of diverse racial, gender, and sexual identifications create shared experiences of belonging. Indeed, the term "Asian American" is itself a production of diasporic locality. Rather than identifying as

Korean American, Indian American, or Japanese American, identifying as "Asian American" demonstrates how a heterogeneous group of immigrants can establish affective relations of belonging to each other as diasporic subjects, and at the same time establish political claims to the US state as a minoritized racial group.

Theorizing Diaspora

What is often rendered as the "diasporic turn" in Asian American literary studies was marked by the publication of a number of landmark critical essays from across postcolonial studies, Black cultural studies, feminist studies, and queer studies in the 1990s. In "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," Black cultural theorist Stuart Hall argues forcefully against essentialist constructs of national, racial and ethnic identity, and emphasizes instead the productive disjunctures that constitute diasporic experience.[4] Hall contends that "Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think [. . .] we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production,' which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation."[5] Feminist theorists Lata Mani and Ruth Frankenberg build on Hall's framework by attending to the politics of location. Instead of the word "postcolonial," which ties immigrants to histories of decolonization in their countries of origin, they propose the word "post-Civil Rights," arguing that immigrants to the United States in the late twentieth century establish claims of belonging in the aftermath of Civil Rights struggles led by African Americans.[6] (Mani and Frankenberg pointedly do not address the relation between Asian American postcoloniality and US settler colonialism). Other scholars explored new forms of ethnic and cultural identity generated by the experience of diaspora. In "Is the Ethnic Authentic in Diaspora?" R. Radhakrishnan takes up the familiar quandary of first-generation immigrants who bemoan the lack of cultural authenticity in their second-generation children, and who therefore attempt to reproduce stable ideas of national cultural heritage in them. Radhakrishnan disputes the very idea of an authentic ethnic identity, which he contends disregards histories of religious and political violence in immigrants' countries of origin. Ethnicity, in his view, can never be authentic, whether it is shaped by a nostalgic turn to one's country of origin or by the adoption of new cultural practices in the United States.[7] Literary theorist David Palumbo-Liu asserts that the experience of diaspora is not simply about feelings of belonging, for such feelings are always structured by immigrants' relation

to the state. He writes that it is necessary to "link the psychic to the political, the imaginary to the real, as it is precisely that dialectic relationship that gives each diasporic instance its particular identity in relation to ethnicity."[8]

Several volumes of memoir, fiction, and poetry published in the early to mid 1990s took up the "dialectic relationship" between Asian diasporas and the US state as a key thematic concern; many of these edited collections focused on the experiences of post-1965 South Asian immigrants. These include Women of South Asian Descent Collective's *Our Feet Walk the Sky* (1993), Rakesh Ratti's *A Lotus of Another Color: An Unfolding of the South Asian Gay and Lesbian Experience* (1993), Lavina Dhingra and Rajini Srikanth's *A Part, Yet Apart* (1998), and Rajini Srikanth and Sunaina Maira's *Contours of the Heart* (1998).[9] Delineating the expansive spatial and historical trajectories of diaspora across the late twentieth century, these volumes include voices of first- and second-generation immigrants from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India, as well as South Asian diasporic writers from East Africa, the Caribbean, and Southeast and East Asia. The queer and feminist commitments of *Our Feet Walk the Sky*, in particular, present an alternative to dominant representations of the heteronormative and patriarchal nuclear family in literary representations of South Asian Americans. The writers call for alternate narratives of diasporic community, forged via matrilineal lines of descent, by creating families of choice rather than affiliating with families of origin, and in alliance with other racialized minorities across the United States. Each of these volumes pushes back against narratives of Asian immigrant assimilation, and reconfigures the place of "home" in Asian America.

Queer Asian American literature and cultural criticism in the mid 1990s also took up the category of diaspora to redefine notions of home and homeland. In her reading of the Sri Lankan Canadian author Shyam Selvadurai's novel *Funny Boy* (1996), Gayatri Gopinath reconsiders the binary relationship between "a Third World home of gender and sexual oppression in order to come out into the more liberated West," showing how Selvadurai's story "reveals a far more complicated relationship between travel, sexual subjectivity, and the space of home as a household, community, and nation."[10] For queer diasporic subjects like Selvadurai's young protagonist Arjie, who prior to migrating to Canada experiences profound sexual desire within the spatial context of his home (itself shaped by the conditions of civil war in Sri Lanka), "a queer diaspora instead recognizes the past as a site of intense violence as well as pleasure; it acknowledges the spaces of impossibility within the nation and their

translation within the diaspora into new logics of affiliation."[11] Similarly in *Q&A: Queer in Asian America* (1998), the editors David Eng and Alice Hom deploy queerness as a method to interrogate the relation between the nation-state and diaspora. "Queer Asian America," they write, "demands more than a deviant swerving from the narrow confines of normativity and normative heterosexuality; it requires subjecting the notion of Asian American identity itself to vigorous interrogation."[12] Through community-based interviews that articulate queer and trans identities across first- and second-generation Asian immigrants, and in scholarly essays that locate queer Asian American sexualities within early histories of Asian immigration to the United States, Eng and Hom redefine the political and psychic linkages between nation and diaspora. Across these works, queer and feminist scholars show how the analytic category of diaspora redefines what we know as "home" and "abroad," and how diasporic subjects tie the past together with the present.

As each of these publications suggests, the category of diaspora produces a conceptual and methodological dilemma for Asian American studies. If we are to narrate Asian Americans as a diaspora, how can literary representations of Asian American diasporas bind together multiple histories of the state: the histories of empire and decolonization in Asia that shape Asian Americans as postcolonial subjects; the ongoing practice of settler colonialism in the United States, within which Asian Americans are settler subjects; and histories of US immigration policies that define Asian immigrants as racialized American subjects?

Reading Diasporic Longings

One of the earliest representations of Asian Americans as diasporic subjects is Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (1976).[13] As a gendered narrative of diaspora, the novel reorients linear trajectories of Asian immigration toward the real and imagined stories of women, in China and in the United States, who shape the narrator's sense of racial and cultural identity. In the chapter "No-Name Woman," the narrator's aunt conceives a child outside of marriage; for her transgression, she is persecuted by fellow villagers, and ultimately jumps into a well with her newborn child. But instead of deliberately forgetting her aunt, as the narrator's mother instructs her to, the narrator resurrects "No-Name Woman" as a figure of her own feminist longing: as a woman whose actions and desires produce an alternate representation of what it means to be Chinese American. Likewise the narrator's mother, Brave Orchid, tells her daughter

of her own migrations: from unpaid work in her husband's house in rural China, to paid work and upward class mobility as a doctor in Canton (now Guanghzou), and back to unpaid domestic and professional labor within the family laundromat in Sacramento, California. As she listens to her mother's experiences, the narrator weaves together histories of anti-Asian immigration legislation in the United States with anti-imperialist, nationalist, and Communist political revolutions in China. Throughout the novel, narrative itself becomes a means of unfixing and transforming Asian American histories. For although the narrator accuses her mother of confusing history with memory – "I don't want to listen to any more of your stories; they have no logic. They scramble me up. You lie with stories. [. . .] I can't tell what's real and what you make up"[14] – these "talk-stories" are central to intergenerational practices of embodying Asian American diasporic locality.

Narratives of diaspora also shape the conceptual and formal innovation of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictee* (1982). As a prose text, *Dictee* is marked by rupture and absence; as an original work of art, it is characterized by reproduction and duplication; and as a historical narrative about Asian Americans, *Dictee* foregrounds Korean immigration to the United States but also captures the histories of war, colonization, occupation, and partition initiated by the United States and Japan on the Korean peninsula. In *Dictee*, the story of immigration does not (and cannot) begin in America: instead, the narrative extends far beyond the protagonists' own moment of arrival, encompassing early-twentieth-century Korean anti-colonial nationalist movements; the violent colonization of Korea and Manchuria by the Japanese; and the experiences of Korean immigrants to Hawai'i, who implore President Roosevelt to intervene in the ongoing occupation of their homeland. For the unnamed subject of *Dictee*, the act of writing is an act of resistance: first to the colonial state, and then to edicts of immigrant assimilation in the United States. This resistance to assimilation is apparent in the form of the text itself, which incorporates a wide range of literary and visual media: photographs from national and personal archives, film stills, handwritten notes and medical diagrams. As a text defined by the diasporic localities of Korean Americans, "the subject of *Dictee*," as Lisa Lowe writes, "continually thwarts the reader's desire to abstract a notion of ethnic or national identity – originating either from the dominant culture's interrogation of its margins or in emergent minority efforts to establish unitary ethnic or cultural nationalist examples."[15] In *Dictee* as well as the chapter "No-Name Woman" in *The Woman Warrior*, reading Asian Americans as diasporic subjects rewrites dominant

representations of Asians as an assimilated "model minority," as immigrants who belong to the United States.

By contrast, from the early 1970s onwards the South Asian American writer Bharati Mukherjee embraced her American citizenship: in her novels and short stories, she consistently represents South Asian Americans as multicultural citizens of the US state, rejecting the multiple cultural and political affiliations of being in diaspora. For Mukherjee, the very point of immigration was to blend into the "melting pot" of the United States, and the thrill of immigration was its possibility for personal transformation. Reflecting on her own marriage to an American and her subsequent decision to naturalize as a US citizen, Mukherjee notes, "America spoke to me – I married it – I embraced the demotion from expatriate aristocrat to immigrant nobody."[16] Likewise, Mukherjee's short stories feature women who leave family, friends, and politics behind in South Asia to forge new identities in the United States. In "The Tenant," from *The Middleman and Other Stories* (1988), the protagonist Maya Sanyal is a newly hired assistant professor of English at a university in Iowa. Recently divorced, Maya refuses to be constrained by the ties that bind her to the legacy of her prominent bourgeois Bengali family in Calcutta, and in particular, to the patriarchal structures of arranged marriage. She despises other South Asian Americans that she encounters – their aspirations toward social mobility, their compact nuclear families, their anti-Black racism – describing one such colleague as "reactionary; he wants to live and work in America but give nothing back except taxes."[17] By the end of the story, Maya submits herself to the sexual will of an upper-middle-class South Asian American man, someone whom she meets through a newspaper ad, and to whom she reveals nothing about her education or her work. For Maya, this act of self-abnegation gives her something that looks like freedom. In another story from the collection, "Jasmine," a young Indo-Caribbean woman from Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, migrates to the United States, longing to leave her past behind. An undocumented immigrant, she works first as a cleaner in a motel, then as a nanny to the child of white professors at the University of Michigan. "Jasmine" concludes with the protagonist falling in love with her male employer, remarking to herself: "she was a bright, pretty girl with no visa, no papers, and no birth certificate. No nothing other than what she wanted to invent and tell. She was a girl rushing wildly into the future."[18] In both short stories, heterosexual romance becomes the conduit for the protagonists to become "American"; it is through following their desires – their longings – that these women erase memories of the families and countries that they have

left behind. As Mukherjee notes in relation to her own life, "The price that the immigrant willingly pays, and that the exile avoids, is the trauma of self-transformation."[19]

The popularity of Mukherjee's work in the late 1980s and early 1990s speaks to the cultural dominance of Reagan-era multiculturalism, and in particular, the popular belief that immigrants can embody only one form of national allegiance, that is to the United States. Mukherjee's rejection of diasporic longings – her insistence on America as a final destination for immigrants – structures her later novels as well. In *Jasmine* (1989), the title protagonist travels from Punjab (where she is called Jyoti) to the plains of Iowa (where she is renamed Jane), swiftly and seamlessly transforming from a rural Indian immigrant into a cosmopolitan US subject. Jasmine's migration from India to the United States, again conducted through a series of heterosexual relationships, celebrates a narrative of self-transformation and personal emancipation. Asha Nadkarni astutely writes that "*Jasmine* models a form of US exceptionalism (as the protagonist's westward trajectory suggests) with an exclusionary feminist twist; although Jasmine is successful in freeing herself of the marks of difference that would trouble her accession into the United States, her experience does not apply to most immigrant women."[20] Indeed, unlike the Native, Black and other women of color that Jasmine encounters during her travels, Jasmine views her arrival in the United States as a promise of a clean slate: "If we could just get away from India," she reflects, "then all fates would be canceled. We'd start with new fates, new stars. We could say or be anything we wanted. We'd be on the other side of the earth, out of God's sight."[21] Instead of the ties of history and memory that bind diasporic subjects to their countries of origin, Mukherjee narrates Jasmine's migration as a relentless forward movement: leaving the past for the present, exchanging tradition for modernity, rejecting religious practice for secular freedom. In this context, Jasmine's eventual choice of "the promise of America" over "old-world dutifulness" emerges as the only possible conclusion to the novel.[22] Yet Jyoti's successful emancipation *as* Jasmine is also contingent on her continued location in the United States within patriarchal family structures as wife, caretaker, and mother. Such transnational formations of patriarchy are elided by the romantic narrative of the novel, which also obscures the fact that, as an undocumented immigrant, Jasmine can never realize her dreams of equality and emancipation as a citizen of the US state.

Asian American feminist literary critics have critiqued Mukherjee's insistence on immigrant assimilation and her rejection of diasporic narrative frameworks. As Nadkarni notes, Mukherjee's belief in the

transformative power of assimilation "insists any connection to the culture of origin is an unhealthy attachment to the past that must be overcome in the name of feminist progress."[23] Similarly, Susan Koshy deplores the proto-feminist forms of individual agency in the novel, noting that Mukherjee consistently represents Jasmine as destined for America from the moment of her birth in India.[24] Inderpal Grewal has argued that in *Jasmine*, US nationalism is endorsed as "a neoliberal political vision of democracy in which ethnic identities are produced and racism overcome through choice and individual will and acts."[25] In her counterintuitive reading of *Jasmine* as a novel of diaspora, Vanita Reddy emphasizes how Jasmine's beauty is central to her diasporic locality. Reddy argues that Jasmine's beauty "operates not vertically to secure her progressive belonging to the US nation but rhizomatically, forcing her to confront a range of social inequities that follow her with various intensities and duration across her Indian and US migration."[26] In so doing, she proposes that *Jasmine* illustrates "both the promise and limits of Indian and American national belonging."[27]

The poet and writer Meena Alexander was a contemporary of Mukherjee's, but her work embodies a radically different approach toward narrating diasporic longings. Born in India, raised in the Sudan, educated in England and living in New York City, Alexander's life trajectory maps the twisting routes of diaspora, within which the United States is one of many destinations. Her memoir *Fault Lines* (1993) moves back and forth between time, place, and memory, reflecting throughout on the contours of diasporic locality: as she writes at the outset, "How should I spell out these fragments of a broken geography?"[28] Dispensing with clear delineations between departure and arrival, birth and death, a colonial past and postcolonial present, *Fault Lines* begins not with Alexander's birth but with oral histories of her grandparents. Each chapter inches forward in time only to fall back further into memories of the past, and maps out a kaleidoscopic geography that ties Pune with Port Sudan, the gardens of Alexander's grandfather's house in Kerala with her kitchen in Manhattan, her adolescence in Khartoum with her graduate studies in Nottingham. Embracing multiple homelands, Alexander writes against US exceptionalism: as the literary critic Rajini Srikanth notes, "In Alexander's vision, a literature born in the United States is a literature that must of necessity evoke other locations."[29]

The production of diasporic locality also informs the shape of Alexander's writing. While *Fault Lines* is a memoir, each chapter does not present a complete story of the author's past. Instead Alexander

constantly revises what she knows and what she remembers, what she hears as myth and story, and what she dreams could have happened across the length of the book. She folds the lives of several generations of women within her own story: her paternal and maternal grandmothers, one of whom is an anti-colonial political activist; an aunt whose vanity over her long hair leads to her death from electric shock when her hair becomes entangled in a fan; her own mother, who assiduously models an idealized vision of motherhood and marriage. Throughout, Alexander's voice shifts from the third person plural "we" to the second person "you" to the first person "I." Each version of the self that Alexander presents is indelibly shaped by her intimate relationship with others: her parents and sisters, her husband and children, and, equally importantly, her longstanding friendships with writers of color whose own diasporic locations produce new political, intellectual, and affective alliances. In her commitment to an anti-imperialist and feminist life, Alexander's memoir "foregrounds not the resolve of the individual but the influences of the various communities to which the individual is connected."[30] A revised and expanded edition of *Fault Lines* published in 2003 includes an additional 100 pages in which Alexander radically rewrites her intimate relationship with her maternal grandfather as a scene of sexual violence and abuse. Taking her memoir itself as an unfinished project of diaspora, Alexander fractures once again the line between what is myth and what is history; what is real and what is imagined; and how genealogies of the past and present shape one diasporic writer's attempt to belong.

While Alexander's memoir links together a far-ranging map of diasporic lives, Chang-rae Lee's novel *Native Speaker* (1995) brings the global scope of Asian American diasporas to New York City. The novel's protagonist, Korean American Henry Park, is no stranger to the United States: born and raised in New York, he does not claim to belong elsewhere. And yet, the fact that Henry is racialized as Asian American makes his claims of belonging tenuous. Crystal Parikh notes that, "While his face registers him as the other of the national body that is the racial alien, his voice links him to a class that has 'made it,' has successfully assimilated to the dominant language of the hegemonic nation."[31] The project of assimilation is what binds Henry, in his professional capacity as a private spy, to the Korean American politician John Kwang, who is running a campaign to become mayor of New York City. Kwang offers his personal history of immigration as a bid for the production of diasporic locality – the success of his campaign relies on Kwang's ability to collectively embody the aspirations of his working-class Black, Latinx, and Asian American constituents, to

show them that "America [w]as a part of him, maybe even his."[32] As the novel progresses, however, Henry becomes an accomplice to Kwang's operation of a *ggeh*, a money-lending club, which in this instance includes contributions from, and payments to, newly arrived immigrants from around the world. The *ggeh* is a paradigm of a "post-racial" America, where the accumulation of capital trumps race; but when Henry hands over the names of its contributors to his employer, the *ggeh*'s contributors become fodder for the deportation regime of the US state. Betsy Huang suggests that *Native Speaker* "exposes the ideological and material imperatives of US citizenship for its ethnic and immigrant subjects, and the kind of cultural consent [. . .] it uncompromisingly demands of them."[33] What the state demands includes the names of those undocumented immigrants who placed their hopes in Kwang's promise of belonging to America, and who therefore contributed to and received payments from his *ggeh*. But Henry's betrayal of Kwang, and subsequently the state's betrayal of its undocumented immigrants, means that, at the novel's conclusion, citizenship itself becomes impossible to imagine. When Henry enquires about John Kwang's whereabouts after the campaign's collapse, the real estate agent selling Kwang's home describes the Asian American politician and his family as "foreigners . . . They went back to their country."[34] As *Native Speaker* delineates the economic, social, and affective ties that bind Asian Americans to other communities of color in New York City, the novel is defined by the tension between the production of diasporic locality and assimilationist desires to belong to the US state.

The Aftereffects of Diasporic Longing

Narratives of diaspora remap the topographies of Asian American identity and community. Over three decades of Asian American literary production, writers have mobilized diasporic imaginaries to recast the spatial, psychic, and temporal distance between Asia and the United States. Through their work, the very idea of "Asia" and "America" as fixed and stable geographical constructs becomes unmoored. "America" emerges as the site of immigrant political representation but also as a nation that betrays its immigrants (as in *Native Speaker*). "Asia" comes to life via childhood memories of aunts and mothers who attempt to shape their own lives (in *The Woman Warrior*), and through histories of Japanese imperialism and US occupation (in *Dictee*). Whereas writers like Bharati Mukherjee reproduced dominant ideologies of US exceptionalism and multicultural citizenship, for other writers such as Meena Alexander, the

production of diasporic locality ripples across generations, as she ties together South Asia with North America, and the Middle East with Europe. For Asian Americans, diasporic longings mean that "home" is always unfixed, subject to change, and narrated in the process of becoming.

Notes

1. On the etymology of diaspora, see David Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 343–346.
2. Jana Braziel and Anita Mannur, "Nation, Migration, Globalization: Points of Contention in Diaspora Studies," in *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*, ed. Jana Braziel and Anita Mannur (Malden: Blackwell, 2003), 8.
3. Bakirathi Mani, *Aspiring to Home: South Asians in America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 4.
4. Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*, ed. Jana Braziel and Anita Mannur (Malden: Blackwell, 2003), 233–246.
5. Ibid., 234.
6. Lata Mani and Ruth Frankenberg, "Crosscurrents, Crosstalk: Race, 'Postcoloniality,' and the Politics of Location," in *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory*, ed. Padmini Mongia (New York: Arnold, 1996), 347–364.
7. R. Radhakrishnan, "Is the Ethnic Authentic in Diaspora?," in *The State of Asian America*, ed. Karen Aguilar-San Juan (Boston: South End Press, 1994), 219–233.
8. Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American*, 345.
9. Women of South Asian Descent Collective, eds., *Our Feet Walk the Sky: Women of the South Asian diaspora* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1993); Rakesh Ratti, ed., *A Lotus of Another Color: An Unfolding of the South Asian Gay and Lesbian Experience* (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1993); Lavina Dhingra Shankar and Rajini Srikanth, eds., *A Part, Yet Apart: South Asians in Asian America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998); Rajini Srikanth and Sunaina Maira, eds., *Contours of the Heart: South Asians Map North America* (New York: The Asian American Writers' Workshop, 1996).
10. Shyam Selvadurai, *Funny Boy* (New York: W. Morrow and Co., 1996); Gayatri Gopinath, *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 166.
11. Gopinath, *Impossible Desires*, 186.
12. David Eng and Alice Hom, *Q&A: Queer in Asian America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 9.
13. For a reading of *The Woman Warrior* as a novel of diaspora, see Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American*, 348–350. See also Robert Lee, "*The Woman Warrior* as an Intervention in Asian American Historiography," in *Approaches to Teaching*

Kingston's The Woman Warrior, ed. Shirley Geok-Lin Lim (New York: Modern Languages Association of America, 1991), 52–63; and King-Kok Cheung, "The Woman Warrior versus the Chinaman Pacific: Must a Chinese American Critic Choose between Feminism and Heroism?," in *Conflicts in Feminism*, ed. Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox Keller (New York: Routledge, 1990), 234–251.

14. Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts* (New York: Vintage, 1989), 202.
15. Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 129.
16. Bharati Mukherjee, "Two Ways to Belong in America," *The New York Times*, September 22, 1996, www.nytimes.com/1996/09/22/opinion/two-ways-to-belong-in-america.html.
17. Bharati Mukherjee, "The Tenant," in *The Middleman and Other Stories* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), 105.
18. Bharati Mukherjee, "Jasmine," in *The Middleman and Other Stories* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), 135.
19. Mukherjee, "Two Ways to Belong in America."
20. Asha Nadkarni, "Reproducing Feminism in 'Jasmine' and 'The Yellow Wallpaper,'" in *Feminist Studies* 38, no. 1 (2012), 218–219.
21. Bharati Mukherjee, *Jasmine* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1989), 77.
22. Ibid., 214.
23. Nadkarni, "Reproducing Feminism," 240.
24. Susan Koshy, "The Geography of Female Subjectivity: Ethnicity, Gender and Diasporax," in *Contemporary American Women Writers: Gender, Class, Ethnicity*, ed. Lois Parkinson Zamora (New York: Longman, 1998), 147.
25. Inderpal Grewal, *Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 69.
26. Vanita Reddy, *Fashioning Diaspora* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2016), 38.
27. Ibid., 38.
28. Meena Alexander, *Fault Lines* (New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1993), 1.
29. Rajini Srikanth, *The World Next Door: South Asian American Literature and the Idea of America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 87.
30. Ibid., 244.
31. Crystal Parikh, *An Ethics of Betrayal: The Politics of Otherness in Emergent U.S. Literatures and Eultures* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 115.
32. Chang-rae Lee, *Native Speaker* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1996), 211. See also Parikh, *An Ethics of Betrayal*, 116 for a similar point.
33. Betsy Huang, "Citizen Kwang: Chang-rae Lee's Native Speaker and the Politics of Consent," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 9, no. 3 (2006), 243–269.
34. Lee, *Native Speaker*, 347.