Distribution Agreement

In presenting this thesis as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my thesis in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter now, including display on the World Wide Web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this thesis. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis.

Kassie Sarkar April 13, 2021

Where Do I Fit?: Stories of Racial Identity, Resistance, and Community Belonging in Bi- and Multiracial South Asians

by

Kassie Sarkar

Michelle Gordon

Co-Adviser

Katie Schank

Co-Adviser

Institute for the Liberal Arts

Michelle Gordon

Co-Adviser

Katie Schank

Co-Adviser

Joyce Flueckiger

Committee Member

2021

Where Do I Fit?: Stories of Racial Identity, Resistance, and Community Belonging in Bi- and Multiracial South Asians

By

Kassie Sarkar

Michelle Gordon

Co-Adviser

Katie Schank

Co-Adviser

An abstract of

a thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences

of Emory University in partial fulfillment

of the requirements of the degree of

Bachelor of Arts with Honors

Institute for the Liberal Arts

2021

Abstract

Where Do I Fit?: Stories of Racial Identity, Resistance, and Community Belonging in Bi- and Multiracial South Asians

By Kassie Sarkar

This thesis investigates bi- and multiracial South Asians' identity construction, community belonging, and resistance to white supremacy. "Biracial South Asian" and "Multiracial South Asian" are terms I use to refer to bi- and multiracial people with South Asian parentage. I centralize South Asian identity in this work in order to evaluate, complicate, and reimagine race in the United States. This thesis uses interdisciplinary modes of storytelling, including poetry, scholarship, narrative, photography, exhibition, interviews and history, to explore bi- and multiracial South Asian figures, individuals, and communities such as Cedric Dover, a twentieth century Eurasian scholar, contemporary American participants in my interviews and the UK-based Mixedracefaces organization, Vice President Kamala Harris, Dalip Singh Saund, and early twentieth century mono-, bi-, and multiracial South Asians in California like Jawala Singh and the Punjabi-Mexican community in the Imperial Valley. While all of these narratives begin to fill the glaring absence of scholarly and cultural representations of bi- and multiracial South Asians, this thesis ultimately calls for greater research on this community in order to realize and actualize a more liberatory and justice-seeking future through nuanced and humanizing scholarship.

Where Do I Fit?: Stories of Racial Identity, Resistance, and Community Belonging in Bi- and Multiracial South Asians

By

Kassie Sarkar

Michelle Gordon

Co-Adviser

Katie Schank

Co-Adviser

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences

of Emory University in partial fulfillment

of the requirements of the degree of

Bachelor of Arts with Honors

Institute for the Liberal Arts

2021

Acknowledgements

Starting from the beginning of my time as a scholar at Emory, I want to thank Dr. Michelle Gordon and Dr. Walter Rucker for their invaluable mentorship. It was through their guidance that I even realized writing scholarship and being a scholar were things that people can do. They were also an irreplaceable part of my journey as I determined what kind of scholar I wanted to be and what kind of interventions I wanted to make. I would not be the scholar I am today with so clear an understanding of how I want to operate as a justice-seeking force in academic and public spaces if I had not been their student.

I also want to thank Dr. Schank and Dr Flueckiger for being so willing and excited to work with me on this thesis in a variety of capacities. Dr. Schank, I really appreciate how you were able to make every meeting fun and optimistic, no matter how close we were to deadlines. And Dr. Flueckiger, though we have not known each other for very long, I have loved getting the chance to learn more about you, your work, and your family! You both have been central to my abilities to conceptualize and complete this thesis to the utmost degree.

Of course, for the people closest to me, I am forever indebted to you. First and foremost, my boyfriend, NiQué: you know how I feel about you, but to preserve it here in the historical and academic record—I truly could not have done any of this without you. Not only have you been with me this entire time, but you have also created the space for me to feel and express the whole range of emotions that have come with this thesis process. I know for a fact that I would not have refocused my thesis to bi- and multiracial South Asians as quickly, thoroughly, or thoughtfully if you had not pushed me to consider my relationship with African American studies and marginalized communities more broadly. Even more, you never stopped pointing out the inconsistencies in my writing, no matter how frustrated I got, which has ultimately pushed my writing to new heights.

To my mom and my brother, PJ, you are amazing! You both read my entire thesis draft and were ready and willing to give me all kinds of feedback, even though this a topic that is so close to all of us. To my mom, dad, PJ, and my sister, Kelssie, thank you for sharing in the joys of discovery with me! I know my 3 AM texts about some seemingly random person in history might have been strange or even the topic of conversation might have gotten monotonous at points, but I will always appreciate the genuine interest and excitement over my work. (I'm looking at you Baba.)

Thank you to my friends! The Minorities—Elissa, Jenna, Emily, and Diana—I love you all. Thank you so much for helping me get through high school and beyond! Also, special thanks to Ben and Iman for reading through my thesis. Ben, your feedback was definitely interesting and I appreciated you taking time to read everything. Iman, you rock! Thank you for being present and supportive from day one. I had no way of knowing that I would be getting more than a roommate when I messaged you on facebook as a high school senior, but I am so glad it happened. Thank you, Iman, Elissa, Jenna, Emily, and Diana for becoming my sisters.

Finally, thank you to my research participants! Your experiences provided so much insight into my research questions, and your willingness to participate in my research was invaluable. I hope you are able to gather some insight from this project as a whole, and I hope we can keep in touch! I'd love to stay updated with everything you're doing and I'd love to keep you updated on my research as it progresses if you're interested.

This might seem like a lot of acknowledgements, dear reader, but each of the people mentioned here have played a direct and vital role in this thesis process. These are the people who I consider part of my community—my academic and personal community. And there are even so many more people who have supported and had an impact on me and my work that I cannot begin to name them all, including you, but all are significant to my own story nonetheless.

Table of Contents

List of Figures.....1

Introduction

When the Absence of Community Creates Community: One Biracial South Asian's Quest for Discovery, Meaning, and Power.....3

Chapter 1

Recovering the Brown Phoenix: Cedric Dover, Race, and Eurasian Experience.....19

Chapter 2

Oral, Visual, and Textual Representations: Contemporary Bi- and Multiracial South Asian Identity through Interview and Exhibition.....40

Chapter 3

Politics of Visibility: Kamala Harris, Dalip Singh Saund, and South Asian Organizing in Early Twentieth Century California.....70

Conclusion

A Realization of the Self, Community, and Power.....87

Bibliography.....93

List of Figures

Chapter Two

Figure 2.1: This table provides basic demographic and background information for each interview participant, Participants A-F, identified by their pseudonym to maintain anonymity.

Figure 2.2: This is the webpage view of Mixedracefaces's "Chapter 1" online exhibition. "Chapter 1," Mixedracefaces, accessed March 10, 2021, https://mixedracefaces.com/chapter-1.

Figure 2.3: This is the webpage view of Mixedracefaces's "International" section. "International," Mixedracefaces, accessed March 10, 2021, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories.

Figure 2.4: This is the webpage view of Mixedracefaces Profile 1, "American | Indian/Turks & Caicos." "American | Indian/Turks & Caicos," Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/american-indian-turks-caicos.

Figure 2.5: This is the webpage view of Mixedracefaces Profile 2, "Guyanese | Indo Trinidadian/Irish." "Guyanese | Indo Trinidadian/Irish," Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/guyanese-indo-trinidadian-irish.

Figure 2.6: This is the webpage view of Mixedracefaces Profile 3, "Indian | Indian/Cuban/Jamaican." "Indian | Indian/Cuban/Jamaican, "Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/indian-indian-cuban-jamaican.

Figure 2.7: This is the webpage view of Mixedracefaces Profile 4, "Indian | Tanzanian." "Indian | Tanzanian," Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/indian-tanzanian

Figure 2.8: This is the webpage view of Mixedracefaces Profile 5, "Indian | Honduran." "Indian | Honduran," Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/indian-honduran.

Figure 2.9: This is the webpage view of Mixedracefaces Profile 6, "Indian | Irish." "Indian | Irish," Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/2018/8/indian-irish-na.

Figure 2.10: This is a screenshot of the comments on Mixedracefaces Profile 6's page. "Indian | Irish," Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/2018/8/indian-irish-na.

Figure 2.11: This is the webpage view of Mixedracefaces Profile 7, "Pakistani | Thai." "Pakistani | Thai," Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/pakistani-thai.

Figure 2.12: This is the webpage view of Mixedracefaces Profile 7, "Japanese | Trinidadian/Tobagonian.""Japanese | Trinidadian/Tobagonian," Mixedracefaces, accessed March 23, 2021, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/japanese-trinidadian-tobagonian.

INTRODUCTION

When the Absence of Community Creates Community: One Biracial South Asian's Quest for Discovery, Meaning, and Power

In high school, my friends and I called ourselves, "The Minorities." In our small New Jersey suburb, we formed our friendship out of a shared experience on the margins of our larger community, as each of our identities stood in opposition to the majority-white, upper middle class, Roman-Catholic town. There were six of us in the group: three Latinas—one Cuban-Dominican, another Cuban-Domincan-Puerto Rican, and the last Puerto Rican—one Ashkenazi Jew, one Korean American, and me, a biracial South Asian-White American. Though this kind of racial classification is reductive and dehumanizing, it also served as a point of pride for my friends and me as we found strength and solidarity in our marginality. Still, against our white backdrop, our group's racial and ethnic makeup along with our pride made us a target for intolerance, indifference, and discrimination from faculty and students.

For me, "The Minorities" presented a safe space for me to explore ideas related to race, ethnicity, power, and white supremacy while remaining grounded in both personal experience and as much of history as possible. However, given our public school education system, our curricula and teachers rarely ventured into or facilitated deeper conversation about structural racism and systemic inequality. After all, this was the same place in which students donned cars with confederate flags and "blue lives matter, black lives don't" bumper stickers, where the highschool mascot was a "chief," and a place where the evidence of racially segregated housing was in all the faces of its students. Though my friends and I did our best to deal with these circumstances through the creation of safe community spaces, such as "The Minorities," we

lacked the language and concrete understanding of our racial and cultural space on local and national levels.

And yet, even while I developed community and solidarity out of a shared nonwhite space, I began to feel more and more like an other or an outsider even within my group when I saw that my friends were able to place themselves in a larger racial, ethnic, and cultural community because of their identities, but I could not. As a young person, I would gloss over the specifics of my racial identity, opting instead to identify as "brown" or a "person of color" in order to fit in with my peers. Though this was a kind of early, unconscious interracial solidarity building, it also left me more uncertain about my racial place in the United States. Through literature and scholarship, I started to find representation in the stories of African American and nonwhite peoples, but these narratives did not fill the representational absence in scholarly or cultural conversations of my own racial identity or identities similar to my own.

It is out of this absence and position within this liminal and underrepresented biracial space that I have developed this thesis. Through my work, I seek to begin to fill the gaps of bi- and multiracial South Asian representation in scholarship in order to make clear that bi- and multiracial experiences like mine do not exist in a vacuum—that we and I are not alone—but, instead, our experiences are grounded in many rich historical and contemporary narratives across time and space. Using interdisciplinary modes of storytelling, including poetry, scholarship, narrative, photography, exhibition, interviews, and history, this thesis functions to evaluate, complicate, and reimagine race in the U.S., while identifying representation, self-determination, and advocacy spaces as some of the most influential factors for the construction of racial identity and community belonging for people with bi- and multiracial South Asian identities. At the same time, this thesis couples racial identity construction and community belonging with resistance,

looking specifically at agency as a site for resistance to white supremacy that bi- and multiracial South Asians have created for themselves. By focusing on resistance in addition to racial identity and community, this thesis serves to highlight and assert the agency, resilience, and humanity of bi- and multiracial South Asian individuals and communities.

I use the term "biracial South Asian" to refer to a group or individual with parentage from two distinct racial groups, one being South Asian, while I use the term "multiracial South Asian" to refer to a group or individual with parentage from multiple racial groups, one being South Asian. I prefer the language of "biracial" and "multiracial" to "mixed-race" because "mixed-race" holds connotations of tainting whiteness and implies the myth of racial purity, though I use it occasionally in this thesis if quoting or referencing someone else's use of the term. I identify "South Asian" as the unifying race in order to center and examine South Asian identity, especially the ways in which it complicates American racial politics where race is popularly understood along lines of whiteness and blackness. As someone who identifies as a biracial South Asian American, I am adamant about understanding how this racial identity not only affects those who identify this way but also how it undermines traditional beliefs about race, power, and identity in the United States.

I use storytelling as a methodological backbone for my work in order to identify the unifying element of my sources. For instance, sources such as exhibitions, photographs, and essays might seem like disparate forms of evidence, but they all act as a storytelling methodology. I use storytelling as a way to unify my interdisciplinary methodology and, ultimately, through my distinctive use of storytelling methodology, I aim to put power back in the hands of the communities I am working with by privileging their experiences as they state or

express them in their storytelling materials. With this, I also hope to destabilize traditional modes of academic scholarship through this re-centering of participants' experiences.

I began this work with a desire to identify and understand a racial community for myself, though I found that this was more complex than it sounds. Through my research, I have come to realize that a community does not only look one specific way, and the defining characteristics for a community, especially a racial community, are even more uncertain. However, I see even now more than ever that community is subjective and, for people like me who exist across and between racial lines, it can develop out of collective grassroots efforts toward something larger, and it can also develop out of the self. Time and time again, I have found that even though bi- and multiracial South Asians do not have the same lived experiences, they occupy a common space out of the collective and individual need for community.

In the absence of representations of my own racial identity, I have often turned to scholarship, African American studies in particular, as a means to explore issues related to race, power, and identity in the United States. However, as I have realized through my undergraduate career, my time in African American studies has come from a place of wanting to know more about myself through the scholarship I had access to, and while African American studies has helped me develop my voice and understand race and identity more broadly, I was not fully accessing my own identity, which prevented me from feeling the full empowerment that African American studies has to offer.

For instance, in my previous senior honors thesis topic, I had planned to explore the multiracial identity of the Black Seminole community, an Afro-Indigenous community in North America, by focusing on their agency through oral, artistic, and ritual resistance. However, I began losing interest in the Black Seminoles, not from any fault of their own, but because, again,

I was feeling the representational absence of my own racial experience. As the U.S. underwent a racial reckoning in the wake of George Floyd's murder, and public and academic conversations scrutinized racial injustice and misrepresentation, I saw that my research on the Black Seminoles was both liberatory and oppressive because, by projecting my own experiences on to them, I was preventing them from having their own voice and platform. It was also impossible for me to help provide them adequate representation and service because I was more preoccupied with my own identity. While my research was well-intentioned, it became clear to me that I was actually using African American studies, and therefore African American people, to avoid the much harder, much more emotional research on myself and my own community—a community that I was not even sure *existed*.

As the absence of my own experiences continued to weigh on me, I began studying decolonized, antiracist methodologies, especially through indigenous scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. I decided that I did not want to understand myself through others anymore. Instead, I wanted to confront my own racial identity to understand the histories of racial liminality, misrepresentation, and erasure. That is when I switched my research communities from Black Seminoles to bi- and multiracial South Asians. However, I found that little scholarship exists, especially within the United States, on bi- and multiracial South Asians. Thus, my work is the first of its kind to investigate bi- and multiracial South Asian identity seriously in the U.S. through interdisciplinary studies, though it draws on scholarship from India and the UK as well as disciplines such as history, literary studies, critical race theory, mixed-race studies, and visual culture studies.[1]

[1] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, (New York: Zed Books, 2012).

While my own biracial identity is made up of South Asian and European ancestry, I have adopted a framework for multiracial studies that seeks to decenter whiteness in order to counter historical and contemporary scholarly trends in the U.S. that only consider bi- and multiraciality in binary paradigms of whiteness, such as Black and White, Caribbean and English, Indigenous and White, and Mexican and Anglo. Though I do incorporate South Asian-White perspectives in my work, I also follow the examples set forth by scholars in *Red and Yellow, Black and Brown: Decentering Whiteness in Mixed Race Studies* by building up my investigation of bi- and multiracial South Asian identity to include dual and multiple minority bi- and multiracial people.[2]

In particular, I utilize Karen Leonard's *Making Ethnic Choices: California's Punjabi Mexcian Americans* and Vivek Bald's *Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America* to inform both the content and historical scope of biracial South Asians in the United States. Both of these books examine the sociopolitical complexity of South Asians in early twentieth century United States in order to understand how and why South Asian men settled and started families in various parts of the country. Bald focuses on Bengali peddlers and seamen who built their businesses in New York City and New Orleans and made their homes with Creole, Puerto Rican, and African American women. Leonard, on the other hand, explores Punjabi men who migrated to California as farmers and married Mexican-American women, creating families with complex ethnic identities as both "Hindus" and Americans. Though the purpose of this thesis is not to center exclusively multiple minority multiracial perspectives, it does seek to begin to dismantle white supremacy within scholarship by balancing non-white

[2] Joanne L. Rondilla, Rudy P. Guevarra, and Paul R. Spickard, *Red and Yellow, Black and Brown: Decentering Whiteness in Mixed Race Studies* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2017), http://proxy.library.emory.edu/login?url=http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/j.ctt1q1cqvn.

multiracial perspectives with part-white multiracial narratives since multiracial scholarship traditionally only looks at part-white multiracial identities.[3]

Because I entered critical race theory through African American studies, many of my approaches are grounded in the discipline. My definition of resistance draws on scholarship about enslaved people in the eighteenth century. Such scholarship includes Stephanie M.H. Camp in *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women & Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South*, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese in "Strategies and Forms of Resistance: Focus on Slave Women in the United States," Darlene Hine and Kate Wittenstein in "Female Slave Resistance: The Economics of Sex," and Raymond A. Bauer and Alice H. Bauer in "Day to Day Resistance to Slavery." These works emphasize the power of everyday resistance, a type of resistance that, for enslaved peoples, included such seemingly innocuous acts as work stalls, abortion, and illegal parties. In the context of bi- and multiracial South Asians, such resistance to oppression and white supremacy appear in this thesis in their writing, their participation in cultural projects, and their grassroots organizing and activism.[4]

Building on this scholarship, I interpret oppressed peoples' very survival as a form of resistance. This is because when people who live under an oppressive system choose to survive and live according to their own will despite their conditions, they directly defy the object of the oppressive system, thereby revealing their resistance. In the case of antebellum slavery in the

---

[3] Karen Isaksen Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices: California's Punjabi Mexican Americans*, Asian American History and Culture Series (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992); Vivek Bald, *Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

[4] Stephanie M. H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "Strategies and Forms of Resistance: Focus on Slave Women in the United States," in *In Resistance: Studies in African, Caribbean, and Afro-American History*, ed. Gary Y. Okihiro (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986) 143-165; Darlene Hine and Kate Wittenstein, "Female Slave Resistance: The Economics of Sex," in *The Black Woman Cross-Culturally*, ed. Filomina Chioma Steady (Rochester: Schenkman Books, Inc, 1981): 289-299; Raymond A. Bauer and Alice H. Bauer, "Day to Day Resistance to Slavery," *The Journal of Negro History* 27 (1942): 388-419.

U.S. South, the object of the system was to dehumanize and commodify enslaved people for the sake of free labor and profit. Since enslaved people's survival encompassed seemingly simple actions, like hosting parties or having children, and complex negotiations, like navigating plantation politics or developing intricate kinship networks, their very existence was resistance because it proved them human, which opposed the object of the slavery system. The lived conditions of bi- and multiracial South Asian Americans are not comparable to the lived conditions of enslaved people in the antebellum South, but understanding this kind of resistance through enslaved people's experiences serves to provide insight into marginalized experiences more broadly. Ultimately, everyday resistance and survival as resistance provide a distinct framework for interpreting marginalized people's experiences broadly. With this definition, the positionality of bi- and multiracial South Asians as the product of interracial relationships makes their very existence a form of resistance to white supremacy.

In my visual cultures analysis, I engage bell hooks's conception of the "oppositional gaze" to understand the sites of resistance that arise in the relationships between nonwhite communities and "the gaze" in artistic and cultural spaces. Since the gaze that manifests in this thesis through photography, I join Allen Sekula's "The Body and the Archive" and John Tagg's "Evidence, Truth and Order: Photographic Records and the Growth of the State," to construct a foundation for understanding how and why photography was historically used by white supremacist academics and the state to define, oppress, conquer, and categorize non-white and socially deviant peoples, evident through historical examples like the dehumanization of Sara Baartman through photography and racial classification, and even more recent debates around Harvard University's ownership rights over pictures taken of enslaved people without their

consent. With this scholarship, I am able to analyze contemporary portraiture in my second chapter, understanding how they are in conversation with these histories of oppression.[5]

As I utilize this scholarship on the scientific and photographic categorization of nonwhite bodies, I also understand it in the context of more extensive scholarly conversations about the roles of early twentieth-century pseudoscientists and eugenicists in systematizing and perpetuating racism. In particular, I evaluate how the main figure in my first chapter, Cedric Dover, used his own scholarship and identity to undermine the eugenicist notions of "hybrid degeneracy" and racism. The scholarship that undergirds my understanding of racial classification, eugenics, and racial sciences are Gloria Ladson-Billing's article, "Through a Glass Darkly: The Persistence of Race in Education Research & Scholarship," Roddy Slorach's article, "From eugenics to scientific racism," and Ann Gibson Winfield's book, *Eugenics and education in America: Institutionalized racism and the implications of history, ideology, and memory*. Though I do not directly articulate this scholarship in the chapter contents, this work frames my research related to eugenics and racist pseudosciences, especially as they relate to academia, social sciences, and racial categorization.[6]

---

[5] bell hooks, "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators," in *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 115–31; Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October* 39 (1986): 3–64, https://doi.org/10.2307/778312; John Tagg, "Evidence, Truth and Order: Photographic Records and the Growth of the State," in *The Burden of Representation* (London: Macmillan, 1987), 60–102**;** Anemona Hartocollis, "Who Should Own Photos of Slaves? The Descendants, Not Harvard, a Lawsuit Says," *New York Times*, (2019): 5, https://archiv.louverture.ch/KAMPA/AGASSIZ/tamara_renty_NYT.pdf; Clifton Crais and Pamela Scully, *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story and a Biography,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Sadiah Qureshi, "Displaying Sara Baartman, the 'Hottentot Venus,'" *History of Science* 42, no. 2 (June 1, 2004): 233–57, https://doi.org/10.1177/007327530404200204.

[6] Gloria Ladson-Billings, "Through a Glass Darkly: The Persistence of Race in Education Research & Scholarship." *Educational Researcher* 41, no. 4 (2012): 115-20, accessed March 31, 2021, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41477775; Roddy Slorach, "From eugenics to scientific racism," International Socialism Journal 165 (2020): 133-54, https://isj.org.uk/from-eugenics-to-scientific-racism/. Ann Gibson Winfield, *Eugenics and education in America: Institutionalized racism and the implications of history, ideology, and memory* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2007).

I also engage broader secondary scholarship on the relationships between eugenics, the "tragic mulattos," biological determinism, and hypodescent as explored in works such as "Still the Tragic Mulatto? Manufacturing Multiracialization in Magazine Media, 1961–2011," by Sheena Gardner and Matthew Hughey, "The Tragic Mulatto and Passing," by Emily Clark, "Old Stereotypes Made New: A Textual Analysis on the Tragic Mulatto Stereotype in Contemporary Hollywood," by Brandale Mills, and "Along the Color Line: Class, Passing, and the Construct of Colorism in DuBois's Crisis Magazine, 1910-1934" by Isabelle Britto. This body of scholarship, while rooted in traditional notions of black-white biraciality, helps identify the ways in which representations and histories of bi- and multiracial South Asians align, push against, and even maintain certain aspects of these racist theories.[7]

Where I engage visual cultures, I also put portraiture in conversation with personal experiences, in particular utilizing original interviews that I conducted. For the interviews, I drew specifically on anthropologist Charles L. Briggs's book *Handbook of Interview Research* to develop a framework for my interviews that would put power back in the hands of participants through a semi-structured interview format that would allow myself and participants to share control over the interview. At the same time, the work of early twentieth century anthropologists and ethnographers, like Bronislaw Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, informed me how not to extract information from and profit off my participants, as well as how to be critical of scientific ideas of objectivity, or, rather, the illusion of objectivity. I balanced such historic

[7] Sheena K. Gardner and Matthew W. Hughey, "Still the Tragic Mulatto? Manufacturing Multiracialization in Magazine Media, 1961–2011," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42, no. 4 (March 12, 2019): 645-665, https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1380212; Emily Clark, "The Tragic Mulatto and Passing," in *The Palgrave Handbook of the Southern Gothic*, ed. Susan Castillo Street and Charles L. Crow (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), 259–70, https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-47774-3_20; Brandale Mills, "Old Stereotypes Made New: A Textual Analysis on the Tragic Mulatto Stereotype in Contemporary Hollywood," *Howard Journal of Communications* 30, no. 5 (October 20, 2019): 411–29, https://doi.org/10.1080/10646175.2018.1512063; Isabelle Britto, "Along the Color Line: Class, Passing, and the Construct of Colorism in DuBois's Crisis Magazine, 1910-1934" (Master's Thesis, University of Leiden, 2019), https://hdl.handle.net/1887/76966.

social scientific work with the works of contemporary ethnographers, particularly Elaine Lawless's *Reciprocal Ethnography and the Power of Women's Narratives* and Robert Desjarlais's *Sensory Biographies: Lives and Deaths among Nepal's Yolmo Buddhists*. Though this thesis itself is not an ethnography, I utilize ethnographic methodology in my approach to conducting interviews and interacting with participants to reinforce my larger goals for my scholarship—to resist the historically oppressive nature of scholarship and academia so that my research can help more than harm its communities of focus.[8]

As a methodological approach, my thesis aims to access what scholar James Scott calls the hidden transcript, or the underlying discourse that marginalized community members use to express themselves without the threat of oppressors' oversight, in his book *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. Though I do not directly use the language of the hidden transcript in my thesis, the hidden transcript acts as one of my main theoretical tools for analyzing the primary source materials that make up the backbone of my storytelling framework. Out of my training in the hidden transcript, I learned the importance of elevating marginalized people's experiences, and therefore stories, in my work, through a variety of modes including personal and essay writing, poetry, photography, and interviews. With the hidden transcript, I seek to access the lived experiences of biracial South Asian Americans in order to understand the internal politics of this marginalized community, not simply the external politics that oppressors like British colonists or white colonial settlers might claim about them. Understanding internal politics is even more vital when investigating the oppressor-oppressed power dynamics that

[8] Charles L. Briggs, "Power/Knowledge and social inequality," in *Handbook of Interview Research*, ed. Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein (SAGE Publications, Inc., 2001), 910-922; Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1922); Elaine J. Lawless, "I Was Afraid Someone like You... an Outsider... Would Misunderstand': Negotiating Interpretive Differences between Ethnographers and Subjects," in *Reciprocal Ethnography and the Power of Women's Narratives* (Indiana University Press, 2019), 80–95, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvpb3z54.9; Robert R. Desjarlais, *Sensory Biographies: Lives and Deaths Among Nepal's Yolmo Buddhists* (University of California Press, 2003).

biracial South Asians both experience and facilitate themselves. In my work, these power dynamics appear when considering how biracial South Asians might both experience and perpetuate oppression due to their proximity to whiteness.[9]

My work couples Scott's theoretical framework with Robin D. G. Kelley's articulation of "freedom dreams," in *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*. The language and theory of "freedom dreams" is essential to my work because it provides space for reimagination. This reimagination enables both scholars and readers to consider the present and historical while also looking forward to the future, pushing the boundaries of contemporary understanding to visualize who is included in a liberated world, how a traumatized society can achieve justice, and what the foundations are for building coalition across identity boundaries. Ultimately, freedom dreams and reimagination allow advocates of justice, equity, and liberation to shape an image of their future, then work more effectively toward creating that image.[10]

This thesis also engages biracial South Asians in the twentieth century through Cedric Dover, an interdisciplinary scholar born in Calcutta, India to an Indian mother and English father. I base much of my research related to Dover on his archival papers which are currently located in Emory University's Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library. I also supplement this original research with material from historian Nico Slate's intellectual biography of Dover, *The Prism of Race: W. E. B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, Paul Robeson, and the Colored World of Cedric Dover*, in which Slate demonstrates the significant relationship that

[9] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

[10] Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002).

Dover had with black artists and intellectuals, particularly W.E.B. DuBois, Langston Hughes, and Paul Robeson.[11]

Dover, who was actively engaged in scholarship, art, writing, and politics in India, Great Britain, and the U.S., personally identified as "Eurasian," a term that allowed him to build solidarity with other mixed race people throughout Asia, much in the same way that "brown" and "person of color" helped me build solidarity with my nonwhite peers. As Dover's career progressed and as he became more invested in the international struggles against racism and colonization, this proclivity toward broad racial identifications strengthened. By the end of his life, terms like "half caste" and "colored" gave him a space to build solidarity with nonwhite communities across the world.[12]

Like Dover, I have also given extensive thought to the way that I use language to identify my racial identity and the racial identities of those like me. For this thesis, I decided to use the term "biracial South Asian" and "multiracial" in order to specifically denote the fact of being the product of two or more distinct racial groups. Though I have not come across this term being used in either academic or everyday language, it is the term that is both specific enough to capture the complexity of this identity, as well as broad enough to incorporate various complex configurations of bi- and multiracial South Asian identity. For instance, this term can be used for Dover, as someone with South Asian-European heritage, as well as for Bald's research subjects, who were South Asian-African American, and who represented various ethnic identities, like Punjabi-Hispanic and Bengali-Creole. Because this thesis seeks to resist the marginalization of

[11] Nico Slate, *The Prism of Race: W. E. B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, Paul Robeson, and the Colored World of Cedric Dover*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

[12] Slate, *The Prism of Race: W. E. B. Du Bois*, 10.

racial identities, it was necessary for my research to make space for such complex variations in racial identification.

Throughout this thesis, I will use terms related to "biracial South Asian" and "multiracial South Asian," including "biracial South Asian *American*." The distinction between "bi- or multiracial South Asian" and "bi- or multiracial South Asian *American*" is important because, as I demonstrate in this thesis, there is little existing research specifically on this racial group in the United States; instead, countries like India and the UK, which have longer documented histories of interracial unions with South Asian people, have more awareness of and scholarship on bi- and multiracial South Asian people. Therefore, I pull on theories, studies, and experiences from such places outside of the U.S. in order to gain insight into how this group exists and functions on an international level.

The first chapter, "Recovering the Brown Phoenix: Cedric Dover, Race, and Eurasian Experience," focuses on Cedric Dover, utilizing his primary source material, such as his unpublished poetry anthology, *The Eurasian Voice*, his lecture notes, and his scholarship on Eurasians, from Emory University's Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library. This chapter argues that Dover both disrupted and replaced negative depictions of racialized peoples in order to resist some forms of oppression, like white supremacy, but, at the same time, Dover upheld other forms of oppression, including a dehumanizing racial classification system, patriarchy, and anti blackness. Despite having lived in the twentieth century, Dover demonstrates so many of the foundational biracial South Asian joys and hardships, like the boundaries and harmfulness of racial sciences, the potential of transnational, interracial, interdisciplinary solidarity, and the empowerment of self-definition.

Cedric Dover's life and work provide so much insight and context into the themes of biracial South Asian existence that this thesis can take a step out of the twentieth century and step directly into the twenty-first century with the second chapter, "Oral Visual, and Textual Representations: Contemporary Bi- and Multiracial South Asian Identity through Interview and Exhibition." Where Dover's chapter focused exclusively on his archival material, this chapter puts Mixedracefaces, a UK-based online arts organization that showcases portraits of and personal stories from multiracial people, in conversation with original interviews that I conducted with biracial South Asian-White Americans. Mixedracefaces's online exhibitions and my interviewees' experiences articulate themes similar to Dover, such as the dangers of racial sciences and the agency of self-definition, as well as themes such as color consciousness and exoticization, all of which work together to argue for bi- and multiracial South Asians' need for greater representation in academic and public spaces.

The third chapter, "Politics of Visibility: Kamala Harris, Dalip Singh Saund, and South Asian Organizing in Early Twentieth Century California," answers the previous chapter's call for greater representation by considering Vice President Kamala Harris's position at the forefront of bi- and multiracial South Asian representation, then using her upbringing in California as an access point to explore early twentieth century mono-, bi-, and multiracial South Asian activism in the region. This chapter argues that the resilience and activism of these early communities laid the groundwork for the political success of future biracial South Asian politicians, including Dalip Singh Saund, the first South Asian congressman, and Vice President Harris. By investigating South Asians in the United States before 1965, this chapter demonstrates how these early peoples have shaped modern politics, and how their collective action in resistance to white supremacist forces, such as racism and imperialism, have created a framework for mono-, bi-,

and multiracial South Asian Americans—and Americans at large—to define their own space in history.

Finally, the conclusion, "A Realization of the Self, Community, and Power" reflects on major takeaways from the research process as a whole, while also thinking forward to what kind of research could come from this thesis in the future. Through these reflections and suggestions, the conclusion is a necessary space for reimagination and freedom dreams, considering what identity and community can look like for bi- and multiracial South Asians in the future, as well as the role that resistance to oppression and white supremacy can continue to play in interracial solidarity building and liberation struggles.

While this thesis focuses on bi- and multiracial South Asians specifically, its significance resonates further, as my research provides insight more broadly into racial identity for individuals and communities in the United States that do not conform to traditional notions of race. By transcending these traditional racial notions and even traditional academic boundaries, this thesis seeks to develop innovative scholarship that can provide powerful and nuanced answers to some of the most challenging questions about race, resistance, community, power, and agency. As my friends and I did in "the Minorities," this thesis creates a distinctive space for elevating bi- and multiracial South Asian stories and lived experiences, thereby empowering bi- and multiracial South Asians, as well as multiracial peoples, and those from all kinds of marginalized identities in order to reimagining more inclusive forms of representation, justice, and equity.

CHAPTER ONE:

Recovering the Brown Phoenix: Cedric Dover, Race, and Eurasian Experience

I. Introduction

In his poem, "Brown Phoenix," twentieth-century scholar Cedric Dover makes a call to the "coloured world" with his final strophe: "Listen brown man, black man, / Yellow man, mongrel man, / And you who call me comrade: / I am the brown phoenix—I am you." With these four lines, Dover demonstrates his commitment to resisting racial oppression and building transnational "coloured solidarity."[13] Here, Dover posits himself as the brown phoenix in order to represent his liminal racial identity as a Eurasian, a person with European and South Asian ancestry, as well as to express his belief that he, and, therefore, multiracial people, would be the source of hope in the struggle against racial oppression, as he considered the racial hybridization of multiracial people, like Eurasians and African Americans, to be the solution to racism, and even to race itself. Through works such as "Brown Phoenix," Dover joined the ranks of intellectuals like W.E.B. DuBois to champion the cause for transnational colored solidarity.[14]

As an interdisciplinary scholar and thinker, Dover often strove to include leftist conceptions of class in his conversations of race; however, he just as often failed to incorporate an intersectional understanding of identity in his work. This meant he ultimately glossed over the historical differences between various racial groups, especially between himself and African Americans, and, in most cases, he excluded women from his work entirely. This is evident even

---

[13] Cedric Dover, *The Eurasian Voice*, Drafts, Cedric Dover Papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University (hereafter cited as Cedric Dover Papers).

[14] Dover takes up racial hybridization as one avenue for achieving transnational racial solidarity in his first major book, *Cimmerii?: Or Eurasians and Their Future*, in which Dover points to African Americans, along with Eurasians, as the model for multiracial communities, arguing that all of humankind eventually will be composed of racially hybridized peoples. Cedric Dover, *Cimmerii?: Or Eurasians and Their Future* (Calcutta: Modern Art Press, 1929); Nico Slate, *The Prism of Race: W. E. B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, Paul Robeson, and the Colored World of Cedric Dover*, (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) 13.

in the language of "Brown Phoenix," as Dover calls out specifically to men: "Listen brown man, black man, / Yellow man, mongrel man," thereby aligning himself exclusively with the colored men of the world. Even more, though, Dover's use of racial classifications in this line is part of Dover's larger legacy reifying racism and racial hierarchy through his subscription to categorization and racial sciences. Thus, Dover was deeply involved in a process of disrupting and replacing negative depictions of racialized people through his work, particularly his storytelling methodologies like his poetry and essays, in order to resist oppressive power structures fueled by racism and white supremacy. Still, even as he tried dismantling some forms of oppression, he maintained others, evident in the ways he supported human and racial classification, overlooked historical differences among racial groups, and erased women from his narrative of interacial unity.

Before my thesis advisor encouraged me to visit the Cedric Dover collection in Emory's archives, Rose Library, for no other reason than that Dover identified as Eurasian, I had never heard of him, nor any other biracial South Asian person in history. While conducting secondary research on Dover, I found that, despite his large impact on race and multiracial studies, his significant activity in the U.S., UK, and India, and his close proximity to major African Americans scholars, artists, and intellectuals, Dover's legacy is largely absent from U.S. scholarship. Only one scholar, Nico Slate, a historian of African American-South Asian studies, has included Cedric Dover in his work. Beside Slate's book, *The Prism of Race: W. E. B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, Paul Robeson, and the Colored World of Cedric Dover,* and his related articles like "Race as Freedom: How Cedric Dover and Barack Obama Became Black," there is little existing scholarship with Dover in it. Therefore, much of my research related to Dover not

only draws on Slate's work, but is also the first of its kind, utilizing primary source material both from Dover's own writings and Dover's contemporaries' work about him.[15]

Though I had not known Cedric Dover before this thesis, I will now never forget him. While he was a complex and even problematic figure, he also pushed the boundaries of scholarship, genre, race, and, as Slate indicates, the emerging world of "Colored Cosmopolitan," which re-envisioned a society that could transcend traditional racial distinctions. Even while perpetuating certain oppressions, his groundbreaking work helped pave the way for interdisciplinary thought, multiracial perspectives, and coalition building across racial identity lines. Dover is often excluded from the historical narrative of the twentieth century, perhaps because, as a biracial person, a leftist, and an interdisciplinary scholar working in multiple countries, it is hard to place him in a singular category, whether related to his racial identity, his scholarship, or any other aspects of his life. However, I resonate with Dover because of his dedication to aligning all parts of his work with his passions for science, history, art, literature, and politics, especially as they intersect with his racial identity. Dover himself explained, "My lifelong interest, as a Eurasian from India myself, has been in the problems, achievements, and creativeness of the coloured peoples, especially the coloured minorities," thereby indicating that his work cannot be separated from his commitments to his "coloured" identity and the development of "coloured" solidarity.[16]

Therefore, Dover is a vital part of this thesis because of his groundbreaking efforts to elevate Eurasian communities and build coalition across racial and national lines. Dover and his work point to the impact of a biracial South Asian identity on an individual's sense of self,

---

[15] Slate, *The Prism of Race*; Nico Slate, "Race as Freedom: How Cedric Dover and Barack Obama Became Black," *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 37, no. 2 (2014): 222–40, https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2012.715661.

[16] Slate, *The Prism of Race*, 27.

community, and resistance. While there is no universal model for biracial South Asian identity, Dover serves as a historical example of how one biracial South Asian made sense of and moved through the world given his status as a biracial person. Though Dover's experiences as a twentieth century biracial South Asian in India, the UK, and U.S. are very different from those growing up in the twenty-first century, his legacy provides insight into biracial identity in the context of global oppressive systems like colonialism, imperialism, and white supremacy that still affect the world today.

II. Dover's Challenge to Discipline, Form, and Race

As a Eurasian born in Calcutta, India in 1904, Dover first entered academia through biology, though his work eventually expanded well beyond the natural sciences, to incorporate social sciences, like anthropology, sociology, and history, and the arts, especially poetry, autobiography, and visual arts. Dover understood better than anyone that this interdisciplinary thinking was not characteristic of his time, as, in one essay, "Biology and Sociology," Dover asserts the connection between biology and sociology, while at the same time defending this understanding because of both disciplines' tendency to deny any association with the other. In particular, when Dover reflects on his teaching tenure at the New School in New York City, he remembers that, after proposing a course on "Biology and Society," "I had the feeling that it was good-humoredly included in the syllabus as a somewhat mysterious innovation." Even so, he utilized this interdisciplinary approach in much of his writing, often blending various genres in one piece of work. His genre blending is especially evident in the unpublished manuscript, *The Eurasian Voice*, a poetry anthology he edited in an effort to highlight and contextualize the works of nineteenth and twentieth century Eurasian poets. "Brown Phoenix" is located in the drafts of

this anthology, though Dover did not include any of his own poetry in the final manuscript. This interdisciplinarity is also present in his academic writings on race, science, social science, and taxonomy, particularly in his anthropology lecture notes, where he outlines the academic thinking on race while refuting biological racism.[17]

While Dover often challenged traditional notions of form and discipline through his writings, he was better known for his challenges to traditional notions of race. In his scholarship and writing on race and ethnic studies, Dover explored his biracial identity while producing criticisms of racism, white supremacy, colonization, and imperialism. For instance, in his most famous book, *Half-Caste*, which the *Pittsburgh Courier* characterized as his "Magnum Opus," Dover advocated for the significance and inclusion of multiracial youth in mainstream society while opposing eugenics and biological racism. The knowledge that came out of *Half-Caste* was so revelatory to Dover that, as historian Nico Slate puts it, he came to understand himself as a "'half- caste' in a world full of half-castes." While half-caste was often used as a derogatory slur against biracial South Asian-European people, Dover reclaimed the term through this book and elevated the status of bi- and multiracial peoples globally.[18]

III. Eurasian, Anglo-Indian, and "Coloured"

[17] Some of Dover's most notable appointments in academia occurred from 1948-1949 when he was a visiting lecturer in intergroup problems for the Graduate Faculty at the New School for Social Research, and from 1947-1948 when he was a visiting lecturer in Anthropology at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. Dover, "Chronological Statement," "Biology and Sociology," *The Eurasian Voice*, Manuscript, [n.d.], lecture notes, Cedric Dover Papers.

[18] Dover used the term 'half-caste' as a racial identifier to refer to his mixed-race identity more than as a reference to the former Indian caste system. Slate, *The Prism of Race,* 10, 14-18; Newspaper Article, "English Author, Student of Races, Debunks 'White Superiority' Theory," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, 1939, Cedric Dover papers; Cedric Dover, *Half-Caste* (Calcutta: M. Secker and Warburg, 1937); "Half-Caste, n. and Adj.," in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/83425.

Similarly, in *The Eurasian Voice*, Dover begins to disrupt traditional notions of race by reclaiming the power to name "Eurasians" separate from "Anglo-Indians." In his twenty-seven page introduction, he historicizes and contextualizes the poetry anthology from his editorial perspective, clearly defining himself and his anthologized five poets as Eurasian, while drawing a distinct difference between themselves and "Anglo-Indians," the term adopted by the Indian government in 1911 for Indian-European multiracial people to replace "Eurasian."[19] Though "Anglo-Indian" was the name incorporated into law, Dover states that this term was "sanctified by official proclamation, but ignored by custom," then sarcastically notes that "England had heard her 'sons.'" Here, Dover shows that he understood the adoption of this word as arising more from colonial consolation than from a genuine push for representation. The etymology of "Eurasian" supports this perception, as "Eurasian" was used more often than "Anglo-Indian" throughout the nineteenth century to refer to Indian-European mixed race people, suggesting that the replacement of "Eurasian" with "Anglo-Indian" was not a grassroots decision. In addition to this history, Dover distinguishes "Eurasian" from "Anglo-Indian" in order to put distance between Eurasians like himself who, as he understood, were anti-colonial thinkers connected to

[19] Within India, "Anglo-Indian" refers to a distinct ethnic group first created in the eighteenth century when European colonists married local Indian woman and the resulting biracial South Asian community married within its ethnic group so that, by Dover's time in the twentieth century, there were around 500,000 "Anglo-Indians" who the Indian government recognized as their own distinct community. While the British colonists and English government showed favoritism toward Anglo-Indians with governmental jobs, the English always rejected Anglo-Indians' attempts to assimilate with British society, keeping Anglo-Indians in a subordinate position relative to themselves. At the same time, though, Indians from other communities came to resent Anglo-Indians for this preferential treatment, as well as the fact that Anglo-Indians tended to look down other Indians, rejecting their own Indian heritage. Thus, Anglo-Indians were a truly liminal community, existing between the British and Indian communities while neither truly accepted them. Though such understandings of South Asian biraciality are specific to India, it is important to consider how these foundational ideas have permeated space and time so that they still affect biracial South Asians in and out of India today. For more on Anglo-Indians, see: Blair Williams, *Anglo-Indians: Vanishing Remnants of a Bygone Era: Anglo-Indians in India, North America, and the UK in 2000* (Calcutta: Tiljallah Relief Inc, 2002); Noel Pitts Gist and Roy Dean Wright, *Marginality and Identity: Anglo-Indians as a Racially-Mixed Minority in India,* (Leiden: Brill Archive, 1973); Lionel Caplan, *Children of Colonialism: Anglo-Indians in a Postcolonial World* (New York: Routledge, 2020); Alison Blunt, "Geographies of Diaspora and Mixed Descent: Anglo-Indians in India and Britain," *International Journal of Population Geography* 9, no. 4 (2003): 281–94, https://doi.org/10.1002/ijpg.287.

Indian culture, and the culture-deprived, uncreative "Anglo-Indians" who "sank deeper in the slime of patronage and greed" throughout the eighteenth century.[20]

The distinction between "Eurasian" and "Anglo-Indian" served not only to differentiate ideological values, but also to indicate poetic prowess. Dover names "Anglo-Indianism" as the phenomenon that "sterilised Eurasian creativeness and sagacity in every sphere," as Anglo-Indians had no roots in Indian "national aspirations," "folk culture," or "social needs." Dover points to Anglo-Indians' education, often run by English Christian organizations, as the source of their detachment from India. By looking at some of Dover's handwritten edits in *The Eurasian Voice's* manuscript, it becomes even more clear that Dover considered Anglo-Indians' colonial education a major source of their trite poetry. For instance, Dover first writes that the Christian-English education was "depriving [Eurasians] of the potter's clay;" however, in his revision, Dover replaces "depriving" with "robbing." This stronger, more emotional and imagistic word choice indicates that Dover viewed Anglo-Indian teachings as an injustice to Eurasians. Therefore, when Dover later describes Anglo-Indian poetry as "destined for the cupboards of fond admirers or the dusty archives of Indian libraries" because of its unoriginality and "religious sing-song rhymes… with coronations and jubilees bulging out like the curves of an epidemic," he does so with an awareness that this kind of poetry is a result of Eurasians' positions as colonial subjects. [21]

---

[20] While Dover does not discuss this in his introduction, it is important to note that the Oxford English Dictionary traces the use of "Anglo-Indian" in texts from as early as 1805; however, most of these nineteenth century texts use "Anglo-Indian" to refer to "A person of British descent born or living in India." Dover would have been familiar with this linguistic history, so his decision to use "Eurasian" instead of "Anglo-Indian" is also a result of his desire to distance his identity from those of British colonial rulers who lived in India. "Anglo-Indian, n. and Adj.," in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/7587; "Eurasian, Adj. and n.," in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/65078; Dover, *The Eurasian Voice*, Manuscript, 11, Cedric Dover papers.

[21] Dover, *The Eurasian Voice*, Manuscript, 12-13, Cedric Dover papers.

In his introduction to *The Eurasian Voice*, Dover included excerpts of Anglo-Indian poetry that demonstrated Anglo-Indians' allegiance to their colonial rulers. For example, Dover includes the first four lines from a privately printed poem, "Ode to Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen Empress on the Occasion of Her Imperial Majesty's Visit to India in 1911": "A day of great rejoicing all o'er India's plain, / From ev'ry lip a welcome goes forth in one acclaim: / To Thee, our Royal Mistress, we humbly bow our knee, / And ask out Heavenly Father to guard and shelter thee." Not only does this represent the unoriginality that Dover was so opposed to, it also exemplifies Anglo-Indians' closer identification with colonial white Britians than with Indians.[22]

With this in mind, it is even more apparent that Dover's distinctive use of the term "Eurasian" is part of a larger resistance to not only colonial power, but also conceptions of biological race. While both "Eurasians" and "Anglo-Indians" have the same biracial identity configuration, they do not have the same relationship to coloniality, and are therefore not the same. With his careful distinction between the two groups, Dover emphasizes that race is a social construction, not a biological trait. In this way, Dover undermines disempowering colonial naming practices as well as stigmatizing theories of biological race from his time.[23]

Dover's own racial identity shaped his relationship to the eugenics movement, one of the most popular scientific schools of thought in the early twentieth century; since his career began in science and biology, Dover accepted eugenics until the mid 1930s. Although, when Dover supported eugenics, he used it to justify racial mixing more than racial purity. For instance, in 1934, Dover co-published the article, "The Eurasian Community as a Eugenic Problem," in which he presented the historical and then-contemporary condition of Eurasians. Notions of

[22] Dover, *The Eurasian Voice*, Manuscript, 14, 15, Cedric Dover papers.

[23] Dover employs language in a similar way in *Half-Caste* by intentionally using the term "ethnicity" in order to connote that race was a social construction. Slate, *The Prism of Race,* 14; Dover, *The Eurasian Voice*, Manuscript, 12-13, Cedric Dover papers.

Eurasian inferiority pervaded reports, scholarship, and literature of the time, as evident in this excerpt—not from a "scientific observer," as Dover explains, but a "novelist," E.B. Reuter—"Physically the Eurasians are slight and weak. They are naturally indolent and will enter into no employment requiring exertion or labor." Dover sought to disprove such stigmas of "cultural inferiority, immorality, cowardice, and slave mentality" in his works. Still, his training as a biologist and zoologist set him up to classify living organisms, like plants, animals, and even humans, as he did with Eurasians in this article.[24]

With this paper, Dover makes a call for eugenicists to conduct "a eugenic survey of Eurasians" using "an extensive questionnaire, in addition to… direct observation" to provide data on elements of Anglo-Indians' community, such as their "physical and psychological characteristics," "economic position and social and political environment," and "the literacy of the community, and an evident desire for self-improvement." To Dover, though, one of the most important aspects of this survey would be a section with "a critical record of their history and achievements," which would help improve their current condition by using this historical information to provide policy recommendations to the leaders of their countries. While this document reveals Dover's use of interdisciplinarity, blending history, eugenics, and political science, it also demonstrates why Dover supported eugenics for a time—he saw it as a scientific method for improving the place of Eurasians. However, Dover denounced it when he realized that eugenics served to reinforce racial hierarchy and racism.[25]

Dover's attention to language, naming, and terminology was important throughout his life and career, as he eventually came to identify more broadly as a "coloured" man, which

[24] Slate, *The Prism of Race,* 15; Dover, and Henry E. Roseboom, "The Eurasian Community as a Eugenics Problem," journal article in *A Decade of Progress in Eugenics* 1934, 6, Cedric Dover papers.

[25] Slate, *The Prism of Race,* 15; Dover, and Henry E. Roseboom, "The Eurasian Community as a Eugenics Problem," journal article in *A Decade of Progress in Eugenics* 1934, 11, Cedric Dover papers.

allowed him the space to be more culturally adaptable and to build community and solidarity with nonwhite communities affected by the oppressive powers of colonialism, imperialism, and white supremacy. This is evident even in *The Eurasian Voice*, as, by the end of his introduction, Dover connects the experiences of Eurasian poets to poets of color more broadly. He explains that "like other creative artists amongst the coloured peoples," Eurasian poets channel political and folk traditions in their work with skills that surpass English poets who are "condemned… to introspection and romanticism." With poetry as their storytelling medium, Dover links Eurasians and "coloured peoples" in the fight against oppression by placing their collective worth, grounded in their marginalized perspectives, higher than that of English poets, who are representative of the white colonial and imperial leaders.[26]

IV. Racial Classification and Scientific Classification

Dover was adamant about challenging racial classifications because his biracial identity did not fit neatly into the preexisting racial categories; however, Dover's scientific use of language to classify and categorize still upheld notions of racial separation and hierarchy. This is most clearly demonstrated in his lecture notes. In one set of lecture notes, titled, "The Classification of Mankind," Dover begins the lecture by defining "Taxonomy," which, as he puts it, "deals with the classification of living things in terms of relationships." Then he describes "species" and "subspecies," with a note that subspecies is sometimes called "geographic races," though "the usage is colloquial not scientific, and the word *race* has no formal sanction in biology." Dover makes this vital distinction because he believes that "to talk, even colloquially, of 'human races' requires social implications. The proofs are to the contrary: human groups are so mixed that they cannot be separated into subspecies." Aligning with his academic

[26] Slate, *The Prism of Race,* 10, 17; Dover, *The Eurasian Voice*, Manuscript, 26, Cedric Dover papers.

commitments, Dover refutes the logic of eugenics here and pushes his understanding of all people as mixed-race people, evident in his articulation of himself as a "'half- caste' in a world full of half-castes."[27] Even so, by stating that the use of "human races" has "social implications" for supporting racism and race-based oppressions, Dover demonstrates his understanding of the social bias that occurs within the use of classification. However, because he only recognizes this for "human races," he does not extend this awareness to the other instances where classification has similarly oppressive social implications.[28]

Dover's use of classification in this lecture, "The Classification of Mankind," undermines his larger goals of opposing racism because it still serves to generalize and reinforce racial hierarchy. For instance, after the first section of taxonomy, Dover describes "Major Types of Recent Man." Here, he outlines three major types: "White (Eurasiatic)," "Yellow (Mongoloid)," and "Black," followed by a physical description of each, including skin tone, head shape, eye and hair color, and nose type. Descriptions of skin color included, "pale reddish white to olive brown," "saffron to yellow, and even reddish, brown," and "brown to brown-black… but some yellow-brown," for "White," "Yellow," and "Black" respectively. Between the three descriptions, the "White" group had more space for nuance and variation, while the "Yellow" and "Black" categories left less room for variation because the generalizations were stated in definitive terms. This is apparent in the description of nose type, as the nose type for the "black" group was "low-bridged, broad to very broad" compared to the "yellow," which was "low or medium-bridged, medium to broad;" by stating that those in the "black" group have only "low-bridged" and "broad to very broad" noses, Dover reinforces anti-black, racialized

[27] Slate, *The Prism of Race*, 10.

[28] Slate, *The Prism of Race,* 10; Dover, "The Classification of Mankind," Lecture Notes, Cedric Dover papers.

stereotypes about how all people in this "black" group look, whereas the individuals in the "yellow" group have a range that allows for more variation and nuance. While those in the "white" group are also restricted to a range for nose type, every characteristic of the "white" group has a range, like "moderate to profuse [hair] on body," whereas only a few of the descriptions for the "yellow" and "black" groups are ranges. As in the description of body hair, where both "yellow" and "black" groups simply have "sparse [hair] on body," the "yellow" and "black" descriptions are more often restrictive and generalized.[29]

Though Dover's practice of classifying humans into such groups likely came from his training as an academic both in the natural and social sciences, the content of his lecture notes still create a hierarchy of race with "white" people at the top, evident in their position as first on the list and their broader range of characteristics. These ranges imply a high level of study and attention to detail, as they show that researchers did not simply generalize for the sake of classification, but made efforts to account for the vast differences among all "white" people. However, the same courtesy was not granted to "yellow" and "black" people, though "black" people are clearly at the bottom of the racial hierarchy, with physical characteristics rooted in stereotype and generalization, their position at the bottom of the list, and the absence of a clarifying or scientific term—where the "white" group has "Eurasiatic" as a more specific term and the "yellow" group has "Mongoloid," the "black" group just has "black."[30]

At the end of the list, Dover makes a note that "these major types of groups, which can be divided into sub-groups, are NOT subspecies or races," a point that he had already mentioned, but emphasized anyway. This is important to note because it points to an awareness, though what specific kind of awareness is not entirely clear. Perhaps Dover was aware that classifying

[29] Dover, "The Classification of Mankind," Lecture Notes, Cedric Dover papers.

[30] Dover, "The Classification of Mankind," Lecture Notes, Cedric Dover papers.

humans contradicted his opposition to biological notions of racial inferiority and hierarchy, or maybe he saw how easily it would have been for students to believe biological racism from this hierarchical list. Either way, Dover strove to distance the classification system from race by discouraging terminology such as "subspecies" and "races," but because the classification system is already rooted in a history of racism and hierarchy, he does not have to use these terms for them to still be present in these lecture notes. Though Dover tried to resist the common racial teachings of the time, he only sometimes achieved this, as, ultimately, the methodologies and terminologies he used reinforced racial messages rooted in white supremacy.[31]

V. When Racial Solidarity is Oppressive

Dover's discussion of the "black" and "yellow" groups in his lecture, "The Classification of Mankind," serves as an instance when Dover's political desire to build interracial solidarity did not humanize his portrayal of nonwhite peoples. This ultimately leads to further stigmatization and oppression of these groups because it perpetuates racial bias and racism in academia. It is important to keep in mind that Dover wrote these lecture notes with an audience of students in mind. So, while Dover's convictions as a scholar pushed him to rethink racism and racial categorization, he still subscribed to certain academic notions of race that did not reconceptualize the role of race, thereby indicating that he did not always push his students to rethink the role of race either.[32]

Additionally, Dover's desire to develop transnational, interracial solidarity often led him to gloss over others' historical differences. While this is present in "Brown Phoenix" when Dover proclaims "I am you" to "brown man, black man, / Yellow man, mongrel man," this

[31] Dover, "The Classification of Mankind," Lecture Notes, Cedric Dover papers.

[32] Dover, "The Classification of Mankind," Lecture Notes, Cedric Dover papers.

flattening of difference is even more apparent and problematic in poems like, “Hullo There - N----r!” For example, the first strophe reads:

Hullo there - N----r!

I dare to greet you, brother,

As you playful call each other.

For while you might be blacker,

Though often you’re much lighter,

We’ve both got it, strong or faint,

What white folks call the taint

Of being joyborn in the sun.

(Dover, “Hullo There - N----r!” stanza 1)

In this particular poem, Dover speaks directly to African American men in order to build solidarity and comradery, evident in his use of the word “brother” in the second line. In this four strophe poem where the last strophe is a single line, the first three strophes repeat this phrase “to greet you, brother,” emphasizing Dover’s desire to meet African Americans on an equal basis. However, his language reveals this glossing over process, especially in his verb choice, “dare.” By using “dare” in “I dare to greet you,” Dover indicates his familiarity with the negative connotations of the n-word and his familiarity with the positive reclamation of the n-word by African Americans, as seen in the line, “As you playful call each other.” However, even with the complicated and traumatic history of the n-word, Dover “dares” to use it, thereby exercising his power and privilege as a nonblack person of color over black people. He hopes to access a black brotherly space, even says that the n-word is “the name we share together,” but Dover neither identifies as black nor experiences the world as a black person. Thus, by appropriating the

n-word, he is ignoring his oppressive power as someone who can choose when to and when not to embrace blackness. While Dover might have intended to write the poem as a show of kinship with African Americans subjected to the oppression of white supremacy, he ends up enacting his own kind of oppression that minimizes historical differences for the sake of solidarity.[33]

Despite the fact that Dover enacts oppression through his abundant use of the n-word in his own poetry from drafts of *The Eurasian Voice*, Dover forges a connection between Eurasian poets and poets of color in the final manuscript by breaking traditional notions of poetry in order to redefine what poetry should look like and whose poetry should be important. In particular, Dover emphasizes the nuances of the English language for Eurasian poets, for, he states, "most of them speak English," yet English is still a "grafted tongue." To discuss their use of English, Dover points to one of his anthologized poets, George Walker, a Eurasian poet in his twenties at the time, who Dover describes as "the major figure: widely read, analytical, passionate, relating himself to social frustration." Though critics described Walker's poetry as having an "unselective, random and unoriginal vocabulary and style," Dover does not attack Walker's poeticism. Instead, he contextualizes Walker, reminding readers that "Walker is not an Englishman, but Eurasian with eight thousand miles between him and the sources of English poetry." In light of this, Dover believes it is even more important to study Walker and poets like Walker, even if their use of English is not up to traditional English poetry standards, because they embody the "folk flavour" of India "with local intonations, stresses and idioms" that are full of colloquialisms particular to their place, identity, and community. Dover likens this Eurasian

[33] Perhaps Dover used the n-word so abundantly in his poems because of his close relationship with major African American intellectuals, artists, and scholars, like W.E.B. DuBois, Paul Robeson, Langston Hughes, and Aaron Douglas, or because of his time in African American spaces, like Fisk University, or even because of his publications in major African American journals like *The Crisis* and *Phylon*. Most likely it was a result of his understanding that his mixed race identity provided him cultural adaptability. While Dover did not identify as black, some evidence suggests that his father might have been, but this is unclear, especially given that he rarely talked about his father. Slate, "Race as Freedom," 222–40; Dover, *The Eurasian Voice*, Drafts, Cedric Dover papers; Slate, "Dover's Colored Cosmopolitanism," in *The Prism of Race,* 9-29.

poetry to that of "the modern Negro poets" who "produce poems that are altogether different from the English tradition in feel and flow" in order to continue building a transnational understanding of interracial solidarity. Through his attention to language, Dover makes space to celebrate nontraditional English poetry found in marginalized communities like Eurasian and African American communities.[34]

VI. Maintaining Patriarchy

Dover also breaks tradition by redefining the literary canon through his use of the anthology as a form, but he reifies patriarchal notions of representation through his selection. While Dover asserts the significance of Eurasian male poets as literary figures, he excludes Eurasian women from his representation of Eurasian poetry, thereby ignoring the intersectional oppression that arises from race and gender. Despite the central role of women, including his wives, in his work, Dover often excluded women from his imaginings of racial solidarity, evident in his exclusive call to "brown man, black man, / Yellow man, mongrel man" in "Brown Phoenix," as well as his call to his black "brothers" in "Hullo There - N----r!" In his role as editor, Dover organized the anthology into six sections, with his introduction, "The Eurasian Voice," as the first and longest section, and each of the five male poets having their own section afterward. Dover, exercising his power to name, titled each section according to a line of phrase from the work of the poet whose section it was. Even as editor, Dover continued to favor masculine language, as seen in his choice of title for the anthology's first section, "Brothers, Brothers, Bravely Row," a line from the famous poem of nineteenth century poet, Henry Derozio, "Song from the Fakeer of Jungheera."[35]

---

[34] Dover, *The Eurasian Voice*, Manuscript, 5, 25, Cedric Dover papers.

[35] Dover, *The Eurasian Voice*, Drafts, Cedric Dover papers.

While Dover could not control how each individual poet portrayed women, he could control which poems were included in the anthology and how many from each author were included. Therefore, through his power as editor, Dover could have sought to create an anthology in which women were portrayed with nuance and agency. Instead, the poems that did include women depicted them as one-dimensional, and often only in terms of their relationship to the poems' male speakers. In Henry Derozio's section, the second longest poetry section, for example, Dover includes eighteen poems; only three of them mention a woman or female-personified character. In the longest poetry section, featuring twenty-five poems from George Walker, eight poems have women in them; in four of those eight poems, the women are portrayed as either wives, mothers, or objects of the speakers' desire. With anthology as his medium, Dover had the opportunity to bring greater representation to Eurasian poetry, though he excluded Eurasian women from his selection of poets, demonstrating another instance of Dover's dismissal of intersectional oppression, causing him to become an oppressive force himself.[36]

As in *The Eurasian Voice*, Dover uses masculine language in his lecture notes, evident in the very title of one lecture, "The Classification of Mankind." Though the use of "mankind" itself as a representation for all humans is rooted in a patriarchal bias, Dover upholds this bias by positing theories on race strictly through a male perspective, as in his subheading "Major Types of Recent Man" and the use of masculine "he" pronouns when discussing general examples. This use of language is consistent in other lectures as well, for instance, his lecture on "'Race' Prejudice" speaks broadly about humans only by referencing "man."[37]

---

[36] Slate, *The Prism of Race,* 11, 31; Dover, *The Eurasian Voice*, Drafts, Cedric Dover papers.

[37] Dover, "The Classification of Mankind," "'Race' Prejudice," Lecture Notes, Cedric Dover papers.

Also in "'Race' Prejudice," Dover includes the Greek mythological figures, Pan, Odysseus, and Penelope in order to discuss the histories of race and race mixing. Dover's inclusion of Penelope marks one of his only inclusions of explicitly female characters or figures; however, Penelope does not appear to hold any power or agency in this instance, as, in his two sentence inclusion of her, he uses the passive voice to say, "Penelope is besieged by common suitors while her husband is away," as though she is simply at the whim of her male suitors, thereby not holding power or choice in the situation. In the next sentence: "In some versions they are defeated by Ulysees in good time; in others Penelope eventually succumbs and gives birth to Pan," Dover does not use the passive voice, but, with the word choice "succumbs," he still portrays Penelope as a weak figure. Ultimately, one of Penelope's only actions in the piece is her giving birth, but this is not a liberatory portrayal of women, as it implies that women's main action is to give birth. Thus, Dover includes Penelope in his lecture, but he does not do so to highlight the important role of women, and his representation of her is very much devoid of power and agency. While one might excuse Dover by arguing that he was acting characteristically of his time, it is clear from various aspects of Dover's life and works, including his interdisciplinarity and radical racial views, that he did not act as most scholars of his time. Therefore, he could think against the traditional beliefs of his peers, but, repeatedly in his work, he does not when it comes to gender, undervaluing and excluding women from his theories, and, even more, from his vision of a united future.[38]

VII. Form as Resistance

[38] Dover, "'Race' Prejudice," Lecture Notes, Cedric Dover papers.

Even though Dover often takes on oppressive roles in his teaching, writing, and editorial work, he still continues to break down tradition through his use of form. This is apparent in his lectures, "'Race' Prejudice" and "The Classification of Mankind," through his interdisciplinary use of evidence. For instance "'Race' Prejudice" discusses the history of race relations and racial thinking through Marxism, etymology, classics (evident in the use of Pan mythology and examples from Roman history), anthropology, sociology, and psychology. Likewise, in "The Classification of Mankind," Dover uses biology, as in his discussion of taxonomy and species, anthropology, and race theory, which seems to be influenced by eugenics. By taking this approach to teaching, Dover would have been showing his students how to think about the ways in which various topics and disciplines connect across disciplinary boundaries, thereby resisting traditional academic structures of the early twentieth century to prove that, like his racial identity, one cannot view the world through a staunch disciplinary lens.[39]

Similarly, Dover uses his introduction of *The Eurasian Voice* to reclaim the anthology as an interdisciplinary space where he can provide historical contextualization and literary criticism along with the larger collection of poetry. This kind of genre-blending is not only characteristic of Dover's writing, but it also provides a useful space for Dover to engage his own perceptions about the purpose of poetry more directly. For Dover, poetry exists for everyday people; therefore, this introduction exists for the same reason—to serve the needs of regular readers by orienting them to the histories and literary conversations of the anthology. Dover's literary criticism appears most poignantly in his discussion of Anglo-Indian poetry, especially as he elucidates particular pieces of poetry that pander to British colonial rulers.[40]

---

[39] Dover, "The Classification of Mankind," "'Race' Prejudice," Lecture Notes, Cedric Dover papers.

[40] Wendy Bishop and David Starkey, "Anthology," in *Keywords in Creative Writing* (University Press of Colorado, 2006), 11–13, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt4cgr61.6; David Damrosch, "So Much to Read, So Little Time: Isn't That the Point?," *Chronicle of Higher Education* 45, no. 32 (1999): B7-B8, https://login.proxy.library.emory.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.proxy.library.emory.edu/trade-journals/so

Entwined in Dover's literary criticism is a historical conversation about the internalization of colonialism, the negotiations with oppressive power, and the enduring presence of Eurasians. One of the most historical parts of the introduction outlines the life of Henry Derozio, whose poems make up the first section of the anthology. As Dover explains the significance of Derozio, a prominent poet who died in 1831 at age twenty-two, it is clear that Dover is establishing a historical record for readers to understand the depth and magnitude of Eurasian accomplishment in India. In addition to a historical record, though, Dover demonstrates the connection between his own generation of Eurasians and Derozio's by discussing the political convictions of Derozio who, like Dover, sought to create spaces for biracial South Asian-European peoples, then known as "East Indians." For instance, like Dover's journal *The New Outlook*, Derozio created *The East Indian*, the first Eurasian newspaper in Asia. One of the most enduring lessons from Derozio's life is that biracial South Asian-European people have a long history of building community spaces, advocating for representation, and flourishing, despite their marginalized circumstances. Dover's role as a historian in this introduction is a necessary part of the process of filling in Eurasian history and providing broader representation for Eurasians in the larger narrative of India, as well as the larger narrative of the world.[41]

VIII. Conclusion

-much-read-little-time-isnt-that-point/docview/214713668/se-2?accountid=10747; Dover, *The Eurasian Voice*, Manuscript, 26, Cedric Dover papers.

[41] Dover started the journal *The New Outlook* with his first wife, Mercia Wood-Hayes, and a man named Henry Roseboom in 1925 to "speak for the Eurasian community." While Dover mentions the journal and all three creators in his introduction, Nico Slate's research indicates that Wood-Hayes is rarely given credit by Dover or others for her foundational advocacy work in the Eurasian community. Slate, *The Prism of Race,* 11; Dover, *The Eurasian Voice*, Manuscript, 10, 22, Cedric Dover papers; Makarand R. Paranjape, "'East Indian' Cosmopolitanism," *Interventions: The International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 13, no. 4 (December 2011): 550–69, https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2011.628119; "East Indian, Adj. and n.," in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/59113#eid5931715.

Though Cedric Dover's legacy in American academia is largely confined to a few scholarly conversations, his primary source material provides invaluable insight into conceptions of race, identity formation, and politics of power in the first half of the twentieth century. Through Dover's scientific writings, his lecture notes, and his editorial voice in *The Eurasian Voice*, it is clear to see the ways in which Dover both broke and maintained oppressive traditions. While Dover advocated for a radical re-understanding of race that challenged a black-white binary and forefronted the experiences of mixed race peoples, like Eurasians, Dover maintained racial hierarchy among communities of color by adhering to conceptions of a racial classification system and glossing over specific racial histories for the sake of solidarity. Dover also maintained patriarchal gender roles by excluding women, specifically Eurasian women, from his work and imaginations of a racially unified future. Through these actions and absences, Dover demonstrated how he himself could act as an oppressive force, even while advocating for radical colonial, imperial, and racial upheaval. Still, in spite of these contradictions, Dover was a staunch proponent of "coloured solidarity." Thus, when Dover makes his call in "Brown Phoenix" for "brown man, black man, / Yellow man, mongrel man" to "Listen," it comes from a place of authenticity—a genuine yearning from a biracial man, a brown phoenix, to create a new world of racial unity, one that has never existed before.

Through Dover, this chapter ultimately seeks to understand biracial South Asian identity in a historical context. As Dover demonstrates in "The Eurasian Community as a Eugenics Problem" and *The Eurasian Voice*, creating a historical record of biracial South Asian identity is necessary to begin constructing a history of this group for those who do not have access to this knowledge, as it enables broader representation and provides historical meaning for biracial South Asians in all parts of the world.

CHAPTER TWO:

Oral, Visual, and Textual Representations: Contemporary Bi- and Multiracial South Asian Identity through Interview and Exhibition

I. Introduction

While Cedric Dover's life and work demonstrate some of the most pressing issues related to biracial South Asians' representation, classification, resistance, and oppression historically, most people are not familiar with him at all. This is the reality not only for Dover, but for biracial South Asians and multiracial peoples more broadly in history and contemporary times. Still, central to resisting such erasure are the efforts that come from the ground, as evident in Mixedracefaces, a family-run, UK-based organization founded in 2018 that showcases portraits of and personal stories from multiracial people. As a visual and textual storytelling platform that uses online projects and exhibitions to oppose the erasure of multiracial identity globally, this organization works in conversation with a series of interviews that I conducted for my study to provide a nuanced glimpse into bi- and multiracial South Asian identity as it exists today. Though the conditions and circumstances for many bi- and multiracial South Asians have changed since Dover's time, many of the complex issues and histories related to racial identity are the same. Whether they are dealing with the effects of racial cataloguing, naming practices, color consciousness, or exoticization, each of the participants in my interviews and figures in Mixedracefaces reveals the need for greater investigation and representation in academic and public spaces.

II. Interviews and Protocol

Between October and November 2020, I conducted interviews over Zoom with six people who identified with the term "biracial South Asian," using snowball sampling as a method for gathering participants. For the sake of confidentiality, I refer to my participants with pseudonyms, such as Participant A, Participant B, etc. Each participant fell within the ages of 18 and 25, while half were male and half were female. All of my interview participants were college educated, and most went to school in a region far from where they grew up. Even with racial, geographic, and generational similarities, each participant's lived experience differed depending on factors such as gender, parentage, and childhood community. Given their diverse backgrounds, each of my participants could provide insight into my driving research questions: What factors impact the racial identity formation and community belonging of biracial South Asian Americans? What sites of resistance to white supremacist oppression emerge through the group's storytelling?

Figure 2.1 shows a table with basic demographic information about each participant. This provides some insight into each participant, allowing readers to get a sense for who they are and where they come from, even though there is not space within the body of the text to explain each of their lives and backgrounds. Since I conducted semi-structured interviews with each person and not deep ethnographic research of their lives, this chart provides qualitative introductory information for each participant, giving more personhood to their pseudonyms.[42] The table is organized chronologically in the order that I conducted the interviews, with Participant A listed first because I conducted my interview with him first, Participant B listed second because I conducted my interview with him second, and the rest following this same practice. Because I

[42] With the table, I hope to get as close as possible given the constraints of the thesis form to ethnographer Robert Desjarlais's example in *Sensory Biographies* of "[thinking] through a few features of the life itself" in order to portray Mheme, his research participant, in the most comprehensive way. Robert R. Desjarlais, "Hardship & Comfort," in *Sensory Biographies: Lives and Deaths Among Nepal's Yolmo Buddhists* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003): 20-53.

utilized interview methodology in my study, my thesis contains the participants' self-representations. Therefore, it does not include any of the tensions or contradictions between participants' discursive self-representations and their observable lives, tensions or contradictions which one might discover otherwise using ethnographic research.

III. Mixedracefaces

While my interviews provide a small glimpse into biracial South Asian American experience, the grassroots arts organization Mixedracefaces supplements this sample with a larger number of bi- and multiracial South Asian experiences, and its online portrait and narrative exhibition format grants the opportunity to dive further into the nuances of visual and textual culture. Even more, it allows the space to investigate how representations of the self by the self compare to representations of the self by others.

Through Mixedracefaces, and even Cedric Dover whose homebase was in the UK, the transnational conversation about bi- and multiracial South Asians becomes more apparent, particularly in the UK. Given its historical role as a colonial and imperial power, the UK has been the destination for diverse peoples from all over the world, making it a unique ground for interracial interactions and multiracial community building. Mixedracefaces embodies the results of this history, showcasing the stories of multiracial people in order to use photography and narrative as representation to disrupt traditional black-white understanding of race and the exoticization of multiracial people.[43]

The organization's founder and photographer, Tenee Attoh, who runs the project with her son and daughter-in-law, created the organization in memory of her mother, a Dutch woman who married a Ghanaian photographer and relocated her life to Ghana in the 1950s. Though the

[43] "About Us," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed March 10, 2021, https://mixedracefaces.com/about-us.

organization brings attention to her parents' position as early pioneers of interracial relationships and her own mixed race identity, such an inception serves to signify the cultural importance of interracial relationships and multiracial people everywhere. Ultimately, Mixedracefaces serves as a form of self-representation for Attoh herself, as well as for those who tell their stories through the organization's projects.[44]

IV. Exhibition, Space, Photography, and Cataloguing

Since the pandemic, Mixedracefaces has been operating online through its website and social media pages, though in August 2019 it hosted its first physical exhibition, entitled "Chapter 1." The organization's leaders put on this two-day exhibition in Peckham, London, choosing this location in order to celebrate Mixedracefaces's birthplace in that community. At the same time, this space functioned as a launch point for the organization, signaling the project's forward motion as a tool for community building. Despite the exhibition's ephemeral nature, this intention for the exhibition, and thus the intention for Mixedracefaces as a whole, is clear in the written archive that still exists surrounding the exhibit. For instance, in a press release preceding the exhibit, the founders described their vision for it, saying, "Mainly we want this event to be a place for people to connect," also stating that "our main focus for now is on the community and the people."[45] Likewise, the title of the exhibition, "Chapter 1," served to indicate the organization's intention to add to the exhibit or create new ones over time.

---

[44] "About Us," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed March 10, 2021, https://mixedracefaces.com/about-us.

[45] "Mixedracefaces; a Must-See Exhibition Coming to Copeland Gallery," *Copeland Park & Bussey Building* (blog), August 7, 2019, https://www.copelandpark.com/blog/2019/08/07/mixedracefaces-a-must-see-exhibition-coming-to-copeland-gallery/.

Though the physical exhibition is no longer in existence, the photographs from the exhibit have been archived on the Mixedracefaces website. The organization of portraits side-by-side with labels containing each person's narrative next to or beneath their portrait provides insight into the format of the museum exhibit. However, the viewer can find even more through the Mixedracefaces website itself, where the contents of the actual exhibition exist, making the website itself a virtual exhibition space (Figure 2.2). Since 2018 when the organization completed "Chapter 1," it has completed four more chapters and is currently on its sixth chapter. While it is not clear if particular themes unify each chapter, the chapters seem to be organized chronologically, and the portraits within each chapter are presented on the website in rows and columns, like tiles. Each portrait is clickable, bringing viewers to a new webpage with the portrait at the top left and a personal statement from the person pictured next to their portrait.

As an organization that seeks to build an international multiracial community, Mixedracefaces contains a folder on their website entitled, "International," which shows the portraits of multiracial people outside of the UK, though without explanation there are also some people from the UK as well. However, what separates this "International" section is that, instead of Tenee Attoh's uniform portraits, one sees self-selected photos of multiracial people (Figure 2.3). The fact that these photos were self-selected is very important, as it indicates how multiracial people themselves decide to represent themselves. As with Cedric Dover and Tenee Attoh, this element of self-representation points to the ways in which multiracial people who do not see representations of themselves have had to create their own spaces for representation. With Dover, this manifested in the form of scholarship and poetry, as in publications like "The Eurasian Community as a Eugenic Problem" and *The Eurasian Voice*; with Attoh, it is the creation of Mixedracefaces; for the multiracial people not in the UK, it is in the selection of their

portrait and the crafting of their personal statement. While this format provides space for individuals to have their narrative add complexity and nuance to their portrait, it is hard not to see similarities between the Mixedracefaces online exhibit and the racial cataloguing of late nineteenth and early twentieth century pseudo-scientists.

Photos from early twentieth century scientists were meant to catalogue nonwhite peoples in order to highlight distinct characteristics and facial features that could then be attributed to their racial or social difference. The portraits and selfies in Mixedracefaces do the same, as evident in Profiles 1 and 2, where the photos of the multiracial South Asian men record their unique racial characteristics, upper body, and skin tone against a plain background (Figures 2.4, 2.5). Even in photos with more complex backgrounds, like those in Profiles 4 and 7, the same photographic format of showcasing the person's facial features and upper body create the same cataloguing effect[46] (Figures 2.7, 2.11).

By the end of the nineteenth century, photography had become vital for cataloguing, generalizing, and mastering the look, and therefore, the body of the Other, whether a racial other or societal other, or both. For anthropological and eugenic practitioners of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the photograph became a means of capturing the illusion scientific objectivity, though, as any analysis of the photograph will reveal, it is anything but objective, as it is steeped with as much of the photographer's sociopolitical biases as any other piece of evidence. Through early anthropological and eugenic efforts to catalogue using photography, as

---

[46] Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October* 39 (1986): 3, https://doi.org/10.2307/778312; "American | Indian/Turks & Caicos," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/american-indian-turks-caicos; "Guyanese | Indo Trinidadian/Irish," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/guyanese-indo-trinidadian-irish; "Indian | Tanzanian," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/indian-tanzanian; "Pakistani | Thai," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/pakistani-thai.

in examples of cataloguing criminality through photographic documentation of people in prison, cataloguing blackness through enslaved people, and cataloguing black female sexuality through Sara Baartman, it is apparent that such photographs came to demonstrate, as photographer and theorist Allan Sekula put it, "the tension between the desire to measure and the desire to look."[47] Through an analysis of this tension, one can clearly see how the desire to measure and the desire to look were part of larger systems of oppression, particularly patriarchal white supremacy, rooted in racism, dehumanization, and exoticization.[48]

Because Tenee Attoh created Mixedracefaces as a biracial person herself, and because she and her family have made personal statements central to photographic presentation, the organization's work provides a counterexample, or an oppositional gaze, to the history that marks photography and racial cataloguing.[49] However, amid the tiles and organizational structure of the exhibitions' main pages, there is monotony in the repeated faces which continues to engage in cataloguing and dehumanization. Since multiracial people's very existence creates ambiguity, complicating traditional notions and generalizations of race, one could interpret Mixedracefaces's work as an effort to reassert what the organization's founders believe race is and is not, especially in context of the exhibitions' titling practices, which engage in further scientific classification and dehumanization. Despite their best intentions, Mixedracefaces has to deal with the limitations of the history they are in conversation with and the media they are

---

[47] Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," 44.

[48] Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," 3; John Tagg, "Evidence, Truth and Order: Photographic Records and the Growth of the State," in *The Burden of Representation* (London: Macmillan, 1987), 60–102; Anemona Hartocollis, "Who Should Own Photos of Slaves? The Descendants, Not Harvard, a Lawsuit Says," *New York Times*, (2019): 5, https://archiv.louverture.ch/KAMPA/AGASSIZ/tamara_renty_NYT.pdf; Clifton Crais and Pamela Scully, *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story and a Biography,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Sadiah Qureshi, "Displaying Sara Baartman, the 'Hottentot Venus,'" *History of Science* 42, no. 2 (June 1, 2004): 233–57, https://doi.org/10.1177/007327530404200204.

[49] bell hooks, "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators," in *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 115–31.

using. Even so, Mixedracefaces presents a formidable alternative to such oppressive histories and uses of photography by centering multiply marginalized bi- and multiracial people, creating a catalogue that seeks to empower and develop new avenues for representation.

V. Naming

In addition to the format of the online exhibition, the naming or titling of each portrait reinforces the cataloguing effect, as no one in the Mixedracefaces exhibition has their own name displayed with their portrait or story. Instead, the portraits are labeled with the self-described national identities of the pictured person's parents, with both parents' identities separated by "|". The decision to label according to nationality instead of race speaks to Mixedracefaces's effort to universalize its method for defining race. While the nationality method provides some specificity, such specificity does not give insight into racial identity as much as it gives insight into the racial and colonial histories of a person's countries of origin. For instance, Profile 1 of the Appendix describes himself as "American | Indian/Turks & Caicos" (Figure 2.4). His personal statement indicates that, by "American," he is referring to his father "born in the United States to a White family."[50] The "American" identification itself is not supposed to refer to a specific race or ethnicity, but, as he uses it here, the default "American" is a white person. As much as this glosses over race, his identification as "Indian/Turks & Caicos" does not provide any more specificity either, since the areas known as India and Turks and Caicos are both former colonies, which mean they have deep and traumatic histories of European occupation, oppression, slavery, and forced migration.[51] Because of this, saying that someone is from India or

[50] "American | Indian/Turks & Caicos," mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/american-indian-turks-caicos.

[51] Since Turks and Caicos is currently a British territory, one might argue that it does not even count as a nationality. However, this thesis will not get into the complexities of that argument.

Turks and Caicos does not indicate that they are racially or ethnically indigenous to either place, as they both contemporarily contain residents from all kinds of racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Profile 1's title is only one instance, but, through his example, it is more clear why labeling multiraciality with national identity creates as many problems as it solves, especially considering that the national identities of so many nonwhite peoples are rooted in the arbitrary boundaries that European colonizers created. While the nationality method might give some sense of organization and even appear to have specificity, the specificity is only based on assumptions, such as "American" meaning white or European or "Indian" meaning Asian or South Asian. Where this classification system blurs the line between race, ethnicity, and nationality, it also reveals the arbitrary nature of racial classification itself, as the definition of race is dynamic, forever changing based upon people's needs in the place and time they are employing it.[52] Even though Mixedracefaces intended their personal statements to humanize their portraits, this classification system as a form of naming serves to reduce participants to their parents' national identities without dealing with their racial identities.

Though there is no naming information on the website, the Mixedracefaces's Instagram account does tag pictured peoples' Instagram accounts when it posts the same portraits and stories from the website. Still, as on the website, it only uses national identifications to title the posts. Even more, the "International" section of the exhibition is not posted on Mixedracefaces's main Instagram page. It just appears as a series of saved Instagram stories on their profile page. Since a viewer would have to click through each individual story to see all or even the most

[52] When we begin to question Mixedracefaces's use of nationality to characterize race, we can also start to question how many people currently define race. For instance, the U.S. Census defines race through five categories, "White," "Black or African American," "American Indian or Alaska Native," "Asian," and "Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander." Even though residents self-report their race, how do such labels restrict, reduce, or diminish the expansiveness and complexity of racial identity? How do they reinforce existing racial hierarchies? How does other countries' understanding of race complicate that of the U.S.? US Census Bureau, "About Race," The United States Census Bureau, accessed March 22, 2021, https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html.

recent international posts, this is not a very accessible format, so any tagged Instagram accounts would also not be accessible either. Thus, individuals pictured in the "International" section have little to no identification beyond their national classification.

Furthermore, the "International" section continues to reinforce a "scientific method" approach to cataloguing with a search bar that allows viewers to search the content of each person's story. This searchability allows for viewers to search for specific racial, ethnic, or national search terms, making the "International" section even more a database of multiracial people. The combination of this search bar and the national identification labels both serve to dehumanize and generalize since the labels reduce individuals to their national identity and the searchability forces viewers to acquiesce to this classification system. However, at the same time, if one were to take nationality as an indicator of race, then the varied labels showcase each person's unique and diverse identity. Even more, the fact that Mixedracefaces uses national identity at all demonstrates how inefficient, nonspecific, and, ultimately, oppressive the current language for understanding and defining race is.

Since Mixedracefaces uses self-described national identification labels to showcase multiracial identity, it presents a more complicated, nuanced understanding of racial identity that intersects with culture and nationality, encompassing more qualities that factor into a person's understanding of their racial identity. This was also the case historically, as even Cedric Dover desired to rename "Anglo-Indian," a term chosen for him, to "Eurasian," a term which he considered to better reflect his identity. Ultimately, racialized peoples' experience of desiring to choose their own identity disproves white supremacist pseudo-scientists' own desire to categorize racial identity neatly, as, through categorization, these scientists could conquer their subjects for the sake of scientific knowledge. However, when the naming comes from the

subjects themselves, they become their own subjects, empowering themselves to create a future dictated by their own desires.

Though I have redacted the names of participants in my interviews to maintain their privacy and anonymity, naming appeared throughout my interviews as well as a source of self-determination and self-representation. For instance, Participant B self-identified as biracial South Asian when he volunteered to be part of my study from seeing a presentation I gave on my research. However, I realized in our interview that he was not who I would have typically defined as "biracial South Asian." He did not have one parent of South Asian descent, and one parent of another race or ethnicity, but one South Asian parent and one biracial South Asian parent. With this racial makeup, Participant B outwardly presents as a monoracial South Asian, but he still identifies with the term biracial South Asian. Though someone else might define him only as South Asian because of his outward appearance, this would not properly reflect his internal identity, thereby demonstrating the tension between others' categorization of his racial identity, and his own definition of himself.

While Participant B might have considered "biracial South Asian" a limiting or inconvenient term because of others' monoracial perception of him, Participant D found joy and freedom in the term. For instance, when we began our interview, it was my first time ever meeting her, but she did not hesitate to express her love for the term, "biracial South Asian," as she had never heard it related to her own identity before. She explained, "I do identify myself first as biracial. I think that it is a mischaracterization to say that I am Indian. And I definitely don't feel white."[53] D was excited to embrace a term which she felt was the closest to characterizing her racial identity, as just as Mixedracefaces indicates, Western culture does not have the language to discuss race comprehensively, especially for bi- and multiracial people who

[53] Participant D in conversation with the author, November 2020.

do not conform to black-white racial binaries. Many bi- and multiracial South Asians in the United States share common non-white experiences that are difficult to talk about because of this lack of adequate language, unity, platform, and history.

VI. Perceptions of the Self by the Self versus by Others

A. Color Consciousness

Though skin color is no indicator of racial identity, fairer skin has proven to bring one closer to whiteness and, therefore, has helped nonwhite people gain favoritism and privileges within and outside their own communities, contributing to bi- and multiracial South Asians' experiences with colorism.[54] Bi- and multiracial South Asians in both Mixedracefaces and my interviews often were conscious of and even directly acknowledged the role of colorism in their lives.

In the case of Profile 1, the "American | Indian/Turks & Caicos" man, he describes himself as "white passing," realizing that he benefits from the privileges of others thinking he is white. While this man sees the benefits of his passing, he also considers it a struggle because he identifies most with his South Asian identity. Aware of this, he says, "I constantly deal with guilt

[54] The Oxford English Dictionary describes "colorism" as a word that chiefly exists in the US, meaning, "Prejudice or discrimination against individuals who have a dark skin tone, esp. among people of the same ethnic or racial background." This definition is important to keep in mind in this section to think through all the nuances of biracial South Asian experience. "Colourism | Colorism, n.," in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed March 18, 2021, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/424803; Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose* (Orlando: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2004): 290; Margaret Hunter, "The Persistent Problem of Colorism: Skin Tone, Status, and Inequality," *Sociology Compass* 1, no. 1 (2007): 237–54, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2007.00006.x; Margaret Hunter, "'If You're Light You're Alright': Light Skin Color as Social Capital for Women of Color," *Gender and Society* 16, no. 2 (2002): 175–93, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3081860; Kumari Devarajan, "Claim Us If You're Famous," November 10, 2020, in *Code Switch*, produced by NPR, podcast, MP3 audio, https://www.npr.org/2020/11/10/933631207/claim-us-if-youre-famous. Nikki Khanna, *Whiter: Asian American Women on Skin Color and Colorism* (New York: New York University Press, 2020); JeffriAnne Wilder, *Color Stories: Black Women and Colorism in the 21st Century* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2015); Traci Baxley, "Taking Off the Rose-Colored Glasses: Exposing Colorism through Counter Narratives," *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education* 14, no. 1 (2014): 20-35, https://doi.org/10.31390/taboo.14.1.05.

as I see myself benefitting from the benefits of being a mixed person, like the culture and the curly hair, while being void of the racism and systematic hate of visibly non-White people."[55] While this man is aware of the colorism that benefits him, he also rejects it, not believing that his white-passing appearance truly encompasses his identity (Figure 2.4).

Meanwhile in my interviews, Participant C never explicitly used the language of "white passing," but he described a "white passing" experience, saying that most people "never really guess that I am a race, per se. They thought more when I was little because I guess when I was little I looked a little more ethnic. I feel like now I just kind of look like a white guy with black hair."[56] Even though most people do not perceive his South Asian identity, racial identity plays a big role in Participant C's life in so far as it gives him a broader sense of the world because he has this exposure to other cultures that most of his peers lack.

However, as opposed to Profile 1's perspective, Participant C had stronger identifications with white communities, though he also demonstrated some hesitancy, evident in his roundabout language, to simplify his identifications to one community or another. When I asked him whether he identified more with South Asian communities, he responded, "I probably wouldn't, just because most of my friend group—the people that I hang out with the most—I'd say are white, but again, at the same time, they are also very aware of my identity, and who I am and who my family is and all that kind of stuff… To say that I identify more with that community, I'd say I would, but it's not like that community isn't aware of what I am."[57] Thus, it was important to Participant C to make it known that, while he is part of white communities because of who he

---

[55] "American | Indian/Turks & Caicos," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/american-indian-turks-caicos.

[56] Participant C in conversation with the author, November 2020.

[57] Participant C in conversation with the author, November 2020.

puts himself next to, he is also different from that community, and that community is aware of his difference.

Both Participant C's and Profile 1's experiences showcase different stages of racial identity-making for biracial South Asian Americans, especially those who have lighter complexions or are white-passing. In both cases, these men are aware of their racial difference, but they internalize it in unique ways. For Profile 1, the internalization manifests as an awareness of his close proximity to whiteness and a guilt for that proximity, whereas for Participant C, it is an awareness of the same proximity to whiteness, but, instead of guilt, he has the desire to distinguish himself from that whiteness. Still, both of their experiences represent a resistance to having to choose one identity over the other. Ultimately, this represents a larger resistance to the practice of racial categorization, as racial categorization serves to limit both of their identities and experiences.

Where Profile 1 and Participant C benefitted from colorism through their white-passing-ness, a consequence of their European-South Asian biracial identity, Profile 4 from Mixedracefaces expressed sadness and regret for the realities of colorism, though, with her South Asian-East African biracial identity, she benefits from colorism less than Profile 1 and Participant C, but more than most black women. She says,

> I feel that sometimes there's a slight resentment of mixed-race women by Black women because we have more 'caucasoid' features, and this tension makes me sad, as there are plenty of beautiful Black women out there like Naomi Campbell, Ajiona Alexus and Solange Knowles. It's appalling how dark-skinned women have historically been viewed as 'less beautiful' than light-skinned or mixed-race women in Western culture.[58]

While talking about her own identity, Profile 4 felt that she also had to talk about herself in relation to other black women, though this is not because she identifies most with "the black

[58] "Indian | Tanzanian," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/indian-tanzanian.

community," as she explicitly states, "I have always had a hard time identifying with the 'Black community' in London."[59] Instead, out of feeling alienated by the black community in London, especially after being called "Black on the outside, White on the inside" as a child, she drew lines between herself and other black Londoners, choosing to befriend more white Londoners instead, because, "I've found White people to be less concerned with my skin colour"[60] (Figure 2.7)

Thus, the complexity here is that Profile 4 feels bad about colorism existing at all because she'd prefer that race not be such a marker for experience, but she also benefits from colorism both as a biracial person, and also because of her positionality within majority white spaces. Though she says that she generally prefers being with white people, she also is aware of that "even among a group of white friends who don't care about race, we are never going to be 'White,' we're always the 'exotic flower' who stands out." This experience is very different from that of Profile 1 and Participant C, as they can both blend into white communities. As evident in this case, the racialization of nonwhite biracial South Asians, or dual minority biracial South Asians, is very different from that of white-passing biracial South Asians. However, they still resist others' tendency to judge and categorize them based on their race and skin color.

B. Exoticization and Alienation

While Profile 4 clearly articulated how white friends named her the "exotic flower," more Mixedracefaces pages demonstrated the ways in which others exoticize bi- and multiracial South Asians. The clearest example of this is Profile 6 (Figure 2.9). Since many of the pictures in the

---

[59] "Indian | Tanzanian," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/indian-tanzanian.

[60] "Indian | Tanzanian," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/indian-tanzanian.

"International" section are selfies or amateur photos, this portrait stands out as a studio portrait, with lens focusing and lighting that draws attention to this woman's face and her blue eyes. This woman describes herself as "whitish-brownish," but is aware that "some may not see me as 'brown,' as I am fair for a brown person, and some may not see me as white, as I am tan for a white person."[61] Like Participant C and Profile 1, Profile 6 is white-passing, though the difference with her profile is that she has five comments on her page, the largest number of comments that I found on any single person's page. These comments demonstrate how viewers exoticize and fetishize this woman, particularly because of her biraciality. For instance, one comment compliments her, "beautiful eyes," before calling her "poetry to the visual senses. The best of both cultures blended together in bicultural masala."[62] In another, the commenter says, "She seems like a young lady who's bright intelligence & beauty that will contribute much to the world."[63] The first comment chooses to liken her to food, as though she is something to be consumed, while both rely on her beauty (Figure 2.10). This reveals the gendered way in which others exoticize and fetishize bi- and mulitiracial women, especially those who are more white-passing or who have more European features.

Though part of the goal of Mixedracefaces is to resist this kind of fetishization by offering individuals' narratives in addition to their photos, these comments indicate that fetishization is still occurring. This might have to do with the process of actually viewing individual pages. When viewers are on the main Mixedracefaces page, they can access the

---

[61] "Indian | Irish," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/2018/8/indian-irish-na.

[62] "Indian | Irish," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/2018/8/indian-irish-na.

[63] "Indian | Irish," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/2018/8/indian-irish-na.

"International" page through the website's menu. Then they see a search bar and tiles to choose from (Figure 2.3). In order to access someone's narrative, the viewers have to click physically on the person's picture. This act of choosing still allows for fetishization because a viewer has to go through the visual in order to get to the narrative. Before the viewer even gets to the narrative, which is intended to counter the visual on its own, they choose which person's story they want to see based on their portrait. Thus, the people with higher quality photos or who conform to traditional notions of beauty would have more people viewing their entire page, thereby privileging these profiles over others because of viewers' own biases.

Overall, exoticization appeared in women's Mixedracefaces profiles more often than in men's, not only in action, but also in language. Like Profile 4, Profile 5 expresses how her white peers exoticized her as a multiracial person in a predominantly white high school in Pennsylvania. She remarks, "I can't even tell you how many times I have been called exotic, when I'm born in New Jersey!!"[64] As Profile 4 explains that her position as the "exotic flower" would always keep her on the outskirts of her white community, Profile 5 says that such comments "made me feel unnatural in my environment, almost like I was an artifact in a museum and was being stared at by onlookers"[65] (Figure 2.8). Likewise, in my interviews, Participant A described a similar feeling, saying that "no matter where I went I kind of felt like an animal in a zoo cage."[66] At this point in the interview, Participant A had been discussing his experiences visiting India as a young child, though, as he states, even in the U.S. he felt this sense of exoticization. All three of these participants described the gazes of others singling them

---

[64] "Indian | Honduran," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/indian-honduran.

[65] "Indian | Honduran," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/indian-honduran.

[66] Participant A in conversation with the author, October 2020.

out, isolating them for their racial difference. Such a gaze can have damaging effects on the gazed-upon, leading to feelings of alienation and self-doubt.

However, when such a gaze is confronted with an oppositional gaze, the gazed-upon can become the gazer, allowing them to resist the damaging effects of the gaze and build-up their identity from a place of power. For instance, Participant F explained that when people ask her about her race, she can get pretty frustrated because she can tell that their questions come from a place of exoticization and racial curiosity, shifting the power dynamic of their encounter to be one in which Participant F owes them some kind of explanation to qualify her existence. To elucidate this point, F explained that when someone asks her about her racial identity, "that's just, like, really annoying because I'm like, clearly you didn't stop to think and… that's just not a normal thing that you would ask people. Like I don't go up to, like, some white people and I'm like, you know, 'What are you?' like, 'Are you from Ireland, because, you know, looks like you have some freckles?'"[67] Here, F makes the feeling of being exocitized very clear by offering a counter example in which she poses the question "Are you from Ireland?" to a white person because of their freckles. By imagining her own experiences in the context of whiteness, she can rationalize how this situation would disempower her. This counterexample also acts as an oppositional gaze for F, as it grants her the space to look back at the scrutinizing (mostly white) onlooker, and use her "critical gaze" to scrutinize their actions right back at them. Ultimately, this oppositional gaze creates a space of resistance for Participant F, as well as other marginalized bi- and multiracial people, because it provides them the power to challenge such exoticization.[68]

---

[67] Participant F in conversation with the author, November 2020.

[68] hooks, "The Oppositional Gaze," 116.

In addition to exoticization, bi- and multiracial South Asians encounter alienation from monoracial communities, though this is not an experience specific to South Asian multiracial people alone. Again and again in my interviews, in the Mixedracefaces profiles, in the literature on multiracial people, and in personal accounts from bi- and multiracial people themselves, there is the feeling of not being enough of a particular race.[69] Such alienation of multiracial people from monoracial and mainstream communities is historically rooted in depictions of multiracial people as the self-hating, insecure, and destructive "tragic mulattos" or "racial passers" who represent the twentieth century eugenic fear of miscegenation. In particular, attached to multiracial people are the concepts of "hybrid degeneracy," positing that multiracial people are inferior and biologically deficient because of their multiraciality, and the concept of the "marginal man," which asserts that multiracial people's liminal racial and social position make them socially and psychologically unstable. After scholars in the mid twentieth century, including Cedric Dover, began challenging racist sciences, like eugenics, biological determinism, and hypodescent, scholars in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century began to showcase the diversity and individuality of multiracial people, creating more nuanced and positive spaces for their identities in scholarship and mainstream media. Even so, bi- and multiracial people are still contending with the long term effects of harmful historical depictions

[69] One example of a non-South Asian multiracial person from Mixedracefaces that stands out in this regard is Profile 8, a dual-minority biracial woman who identifies as Japanese, Afro-Caribbean, and American. In discussing her growth as a multiracial person, she specifically discusses others' perceptions of her, using the language of not being "Black enough" or "Asian enough." However, like Participant F, Profile 8 counters others who decide she is not enough of either race by simply stating, "I know I am plenty." Ultimately, this kind of oppositional resistance allows this woman to create her own space for her own identity (Figure 2.12). "Japanese | Trinidadian/Tobagonian," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed March 23, 2021, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/japanese-trinidadian-tobagonian. For more on this, please see: Joanne L. Rondilla, Rudy P. Guevarra, and Paul R. Spickard, "Being Mixed Race in the Makah Nation: Redeeming the Existence of African Native Americans," and "'You're Not Black or Mexican enough!': Policing Racial / Ethnic Authenticity among Blaxicans in the United States," in *Red and Yellow, Black and Brown: Decentering Whiteness in Mixed Race Studies* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2017), http://proxy.library.emory.edu/login?url=http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/j.ctt1q1cqvn.

and stereotypes of multiraciality, as monoracial and mainstream communities still alienate and isolate them as racial others who do not fit.[70]

VII. Why representation matters

In my interviews, I asked participants about their familiarity with other figures in history or popular culture with a racial identity similar to their own. Regarding history, none of the participants could recall being taught in school about biracial South Asians—or even multiracial people generally—nor could many of them say they learned about India in their history classes.

Participant E remembered that she never learned much about India in her K-12 education, except vague mentions of Buddha and the Indus River Valley. When it came to biracial people in history, she knew even less. She went on to say, "I think that's why a lot of people have really latched on to Kamala Harris, just because we haven't seen [her racial identity], especially in the historical context." When I asked this participant if she thought that seeing others with a racial identity like hers would have changed the way she regarded her own identity, she thought that it would have, remarking how strange it was to grow up feeling as though, "my identity hasn't really existed for the most part, or it seems like it hasn't, even though it definitely has, but you just don't learn about it." Revealing the negative impacts of this, this participant indicated that

[70] Sheena K. Gardner and Matthew W. Hughey, "Still the Tragic Mulatto? Manufacturing Multiracialization in Magazine Media, 1961–2011," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42, no. 4 (March 12, 2019): 646, 647, 660, https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1380212. For more on the "Tragic Mulatto," see: Emily Clark, "The Tragic Mulatto and Passing," in *The Palgrave Handbook of the Southern Gothic*, ed. Susan Castillo Street and Charles L. Crow (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), 259–70, https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-47774-3_20; Brandale Mills, "Old Stereotypes Made New: A Textual Analysis on the Tragic Mulatto Stereotype in Contemporary Hollywood," *Howard Journal of Communications* 30, no. 5 (October 20, 2019): 411–29, https://doi.org/10.1080/10646175.2018.1512063; Isabelle Britto, "Along the Color Line: Class, Passing, and the Construct of Colorism in DuBois's Crisis Magazine, 1910-1934" (Master's Thesis, University of Leiden, 2019), https://hdl.handle.net/1887/76966.

"you kind of get into your mind that, oh maybe people like me don't really accomplish stuff, or maybe they just aren't important in society's eyes."[71]

This sentiment is not uncommon among nonwhite communities, especially among bi- and multiracial people, since the absence of their stories can create the illusion that they are worth less than their monoracial or white peers. This is a feeling that has been reiterated in studies across the United States. For instance, in the 2016 study by Aurora Chang at the University of Wyoming, Chang calls for the inclusion of multiracial identities in K-16 curricula in order to make space for and empower students whose identities do not conform to traditional notions of monoraciality. After conducting a series of interviews and focus groups, Chang found that the absence of mulitiracial identity in curricula and classroom culture caused multiracial college students to have to create their own spaces for belonging through a "Multiracial rubric" which allowed students to rate and categorize themselves and others into a "multiracial" category. Since they finally fit into some kind of racial group like monoracial individuals, the creation of such a rubric was a source of pride for some students. However, the fact that students have to do this at all points to broader issues in the United States' education system and social codes: the absence of complex racial identities in education and culture can diminish multiracial individuals' sense of self-worth and belonging.[72]

As Chang's study indicates, when bi- and multiracial people do not see reflections of themselves in their world, they have to create their own spaces for themselves. Such spaces do not always appear as an embrace of multiraciality, though. They can also appear as a disillusionment and distancing from multiraciality. For instance, when I asked Participant A

[71] Participant E in conversation with the author, November 2020.

[72] Aurora Chang, "Multiracial Matters – Disrupting and Reinforcing the Racial Rubric in Educational Discourse," *Race Ethnicity and Education* 19, no. 4 (July 3, 2016): 706–30, https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2014.885427.

about whether he'd seen other figures in history or popular culture with a racial identity like his, his words were marked by a disillusionment, saying that "people you look up to—celebrities, heroes nowadays—are all going to eventually let you down." He did not think that identifying with a celebrity would have been helpful for him growing up because he doubted that the media would have portrayed such a person very well: "I don't feel like [multiracial celebrities would have] the greatest reputation because it doesn't uphold the compass direction that our society wants people like me to have." When this participant referred to "people like me" he was indicating bi- and multiracial people. Thus, this participant had the awareness that his multiraciality was not desirable, so he learned to deal with this reality by de-emphasizing the role of race and creating his own space for his identity.[73]

This participant created his own racially de-centered space through ancient Roman history. As he put it, "there were a bunch of Roman emperors who were mixed with not just Roman blood, but also with what is now modern-day Spain." Despite this "mixedness" though, what was most attractive to him about Roman emperors, like the Roman emperor Trajan, was that "people didn't see him because of his race… The thing about Trajan was that he came from humble beginnings. He came from the peninsula of Spain. He didn't have a chip on his shoulder. He didn't have to plead with the masses. He literally just did what he needed to do to grow the empire." This appreciation that Trajan's importance was not all about race reveals this participant's deeper desire for race not to matter as much as it does in our contemporary world, since, in his experience, his biracial identity only caused issues of self-doubt, marginalization, and exclusion. The fact that this participant had to turn toward ancient Roman history instead of American history to find figures to identify with further illustrates that there is a glaring and

[73] Participant A in conversation with the author, October 2020.

harmful absence of meaningful representations of multiracial people in U.S. history and culture.[74]

VIII. Conclusion

Where Dover used poetry, history, writing, and academia to forge biracial South Asian and "coloured" solidarity, Mixedracefaces uses portraiture, narrative, and exhibition to advance multiracial representation, humanization, and community building. Even with the success of their efforts, there is still much work to be done to support the current generations of bi- and multiracial South Asians around the world who do not see positive—or even any—depictions of themselves in their worlds. For those in the United States, like me, my interview participants, and some of the Mixedracefaces profiles, this starts with seeing other prominent bi- and multiracial South Asians, like Vice President Kamala Harris, who hold positions of power, while also understanding the deeper legacy of mono-, bi-, and multiracial South Asian communities in our country.

[74] Participant A in conversation with the author, October 2020.

Identifier	Personal Details at the time of the interview
Participant A	• 25 years old • Male • Grew up in New Jersey • Attended college at Arizona State University • Intentions to go to law school • European-descent mother, South Asian father • Oldest child of three, only son in family
Participant B	• 21 years old • Male • Grew up in California • 3rd year student at Emory University • Intends to work in strategic supply chain operations in the healthcare industry • South Asian mother, biracial South Asian father • Oldest child of three sons
Participant C	• 24 years old • Male • Grew up in Georgia • Attended college at Elon University • Currently employed as a sportscaster in Indiana • South Asian mother, European-descent father • Brother of Participant E, oldest child of two
Participant D	• 22 years old • Female • Grew up in Chicago, IL • Attends Duke University as a last semester senior • Intends to go to medical school • European-decent mother (grew up in India as the daughter of missionaries), South Asian father • Oldest child of two
Participant E	• 19 years old • Female • Grew up in Georgia • 2nd year student at the University of Georgia • Intends to go to law school • South Asian mother, European-descent father • Sister of Participant C, youngest child of two
Participant F	• 21 Years old • Female

	• Grew up in Houston, TX • 3rd year student at Emory University • Intends to pursue a masters and teach English Language Learners • South Asian mother, European-descent father • Oldest child of two

Figure 2.1: This table provides basic demographic and background information for each interview participant, Participants A-F, identified by their pseudonym to maintain anonymity.

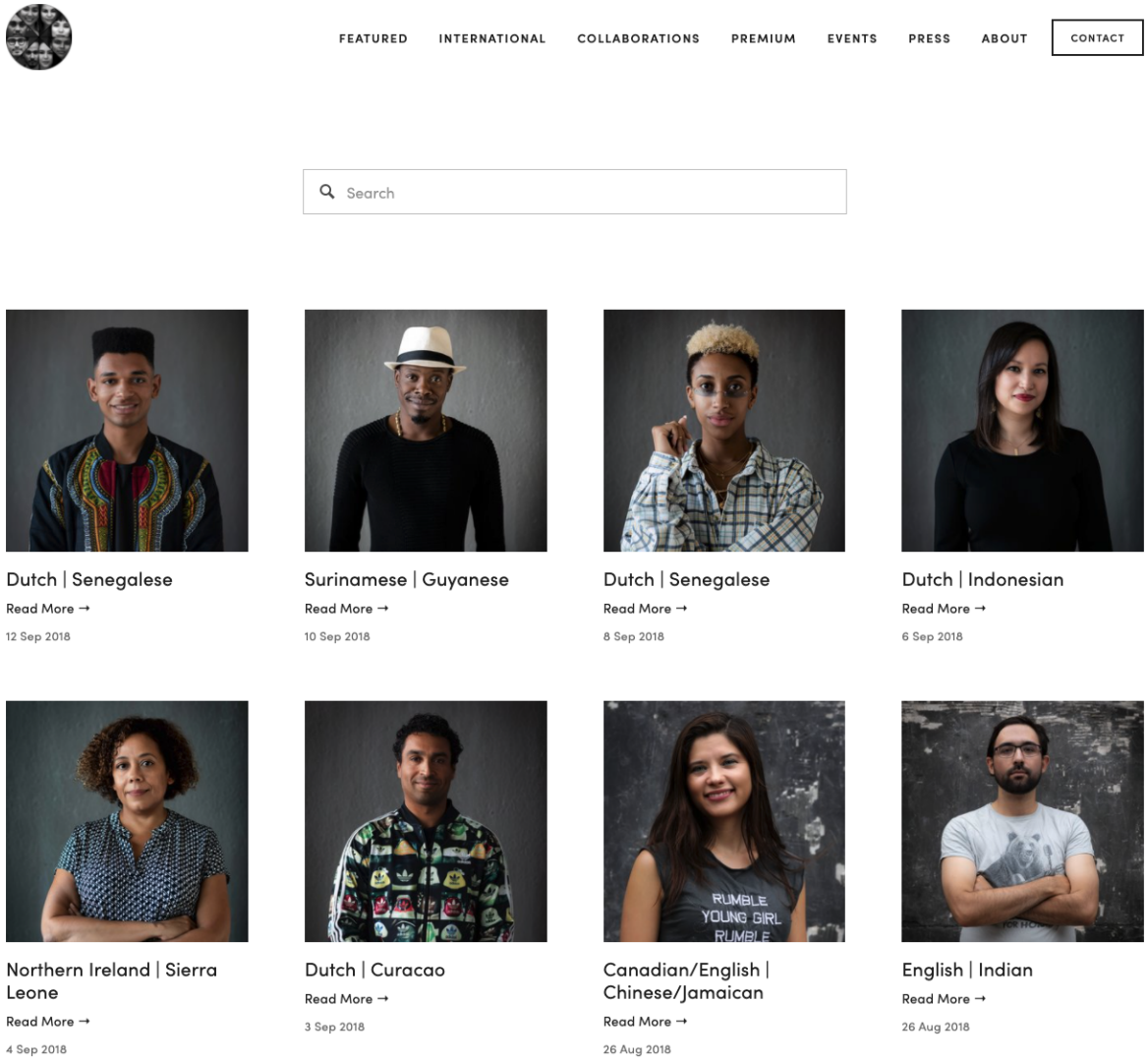


Figure 2.2: This is the webpage view of Mixedracefaces's "Chapter 1" online exhibition. "Chapter 1," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed March 10, 2021, https://mixedracefaces.com/chapter-1.

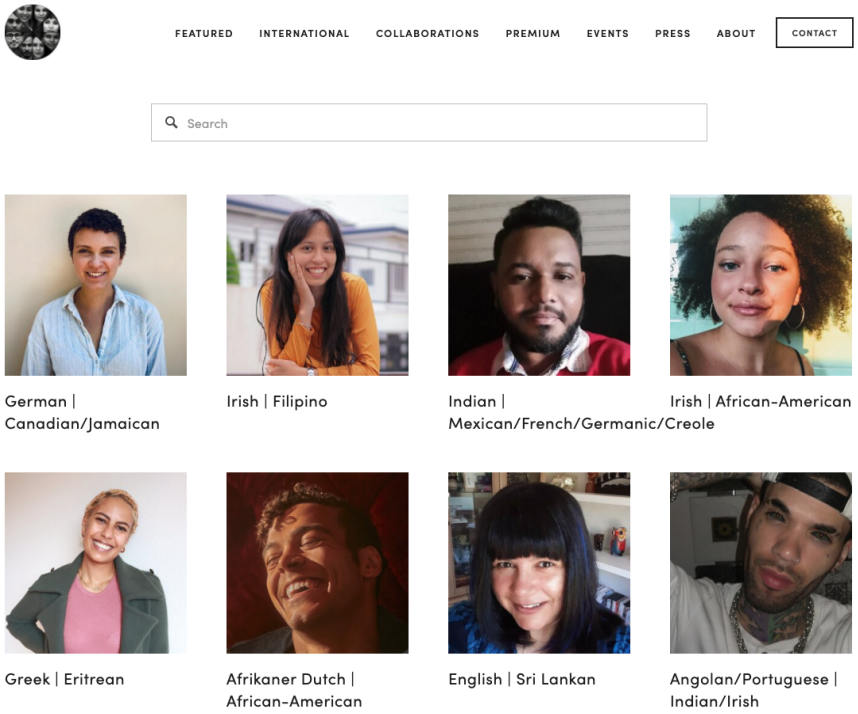


Figure 2.3: This is the webpage view of Mixedracefaces's "International" section. "International," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed March 10, 2021, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories.

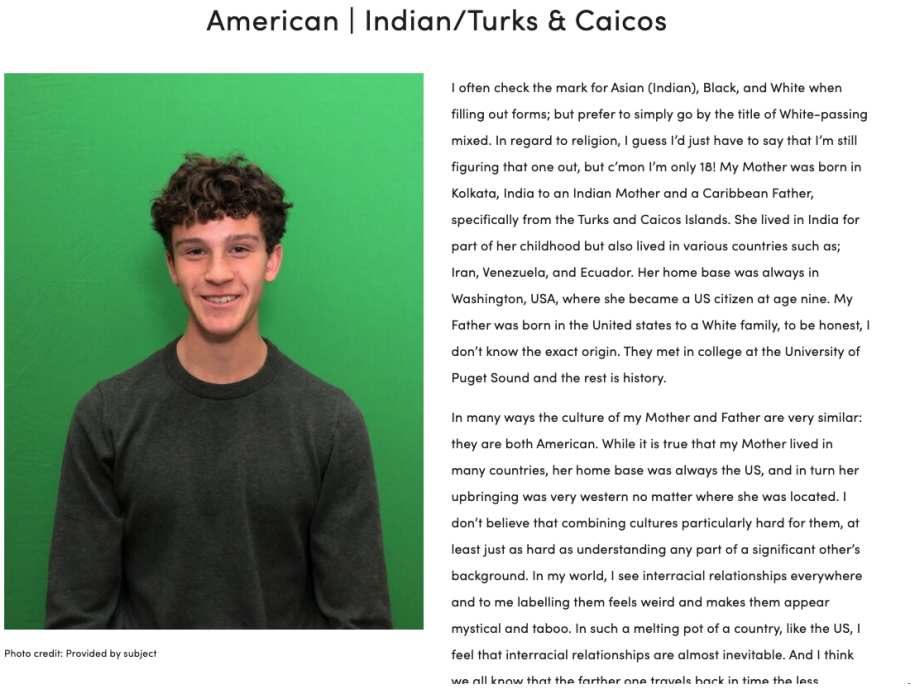
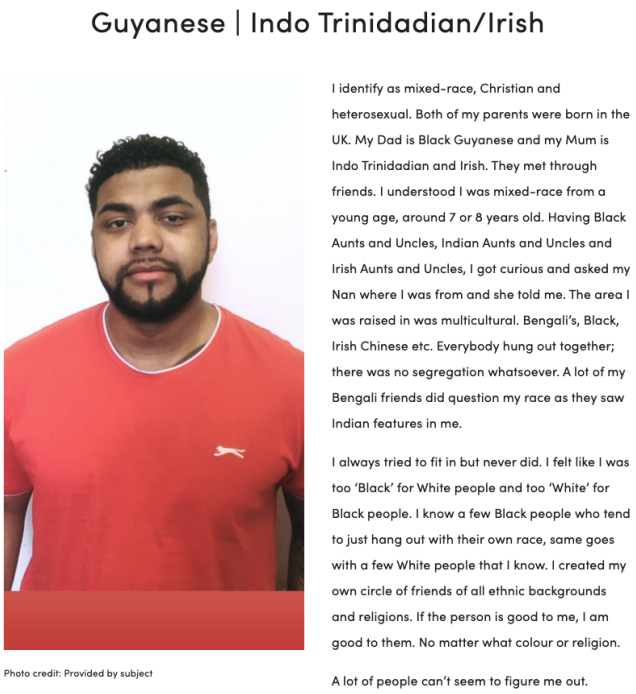


Figure 2.4: This is the webpage view of Mixedracefaces Profile 1, "American | Indian/Turks & Caicos." "American | Indian/Turks & Caicos," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/american-indian-turks-caicos.



Guyanese | Indo Trinidadian/Irish

I identify as mixed-race, Christian and heterosexual. Both of my parents were born in the UK. My Dad is Black Guyanese and my Mum is Indo Trinidadian and Irish. They met through friends. I understood I was mixed-race from a young age, around 7 or 8 years old. Having Black Aunts and Uncles, Indian Aunts and Uncles and Irish Aunts and Uncles, I got curious and asked my Nan where I was from and she told me. The area I was raised in was multicultural. Bengali's, Black, Irish Chinese etc. Everybody hung out together; there was no segregation whatsoever. A lot of my Bengali friends did question my race as they saw Indian features in me.

I always tried to fit in but never did. I felt like I was too 'Black' for White people and too 'White' for Black people. I know a few Black people who tend to just hang out with their own race, same goes with a few White people that I know. I created my own circle of friends of all ethnic backgrounds and religions. If the person is good to me, I am good to them. No matter what colour or religion.

A lot of people can't seem to figure me out.

Photo credit: Provided by subject

Figure 2.5: This is the webpage view of Mixedracefaces Profile 2, "Guyanese | Indo Trinidadian/Irish." "Guyanese | Indo Trinidadian/Irish," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/guyanese-indo-trinidadian-irish.

Indian | Indian/Cuban/Jamaican

I identify as Indo-Jamaican. My Dad is fully Indian and my Mom is Indian, Cuban and Black. My Grandmother on my Mom's side is Cuban and Indian and Granddad is Black. My parents were born and raised in Jamaica. They also met in Jamaica. Combining their cultures was effortless, everything fit just right.

To be honest, while growing up in Jamaica it was normal seeing interracial relationships. I thought it was awesome. My parents didn't have any worries. A Jamaican motto is "Out of Many One People". There is unity of the different cultural minorities inhabiting the nation. I think society

Photo credit: provided by subject - selfie

Figure 2.6: This is the webpage view of Mixedracefaces Profile 3, "Indian | Indian/Cuban/Jamaican." "Indian | Indian/Cuban/Jamaican, "Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/indian-indian-cuban-jamaican.

Indian | Tanzanian

Photo credit: Provided by subject

I have always firmly believed that we should look past race and ethnic origin and view people as individuals through the content of their character. However, one cannot deny that race and ethnicity do influence how a person is treated and how we view others.

I am a British Londoner, with 'ethnic' parents. My Father was born and raised in Tanzania and was first married to my sister's Mother (who is German), and later married my (British-Indian) Mother whom I share with my brother. I know that my Dad experienced intense difficulties with both these relationships, in terms of familial acceptance in the beginning. A German/Tanzanian and later Indian/Tanzanian marriage in the 80s and 90s were still frowned

Figure 2.7: This is the webpage view of Mixedracefaces Profile 4, "Indian | Tanzanian." "Indian | Tanzanian," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/indian-tanzanian

Indian | Honduran

Photo credit: Provided by subject

I'm Punjabi Indian and Honduran. My Mother is from Tegucigalpa, Honduras and my Father is from Punjab, India. My parents actually meet in a Burger King in Newark, New Jersey. My Dad was actually waiting for another girl to go on a date and then my Mom ended up walking through the door first and he caught her eye. For some reason, I always think their version of a coffee shop was Burger King.

I remember combining their cultures as being a struggle for my parents at first because of the ancestral and cultural pressures placed on them. My parents are both immigrants who were trying to develop a better life for their future generations. I remember having baleadas on one day and then samosas for an appetizer on another day. I have always loved how mixed our

Figure 2.8: This is the webpage view of Mixedracefaces Profile 5, "Indian | Honduran." "Indian | Honduran," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/indian-honduran.

Indian | Irish

Photo by Maggie Marguerite Studio

I usually say I am mixed, and if people press (as they often do!) I tell them I'm half Indian, half Irish (though the Irish half is actually mixed Irish/English - according to Ancestry DNA I am 24% Irish). I think I look pretty ethnically ambiguous and no one can really tell where I am from, but they always know I am 'something.' When I lived in Peru, most people thought I was Brazilian. When I am in India, people seem to realize I am some mix of Indian and white. I get Middle Eastern /Iranian quite a bit, generally.

I am an author, and my first book came out in May in the UK (MAN FAST). I started off as a journalist (BBC, Nat Geo, CNN) and then I worked at international organizations, the World Bank followed by the United Nations. I was a humanitarian aid worker for a few years and travelled all over the world for my job with the UN

Figure 2.9: This is the webpage view of Mixedracefaces Profile 6, "Indian | Irish." "Indian | Irish," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/2018/8/indian-irish-na.

Chaz Hector 2 months ago · 0 Likes

I am half Indian half Venezuelan, however I am British. Yes, been confused for many ethnicities mainly Arab. I love the way I was bright up and I love the fact that 2 different people fell in love to produce someone more unique. Thanks for sharing

Anil Chitnis 8 months ago · 0 Likes

Love ❤️ your beautiful eyes. Your are like poetry to the visual senses.
The best of both cultures blended together to in bicultural masala. Very nice!

Michael O'Connor 11 months ago · 0 Likes

I'm on my treadmill passing the time in Connecticut USA -She seems like a young lady who's bright intelligence & beauty that will contribute much to the world -I hope she is happy & well these 2 yrs on from this original post

mar 3 years ago · 0 Likes

You seem fascinating!!!!

Tina Todd 3 years ago · 0 Likes

Great post, thanks for sharing your interesting journey!

Figure 2.10: This is a screenshot of the comments on Mixedracefaces Profile 6's page. "Indian | Irish," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/2018/8/indian-irish-na.

Pakistani | Thai

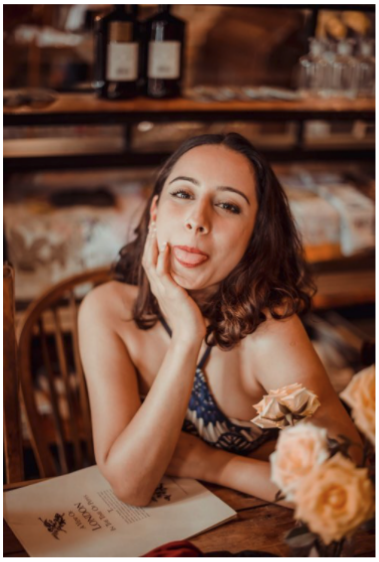


Photo credit: provided by Sarawin Kawin

I identify as a person of the world. Growing up in small town of Thailand I had a hard time, I was bullied because I looked different in School. Other kids would always ask questions that I don't have answer to. I was very conscious about my looks, and the definition of beauty in Thailand was totally opposite of how I look. I even wanted to get surgery to look more Thai. However, as I grow up things started to change. I went to Bangkok for University, people were more open minded there and I started to meet more foreigners, and mixed kids like me. I was finally comfortable with who I am. Then I got a chance to travel the world for 2 years, that's when I realized how I feel connect to others so easily even people from totally different part of the world. I realized that the bad has turn to good, the feeling that I had growing up that I don't belong here but I must live here, has changed to I belong everywhere, and I can live

Figure 2.11: This is the webpage view of Mixedracefaces Profile 7, "Pakistani | Thai." "Pakistani | Thai," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed September 16, 2020, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/pakistani-thai.

Japanese | Trinidadian/Tobagonian

Photo credit: Austin Chernich

I am Japanese, Afro-Caribbean, American & Queer. My Mom is from Kagoshima, Tokyo and my Father while he is of Trinidadian and Tobagonian descent is from Brooklyn, New York. They met in Japan when my Dad was touring for music.

Both of my parents have an artistic background, my Mother studied fashion and does studio art from time to time. My Father is a musician and also dabbles in visual art. They also are not afraid to eat different kinds of foods outside of their culture. I have friends from all over the world with various ethnicities, upbringings, and philosophies in life. However, many of them are biracial or at least multicultural. Whether they are the child of an immigrant, grew up moving around a lot, or just had parents like mine and were multiracial. Most of my partners have been mixed or racially ambiguous, because they understand the

Figure 2.12: This is the webpage view of Mixedracefaces Profile 7, "Japanese | Trinidadian/Tobagonian."“Japanese | Trinidadian/Tobagonian," Mixedracefaces, Mixedracefaces, accessed March 23, 2021, https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/japanese-trinidadian-tobagonian.

CHAPTER THREE

Politics of Visibility: Kamala Harris, Dalip Singh Saund, and South Asian Organizing in Early Twentieth Century California

I. Introduction

When telling her story, Vice President Kamala Harris often begins with her Jamaican-American father and South Asian mother, who met as graduate students and became civil rights activists at the University of California, Berkeley, and who "instilled Vice President Harris with a strong sense of justice."[75] While many would assume that 1960s activist organizations in California like the Black Panther Party, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the Congress of Racial Equality, alone were responsible for developing the political fervor of young people, this assumption ignores a deeper and broader legacy of revolutionary activism in the region. As early as the 1910s, mono- and biracial South Asian communities had been agitating for agency, autonomy, and liberation, creating spaces for themselves and future leaders to advance the political agency of multiracial South Asian American leaders. The resilience and activism of South Asian migrants in the early twentieth century—through the creation of political organizations like the Ghadar Party, and the creation of bi- and multiracial South Asian communities, like the Mexican-Punjabi community in the Imperial Valley—laid the groundwork for future biracial South Asian Americans' political success, as seen through Dalip Singh Saund, a member of a multiracial South Asian community, and Vice President Kamala Harris, who is also a biracial South Asian American.

Though Harris's election has ushered a new wave of conversations about the positionality of bi- and multiracial people in the United States, there is little attention dedicated specifically to

[75] "Kamala Harris: The Vice President," The White House, White House.gov, accessed February 22, 2021, https://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/vice-president-harris/.

biracial South Asian people and communities, despite the fact that they have an enduring historical and contemporary presence in this country. By investigating South Asians in the United States before 1965, one can gain greater insight into not only how these early peoples have shaped modern politics, but also about how their collective action in resistance to white supremacist forces, such as racism and imperialism, have created a framework for mono-, bi-, and multiracial South Asian Americans—and Americans at large—to define their own space in history.

II. Early South Asian Activism and the Mexican-Punjabi Community in California

While many Americans might be most familiar with South Asians' U.S. presence after 1965, when the Hart-Celler Act opened the United States to increased Asian immigration, it is impossible to discuss contemporary South Asians in American politics without understanding how the early history of South Asians in this country laid the foundation for future political activism, local organizing, and resilient leadership. Many scholars mark the late nineteenth century, when Punjabi men arrived as farmers and laborers on the west coast, as the starting point for South Asian immigration to the United States.[76] Though many Punjabi migrants first arrived in the part of Canada then called British Columbia, they gradually moved south into Washington, Oregon, and then California due to employment, housing, and racial discrimination in British

[76] However, South Asians had actually arrived in the United States about one hundred years earlier, in the late 1700s, though little is known about the history of these sailors on Yankee clipper ships trading between New England and India, because, as historian Vijay Prashad indicates in *The Karma of Brown Folk*, "they jumped ship, married black women, and disappeared from the historical record." Vijay Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000): 71. Still, this group of early migrants that Prashad refers to are not to be confused with the subject of Vivek Bald's work in *Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America*. In this book, Bald recounts the history of African American-South Asian communities in the United States, particularly in New York City and New Orleans, in the early 20th century, though these South Asian migrants had also been sailors who jumped ship and married black women. For more on this biracial South Asian community, see: Vivek Bald, *Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

Columbia. However, even as they moved southward to Oregon and Washington, white settlers continued to target Punjabis with discrimination and violence, evident structurally in organizations like the Asiatic Exclusion League and directly in events like the Bellingham riots. The Bellingham riots took place in Washington on September 4, 1907, and consisted of mobs of about 400 and 500 white men who terrorized Punjabi neighborhoods, abducting, beating, and abandoning Punjabi men in remote places. While some Punjabis fled back north after such acts of terrorism, other stayed, so that, by 1910, when the demand for workers on the Western Pacific Railroads increased and immigration restrictions loosened as a result, Punjabi migrants could begin settling in California.[77]

And yet, as was the case in British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon, white communities in California targeted Punjabi communities with violence and racist propaganda. Local newspapers referred to the new settlers' arrival as the "Hindu invasion," and wrote about Punjabis in demeaning ways, referring to them as "the most undesirable people" and an "unmitigated nuisance."[78] Newspapers also documented local violence and intimidation, as in the article titled, "Hindus Driven Out," where "Twenty citizens of Live Oak attacked two houses occupied by 70 Hindus and ordered them to leave the city."[79] Such depictions of South Asians, along with racist cartoons showing them to be "incompetent and indolent," stoked white supremacist and xenophobic sentiments. Then, when the Asiatic Exclusion League demanded that the Superintendent of Immigration Commission, H.A. Millis, investigate the Punjabi

---

[77] Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk*, 71-72; Amandeep Bal, "Pioneer Punjabis in North America: Racism, Empire and Birth of Ghadar," *Journal of Sikh & Punjab Studies* 26, no. 1&2 (2019): 9-14, http://www.giss.org/jsps_vol_26/amandeep_bal.pdf; Farah Ibrahim, Hifumi Ohnishi, and Daya Singh Sandhu, "Asian American Identity Development: A Culture Specific Model for South Asian Americans," *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development* 25, no. 1 (1997): 43-44.

[78] Bal, "Pioneer Punjabis in North America," 15.

[79] Bal, "Pioneer Punjabis in North America," 15.

community in 1910, Millis concluded that Punjabis were not an important part of the West Coast's labor force and called for their immediate exclusion. So, by 1911, even with the need for labor on the Western Pacific Railroads, immigration officials in San Francisco began rejecting new South Asian arrivals. Such sentiments were later codified by legislation like the 1917 Immigration Law, more popularly known as the "Asiatic Barred Zone Act," which used longitudinal measurements to limit immigration from Asia along with literacy tests and other Asiatic exclusion provisions that, as local press indicated, would "especially bar Hindus."[80] Still, despite this hostile environment, South Asian immigrants continued to find their way to the American West Coast to create lives for themselves.[81]

This first wave of South Asian immigration in California largely settled in Sacramento Valley, San Joaquin Valley, and the Imperial Valley, where they had access to farmlands that reminded many of the migrants of home. For instance, one Punjabi settler, Pune Singh, remembered that "On arriving in the Sacramento Valley, one could not help but be reminded of the Punjab. Fertile fields stretched across the flat valley to the foothills lying far in the distance. Most of the jobs available were agricultural and I found many Punjabis already working throughout the area."[82] Access to familiar farmlands gave Punjabis an advantage in California farms, allowing them to earn higher wages because of their skill.[83]

---

[80] Karen Isaksen Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices: California's Punjabi Mexican Americans*, Asian American History and Culture Series (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992) 46; Huping Ling and Allan W. Austin, *Asian American History and Culture: An Encyclopedia: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 2015): 328.

[81] Bal, "Pioneer Punjabis in North America," 15; Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices*, 46.

[82] Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices*, 34.

[83] Bal, "Pioneer Punjabis in North America," 13-14.

Some Punjabis became very successful as farmers, as in the case of Jawala Singh, also known as the "Potato King," who, by leasing and purchasing land, had become one of the wealthiest farmers in America.[84] However, Singh's legacy does not end there, as he used his prosperity to support his community as a social justice activist and a revolutionary for India's independence. For instance, in 1912, when he founded the first Sikh temple, or *gurdwara*, in the United States in Stockton, CA, it served as a community space for the religious, political, and social life of all Punjabi communities.[85]

In fact, the *gurdwara* in Stockton became the central hub for the revolutionary activity of the Ghadar Party, a U.S.-based anti-imperialism organization opposed to British colonial rule in India; Jawala Singh was one of the founders and leaders of this party. As an organization inspired by the American Revolution, the Ghadar Party created solidarity among Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims, had international support from Europe and Asia, and developed a network of newspapers and publications that sparked revolutionary fervor in South Asians from diverse occupational backgrounds—from the colonial soldier, to the mill worker, and even to the college educated. For these reasons, the Ghadar Party posed a major threat to the British colonial government. While the party considered itself a militant organization and used direct military action to oppose British rule, much of its success laid in its abilities to ideologically mobilize and build alliances around revolution, liberation, and resistance to British imperialism, which was also a resistance to white supremacy.[86]

---

[84] Ling and Austin, *Asian American History and Culture*, 360.

[85] Bal, "Pioneer Punjabis in North America," 13-14; Ling and Austin, *Asian American History and Culture*, 360.

[86] Ling and Austin, *Asian American History and Culture*, 327-328, 360-361; Bal, "Pioneer Punjabis in North America," 16-19; Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices*, 83-84.

Though the Ghadar Party only existed until the 1930s, the Guru Gobind Singh Scholarship, which Singh established at the University of California, Berkeley in 1912, became an even longer-lasting testament to Jawala Singh's legacy. This three-year scholarship was open to men and women of any race, ethnicity, or caste in India. While it paid for all tuition, housing, and personal expenses, the scholarship also became a revolutionary training ground from which the students could return to India prepared to start a revolution against British colonial rule.[87] Thus, Singh's local organizing helped set a foundation for South Asian political and community involvement in California that resisted white supremacy not only in India, but also in the United States, as he was dedicated to creating safe spaces, despite the violence, racism, and discrimination of the time, for South Asians to create meaningful change. Similar to Cedric Dover's efforts to develop community through scholarship and writing as well as Mixedracefaces's effort to do the same through narrative and portraiture, Singh, as a political leader and local organizer, served as a model for building community against oppression and empowering the first mono- and biracial South Asian communities in the United States. While this history might not be widely known throughout the United States, this kind of activism is a vital part of the fabric of American cultural and political life.

Meanwhile, when the Punjabi settler Pune Singh remembered seeing so many Punjabis in California's farmlands, they were all likely men, because the United States' restrictive immigration laws at the time prevented South Asian women from migrating to the country. As a result, many Punjabis in the Imperial Valley married Mexican and Mexican-American women.[88]

---

[87] Bal, "Pioneer Punjabis in North America," 12-14, 16; Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices*, 32-36; Ling and Austin, *Asian American History and Culture*, 360-361.

[88] Ling and Austin, *Asian American History and Culture*, 345; Stanley Thangaraj, "Playing through Differences: Black–White Racial Logic and Interrogating South Asian American Identity," *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 35, no. 6 (June 2012): 988, https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2012.661868.

Mexican-Punjabi marriages, while sometimes developed out of love, also developed out of necessity, as Punjabi men could not own land in California under the 1913 Asian Land Laws; their marriages to Mexican women granted them the opportunity to have economic autonomy as land-owning agriculturalists and businessmen. These relationships produced a new ethnic community of Mexican-Punjabis, a biracial, biethnic South Asian American community that provided a safe haven for South Asian immigrants facing discriminatory policies and racial violence.[89]

The Mexican-Punjabi community in the Imperial Valley became known as "a refuge from political factionalism" because marriage and family life defined it.[90] This reputation stood in contrast to that of unmarried Punjabi men in central and northern California who were most active in the Ghadar Party. Though the Imperial Valley did host Ghadar Party speakers from time to time, most families withdrew from the party because they believed that party leaders were using organizational donations for personal gain. However, this did not mean that residents of the Imperial Valley were not politically active. As early as the 1920s—especially with the 1923 Supreme Court decision from *United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind* in which the court denied South Asians citizenship on the grounds that they were not "'white' in a popular sense" and thus that they were not capable of assimilating—Punjabi farmers in the Imperial Valley were donating money and organizing for citizenship rights.[91] However, these rights would not come until two

[89] Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices*, 32-36; Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk*, 71-72; Ibrahim, Ohnishi, and Sandhu, "Asian American Identity Development," 43-44; Ling and Austin, *Asian American History and Culture*, 364.

[90] Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices*, 84.

[91] In many ways, the *United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind* case represents the culmination of racial sciences of the time, both in favor and opposition of Thind's case. Thind used anthropological evidence and notions of white supremacy to argue that he was "Caucasian," and his position as a high caste Punjabi relative to "the aboriginal Indian Mongoloid" put him in the same racial level as white Americans relative to African Americans. Though the court denied Thind's appeal to whiteness, they made their decision at the same time that Cedric Dover is developing his ideas on race and scholarship. Though Dover was still a young man in India in 1923, Thind's use of anthropology and the court's denial of his appeal on the grounds of the popular perception of whiteness will come to

decades later with the passing of the 1946 Luce-Celler Act, which allowed for South Asians to naturalize as citizens.[92] With the examination of the local activism and organizing of California's early South Asian immigrants and biracial South Asian communities, scholars can better understand the context in which public officials like Dalip Singh Saund in the 1950s and Kamala Harris in the 2000s became prominent political figures.

III. Dalip Singh Saund: Political Organizing and Race

Instrumental in the Imperial Valley's local political organizing for South Asian citizenship was Dalip Singh Saund, a Punjabi Sikh who traveled to the United States in 1921 to pursue his doctorate at the University of California, Berkeley, and who would go on to represent the Imperial Valley as the first South Asian elected to Congress. As a student at Berkeley, Saund lived in the same Stockton *gurdwara* that Jawala Singh had established, and, as was the case for so many South Asians before him, the gurdwara and his university became spaces where Saund first began to engage in politics actively. For instance, as the president of Berkeley's Hindustani Association of America, Saund advocated for India's independence. Despite his close proximity, though, he was not directly involved in the Ghadar Party. In his autobiography, *A Congressman from India,* Saund never mentions the party, and instead portrays his own revolutionary activism in intellectual terms, allowing him to tie the American founding fathers to Mahatma Gandhi

characterize the academic limitations that Dover later faces in trying to advocate for non white and multiracial peoples, as, even in more liberal academic spaces, Dover continued to hit white supremacist barriers that kept him and his work from being more well-known. For more on the *United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind*, please see: Lee D. Baker, *Anthropology and the Racial Politics of Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010): 7; Suzanne A. Kim, "Yellow Skin, White Masks: Asian American Impersonations of Whiteness and the Feminist Critique of Liberal Equality," *Asian Law Journal* 8 (2001): 89–109; Susan Koshy, "Category Crisis: South Asian Americans and Questions of Race and Ethnicity," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 7, no. 3 (1998), 285-320, https://doi.org/10.1353/dsp.1998.0013.

[92] Jeff H. Lesser, "Always 'Outsiders': Asians, Naturalization, and the Supreme Court," *Amerasia Journal* 12, no. 1 (January 1985): 83–100, https://doi.org/10.17953/amer.12.1.033ktptx4431w322. Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices*, 84.

while exemplifying his own American-ness without seeming too radical. After finishing his graduate degrees in 1925 and learning that the British Indian government was tracking his "anti-British utterances in America," Saund stayed in California, living and farming with relatives in the Imperial Valley. By 1928, Saund further solidified his position in a multiracial South Asian community when he married Marian Kosa, the white daughter of Czech immigrants. Together, they would have three biracial South Asian children.[93]

While Saund built up his farming business throughout the 1930s, he continued his local activism by speaking about Indian independence to civic organizations and churches throughout California. By the 1940s, he was organizing in the Imperial Valley to help gain U.S. citizenship rights for South Asians. Saund turned this advocacy into a campaign organization, the India Association of America, and, as its national leader, he was instrumental in persuading Congress to pass the Luce-Celler Act in 1946, allowing South Asians to become naturalized citizens. After Saund became a citizen in 1949, he was elected the justice of peace in Westmoreland Township, CA. Then in 1956, he was elected as a Democrat in the House of Representatives for California's 29th District, Imperial Valley and Riverside County. During Saund's political rise, he remained connected to his community, serving on the executive committee on Stockton's *gurdwara* from 1948 to 1953, and as chair of the Imperial County Democratic Central Committee in 1951. Though Saund's political rivals often tried to delegitimize his campaigns by emphasizing his otherness as a nonwhite, non-Christian, foreign-born man, Saund relied on grassroots organizing and his American values to demonstrate his commitment to his constituents.[94]

---

[93] Swati Rana, *Race Characters: Ethnic Literature and the Figure of the American Dream* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020): 136; Office of the Historian and Office of the Clerk United States House of Representatives, "Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Congress: 1900-2017" (House Document, Washington, DC, 2017), 316; Dalip Singh Saund, *Congressman from India* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1960).

[94] Lan Dong, *25 Events That Shaped Asian American History: An Encyclopedia of the American Mosaic* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2019): 134-135; Tom Patterson, "Triumph and Tragedy of Dalip Singh Saund," *California Historian* 38, no. 4 (1992), https://www-tc.pbs.org/rootsinthesand/dalip.pdf.

Though Dalip Singh Saund's political success marks a major turning point for the representation of South Asian and biracial South Asian Americans in U.S. politics, an analysis of *Congressman from India* reveals the complicated racial negotiations Saund had to make to achieve that success. Throughout the book, Saund celebrates his marriage to Kosa as a marriage of East and West, while he also shies away from confronting the racial discrimination and prejudice that he, his family, and his community experience in California. For instance, Saund never discusses the implications of the 1922 Cable Act on Kosa, which required her to renounce her U.S. citizenship in order to marry Saund, and he also does not talk about the fact that his own children were not accepted by the white community in Westmoreland because they were considered "halfbreeds."[95] Even more jarring is Saund's entire omission of the Mexican-Punjabi families that were well-known in Imperial Valley, though, like Saund's children, they were often discriminated against because they were considered "half-breeds" and "mestizos" by other Mexicans and South Asians.[96]

While these omissions could have been the result of layers of internalized racism and oppression, it is important to note that Saund wrote *Congressman from India* with white political constituencies in mind, so that when he emphasizes his own role as the unifier of East and the West, especially through his marriage to his white wife, he does so to increase his proximity to whiteness. Similarly, by omitting meaningful discussion of racism, prejudice, and discrimination in the United States, Saund could continue to portray a vision of the American Dream as one in which a model minority like himself could prosper through hard work and the wholehearted

---

[95] Patterson, "Triumph and Tragedy of Dalip Singh Saund."

[96] Rana, *Race Characters,* 146.

belief in American exceptionalism.[97] By understanding the nuanced political and racial position of Dalip Singh Saund, himself a monoracial person, in the 1950s, in relation to the South Asian organizers who laid the political foundation for his activities, the position and significance of Kamala Harris as part of this legacy of multiracial South Asian activism becomes even more apparent.

IV. Kamala Harris as a Political and Racial Figure

Given that South Asians and biracial South Asians have a political history in the United States that extends over a century, the presence of Kamala Harris as a major biracial South Asian political figure continues this legacy. From her upbringing in Oakland, CA, in the same area that produced Jawala Singh, the Ghadar Party, and Dalip Singh Saund, to her election as San Francisco District Attorney, California's Attorney General, and subsequently as state senator, Harris carries with her the history of South Asian resilience and activism even now in her role as Madame Vice President. Though Harris herself never explicates the South Asian activist connection, early South Asian political leaders helped create the space that nurtured the activism of Harris's mother, Shyamala Gopalan, at Berkeley, and she, in turn, instilled that social justice framework in her daughter. Despite controversies over Harris's career as a "progressive prosecutor," Harris traces her own social justice consciousness in her autobiography *The Truths We Hold: An American Journey* to her mother, whom she credits with teaching her how to be "a confident, proud" black woman, and also have "pride" in her "South Asian roots."[98] However,

---

[97] Ling and Austin, *Asian American History and Culture*, 356-57; Dong, *25 Events That Shaped Asian American History,* 133; Rana, *Race Characters,* 144-146; Patterson, "Triumph and Tragedy of Dalip Singh Saund." Saund, *Congressman from India*.

[98] Purnima Bose, "Kamala Harris's *The Truths We Hold: An American Journey*," *American Literary History* 32, no. 2 (2020): e25-e28, doi: 10.1093/alh/ajaa005; Kamala D. Harris, *The Truths We Hold: An American Journey* (New York: Penguin Press, 2019), 10.

Harris's position as a dual-minority biracial person, like the Imperial Valley's Mexican-Punjabis, complicates her role in the legacy of mono- and biracial South Asian politics; the reduction of racial identity in the United States to binary lines of whiteness and blackness, in combination with hypodescent, or the "one drop rule," South Asian respectability politics, and anti-blackness have often caused Harris to limit the expression of her racial identity and emphasize one over the other.[99]

Despite Harris's current visibility as a biracial American, her South Asian identity was largely unknown to non-South Asians until November 2019 when she released the viral cooking video with South Asian American actress, Mindy Kaling, which NPR's *Code Switch* podcast characterized as her "racial coming out."[100] This video marked a turning point in the public's perception of Harris's race, evident in one of Kaling's opening statements in the video: "What we're going to cook today is an Indian recipe—because you are Indian!"[101]

While her South Asian identity is well-known now that she is the sitting vice president, this was not always the case, especially when Harris had first entered the presidential campaign trail, with Kaling herself even explaining that "I don't know that everybody knows that [you're Indian]."[102] In a country which understands race through a black-white binary and the "one drop rule," it is understandable that many people would simplify Harris's racial identity to only include her African American identity. As Dr. Nitasha Sharma, Associate Professor of African

---

[99] Nico Slate, "The Other Kamala: Kamala Harris and the History of South Asian America," *Tides*, February 25, 2019, https://www.saada.org/tides/article/the-other-kamala.

[100] Kumari Devarajan, "Claim Us If You're Famous," November 10, 2020, in *Code Switch*, produced by NPR, podcast, MP3 audio, 7:10, https://www.npr.org/2020/11/10/933631207/claim-us-if-youre-famous.

[101] Kamala Harris, "Kamala Harris & Mindy Kaling Cook Masala Dosa," Kamala Harris, November 25, 2019, video, 1:14, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xz7rNOAFkgE.

[102] Harris, "Kamala Harris & Mindy Kaling Cook Masala Dosa," 1:14.

American Studies and Asian American Studies at Northwestern University, puts it in an interview with *Code Switch*, "The invisibility of Harris's Indian-ness is an allegory for the racial position of Asians in the United States. We are generally invisible, irrelevant, it seems, to the conversation of race. So... people often only speak about [Harris] as a black woman."[103] Thus, the American traditional black-white understanding of race can be limiting, especially for bi- and multiracial people whose racial identities exist outside of this framework. For Harris, this means that others try to put her in a single racial category, limiting her racial identity expressions to conform to oppressive societal standards. The ways in which Harris has subsequently censored herself is evident in the language of her upbringing, as she describes her mother raising her as a "confident, proud" black women, but not as an equally "confident, proud" South Asian woman; instead, she learned to have only "pride" in her "South Asian roots," the language of which ultimately distances her from her South Asian-ness, indicating that South Asian is not an identity to embody the same way one would embody an African American identity.[104]

In this way, the pressures of a racial binary system have caused Harris to choose to highlight one racial background over another, as was the case with many of my interview participants and the Mixedracefaces participants, in order to be more palatable to American audiences. While this act of choosing is not always apparent in personal stories about her childhood and her mother, the act of choosing is apparent elsewhere. For instance, a short biography on the inside back cover of *The Truths We Hold* celebrates Harris as "the second black woman ever elected to the U.S. Senate," and while this accomplishment is important for

---

[103] Devarajan, "Claim Us If You're Famous," 7:10.

[104] Nisha Chittal, "Why Kamala Harris Shouldn't Have to Choose between Identifying as Black or South Asian," *Vox*, August 14, 2020, https://www.vox.com/identities/2020/8/14/21366307/kamala-harris-black-south-asian-indian-identity. Harris, *The Truths We Hold*, 10.

advancing representation in U.S. politics, it leaves out Harris's dual position as the first South Asian senator.[105] In fact, out of the three summaries that take up the inside and back covers of the book, this is the only explicit mention of her race. Harris continues to emphasize her African American identity throughout her book, even emphasizing her American blackness over her diasporic or Jamaican blackness, in order to minimize any chance of alienation or perceived difference between herself and mainstream Americans.[106] This practice is not new, though, as even half a century earlier, Dalip Singh Saund was emphasizing his American values and proximity to whiteness in his own autobiography and political activities. Though Harris has brought herself closer to blackness, both she and Saund had to fit within the standards of the U.S. racial binary to succeed politically, all at the expense of expressing their own racial complexities.

With this context, it is more clear why the actions of the video with Mindy Kaling seem to be specifically curated to emphasize Kamala Harris's South Asian heritage, evident when Harris reminisces about her mother's cooking style, her Indian family, and her South Indian connection with Mindy Kaling. Emphasizing their commonalities, Harris remarks to Kaling, "you look like the entire one-half of my family," after which Kaling jokingly responds that she has been telling others they were related.[107] While heartfelt, this moment, even more, serves to exemplify the lengths to which Kamala Harris has had to go to qualify or prove her South Asian-ness. Mindy Kaling, as a well-known South Asian actress, is instrumental in this, as she represents the South Asian community's acceptance of Harris, even if the reality of this acceptance is fraught with tension.

---

[105] Harris, *The Truths We Hold*.

[106] Bose, "Kamala Harris's *The Truths We Hold,*" e27, e31; Reuters Staff, "Fact Check: Kamala Harris Did Not Switch from Identifying as Indian-American to Black," *Reuters*, August 24, 2020, https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-fact-check-harris-did-not-switch-raci-idUSKBN25H1RC.

[107] Harris, "Kamala Harris & Mindy Kaling Cook Masala Dosa," 1:39.

Though it might be true that many South Asians are excited about Harris's political prominence, as Kaling expresses in the video, her words leave out a history of anti-blackness among South Asians that likely interferes with some South Asians' full acceptance of Harris. Evidence of this can be found in Indian media outlets that questioned whether Harris is "Indian enough" because of her stronger identification with her African American identity.[108] Likewise, colorism within South Asian communities reinforces anti blackness, as colorist thinking favors lighter skin color in order to increase one's proximity to whiteness. While none of the sources I've encountered have openly talked about Harris's skin tone, one can observe from the images and videos of her, like in her portrait on the cover of her autobiography or even in her video with Mindy Kaling, that Harris does not have very dark skin, making colorism and South Asian respectability politics work in her favor. As Dr. Sharma indicates, "she's so respectable, and she's doing all the things" that South Asians approve of: she is married to a "nice white man," she is not "crazy progressive," and she is "highly educated… and well dressed."[109] She is also a Brahmin according to the Indian caste system, which makes it easier for many South Asians to be all right with her being one of the United States' first major South Asian representatives.[110]

Thus, Harris's biracial identity is steeped with sociopolitical complexity, but it is a complexity integral to the narrative of race in the United States. The public's unprecedented acknowledgement and acceptance of Harris's South Asian identity *and* her African American

---

[108] Seema Sirohi, "Is Democratic Vice-President Nominee Kamala Harris Too 'Left' or Enough Indian?," *The Economic Times,* August 12, 2020, https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/is-democratic-vice-president-nominee-kamala-harris-too-left-or-enough-indian/articleshow/77508151.cms; Chittal, "Why Kamala Harris Shouldn't Have to Choose between Identifying as Black or South Asian."

[109] Devarajan, "Claim Us If You're Famous."

[110] Nitasha Tamar Sharma, *Hip Hop Desis: South Asian Americans, Blackness, and a Global Race Consciousness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010) 97-99**;** Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk*, 91; Devarajan, "Claim Us If You're Famous**."**

identity—unprecedented especially in the context of Barack Obama's title as the first black president despite his black-white biracial identity—signal a shift in popular understandings of race. Because whiteness is not part of Harris's biracial identity, she opens up the American public to a more nuanced and expansive understanding of bi- and multiraciality. As with Obama, media outlets have questioned both Harris's blackness and her citizenship status to try to undermine her campaign; however, Harris has skirted such challenges to her identity by describing herself as a "proud American."[111] While some might criticize such a comment for its intentional glossing over of race, it reveals the negotiations that racialized peoples in the United States, like Kamala Harris and Dalip Singh Saund, even my interviewees and the Mixedracefaces profiles, have had to make in order to be accepted as Americans. Furthermore, it symbolizes that nonwhite mono-, bi-, and multiracial people are a vital part of the American story.[112]

V. Conclusion

As the most visible biracial South Asian politician in the United States today, Kamala Harris's vice-presidential election marks an important turning point for nonwhite mono-, bi-, and multiracial people in the United States and throughout the world. Harris's prominent political visibility has begun conversations about the complexities of racial identity beyond the black-white binary, as well as provides a lens through which to explore the deeper history of various racialized South Asian groups in the United States. There are clear parallels between the steps that both Kamala Harris and Dalip Singh Saund took in order to be accepted by mainstream American society, steps that positioned both closer to one side of the black-white binary.

---

[111] Chittal, "Why Kamala Harris Shouldn't Have to Choose between Identifying as Black or South Asian."

[112] Devarajan, "Claim Us If You're Famous;" Chittal, "Why Kamala Harris Shouldn't Have to Choose between Identifying as Black or South Asian."

However, earlier South Asians, like Jawala Singh and those in the Ghadar Party, created spaces outside of the American West's white supremacist and xenophobic society, like the *gurdwara*, where South Asians of all backgrounds could consider and actualize revolution, resistance, and liberation. Even the less overtly political Mexican-Punjabi community forged their own interracial space of solidarity, where Punjabi men and Mexican women could be business owners, land owners, and independent farmers, having their own families and building their own spaces of safety and agency. This was also where Saund himself first became politically active, and where he remained committed to local organizing and advocacy, even as he became more and more successful as a politician.

With California as ground zero for over a century of mono-, bi-, and multiracial South Asian resilience, resistance, and activism, it is clear that Kamala Harris is part of this legacy. Though she, like Saund, has conceded to aspects of the black-white racial binary and rhetorics of Americanism, while also dealing with the "one drop rule," South Asian respectability politics, and anti blackness, she has persevered through others' challenges to her identity, asserting herself as the first biracial South Asian *and* African American Vice President. She serves as a much-needed biracial figure who not only can provide representation for peoples from various racial backgrounds, but also create new spaces for meaningful discussions and investigations into racial identity that resist racial thinking grounded in white supremacy and oppression. Ultimately, the intersecting historical and contemporary experiences of these mono-, bi-, and multiracial South Asians empower all Americans to strive for and build a more liberatory, just, and equitable world.

CONCLUSION

A Realization of the Self, Community, and Power

When I began this project, I did not know what to expect, but I knew I was looking for answers—about my identity, about other people with an identity like mine, about what it really means to be a biracial person in this country. While I am still learning each of these points, this thesis has brought me to research that I never knew existed, or could exist, and that I could spend multiple lifetimes on and still never complete. Though I had many disillusioned nights feeling powerless in front of the hundreds of years of history, trauma, and erasure of nonwhite mono-, bi-, and multiracial people all over the world, there were just as many nights where the hope and excitement of discovery pushed me further into my research, and all the layers of the good and the bad collapsed in on each other, bringing me to tears with the relief of finally having some answers. It might sound cheesy, but I cried when I read the introduction to *Bengali Harlem*, just as I cried when I watched Vice President Kamala Harris's inauguration, just as I am crying as I write this now and think about these powerful moments. In all of these cases, I finally saw that the cracks in the foundation of my own selfhood were beginning to fill, and that the house that I thought was me was actually much bigger, much stronger, than what I had known before. More importantly, though, I had people next to me and people behind me who I could turn to with questions, answers, strength, and I had space to look forward, to imagine and reimagine who and what will come next.

Analyzing Cedric Dover, Mixedracefaces and contemporary biracial South Asian Americans, Kamala Harris, and early twentieth century bi- and multiracial South Asians through a variety of materials and modes, this thesis identifies representation, self-determination, and advocacy spaces as influential factors to the construction of racial identity and community

belonging for bi- and multiracial South Asians. Furthermore, out of various modes of storytelling that include poetry, scholarship, narrative, photography, exhibition, interviews, and history, bi- and multiracial South Asian have developed their own sites of resistance to white supremacy. As I reach the conclusion of this thesis process, it is clear to me that bi- and multiracial South Asians have a distinct historical and contemporary presence in the United States that is necessary to study, as the stories of these individuals and communities are marked by resilience, perseverance, ingenuity, and humanity. While all of these qualities are certainly admirable, these people and communities also warrant study for no other reason than that they are real and they have experienced and still are experiencing the world through their own unique circumstances.

I have used and thought a lot about the word "community" in this thesis process. When I had asked my interviewees to define community for me, they each had their own answer ranging from the close and personal to the scientific and practical. The most prominent trend I found, though, was that no two definitions were the same. From this, I understand now more than ever that community is more than just the people physically in or around your life. It is composed of the past, present, and future, of people you meet in archives and YouTube videos and online exhibitions, and people you never will meet but always will remember. A community is also made up of ideas and aspirations, one's freedom dreams and those of one's ancestors and one's children all at the same time. Ultimately, though, community starts with the self. So my decision to turn inward to investigate the absences in my own experiences with identity, community, and belonging helped me realize that I always had a community, I just needed to find it.

This is also the case with the experiences of bi- and multiracial South Asians, as there are whole humans and lives and communities, both historical and contemporary, that exist that most people do not know about, but are rich and vibrant nonetheless. My thesis only could bring

together a few of these stories, but they are powerful even so. Starting with Cedric Dover, who received and receives little recognition for his work, but who, in all of his problems and complexity, showcases so many of the foundational hardships and joys of being a biracial South Asian, such as the limitations of racial sciences and epistemologies, the possibility of interracial, transnational, interdisciplinary solidarity, and the empowerment arising from self-definition. His life and work provided so much context that we could jump from the twentieth century right into the twenty-first with the experiences of young biracial South Asians who, even with the distance of almost a century, still endure the weight of racial pseudosciences, erasure and misrepresentation, though now have the faculties to create their own platforms and spaces for self-determination and self-worth. Yet, even for those of us who still have trouble in the U.S. fully realizing our place, space, and power, we have Kamala Harris at the forefront of bi- and multiracial South Asian representation, and through her, we can start to imagine the various functions and reaches of bi- and multiracial South Asian identity in our contemporary world, while also beginning to access the little known material about Mexican-Punjabis, the Ghadar Party, Jawala Singh, and even Dalip Singh Saund.

Though it hurt when I could not go even deeper on all of these topics and more, it was also reassuring to know that there is so much left to explore relating to bi- and multiracial South Asians, especially because of how long I lived believing that I had no context or foothold for my racial identity in the United States or anywhere else. While there is so much research that still needs to be done, there were a few areas that I wish I had more time and space to pursue. For starters, there seems to be a large and deep body of scholarship on Anglo-Indians as a specific ethnic group within India, and even scholarship on diasporic Anglo-Indians, but there does not seem to be as much work that considers the implications of “Anglo-Indian” and “Eurasian” in a

contemporary context, especially related to a much broader, more global biracial South Asian-European identity. For instance, what are similarities and differences among people who identify as "Anglo-Indians," compared to "Eurasian," and even to "biracial South Asian"? Do these similarities and differences vary by geopolitical context? Is the racial and/or cultural upbringing of these three identifiers differ drastically?

Academia also needs scholarship that conducts more in-depth and comprehensive interviews focused exclusively on various configurations of bi- and multiracial South Asian identities, while tapping into a much more expansive pool of participants. An interview-driven research project of a much larger scale, like an ethnography, would serve as a necessary compilation of primary source material related to this group in order to compare and contrast various experiences of bi- and multiracial South Asian experience. Where Karen Leonard's *Making Ethnic Choices* begins to fill out this area of scholarship, there are so many bi- and multiracial South Asian experiences that need their own space to exist as part of the larger cultural narrative.

Similarly, while I was able to focus on Mixedracefaces in this thesis, there are other exhibition and arts related programs in the UK that require further research. One is the Mixed Museum, a British digital museum and archive that examines Britain's history of racial and ethnic mixing, and another is Our Shared Cultural Heritage (OSCH), a youth engagement program at the Manchester Museum that promotes activism through arts and museum education in order to understand shared cross-cultural histories between the UK and South Asia. As with Mixedracefaces, these organizations exist as evidence of the cultural commitments of local Britians, which is especially significant when thinking about the absence of similar organizations in the United States. Future research could seek to understand why these organizations do exist

in the UK but not the U.S. and what the larger implications of this are. One also could take a critical multiracial studies perspective on these organizations to see what narratives the organizations exclude , and whether these narratives tend to be already marginalized, nonwhite perspectives. Also, one could evaluate the ways in which each of these organizations conforms to and resists larger structures of white supremacy.[113]

Finally, while conducting research for the last chapter, I came across an article from Nico Slate, called "The Other Kamala" in which Slate discussed Kamala Harris in relation to Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, a feminist, anticolonialist activist who was advocating for civil rights and "colored" solidarity as early as the 1940s, as well as other little known South Asian activists in the twentieth century. Though I did not get to include this in my chapter, it is important to consider mono-, bi-, and multiracial South Asian activists in relation to each other, and the larger considerations about what their activism and solidarity across racial lines means for the position of South Asians as well as larger implications for justice, coalition building, and community building in the United States. Even more, Slate's article did not fully discuss the gender implications of Harris's political role and Chattopadhyay activist role. Bringing more of an intersectional feminist lens to historical, contemporary, and future mono-, bi-, and multiracial South Asian activism would enhance the scholarship itself as well as the liberatory, reimagination potential of the work.[114]

Ultimately, as one of the first pieces of scholarship to investigate bi- and multiracial South Asian identity seriously through a critical race theory and multiracial studies lens that seeks to decenter whiteness and utilize interdisciplinarity, this work is important for starting and

[113] "The Mixed Museum," The Mixed Museum, accessed November 6, 2020, https://amri.atelier.enfield.chancom.net/; "OSCH Young Collective," *Our Shared Cultural Heritage* (blog), April 17, 2020, https://sharedculturalheritage.wordpress.com/osch-young-collective/.

[114] Nico Slate, "The Other Kamala," *Tides*, February 25, 2019, https://www.saada.org/tides/article/the-other-kamala.

extending the conversation. Still, it is on you, the reader, to take this information and do something with it, whether that be internalization, action, or anything else in between, or do not do anything with it. You have the power to decide your next move, and, if you learned nothing else from this thesis, I want you to know that self-determination—and the realization of this self-determination—is the greatest power of all.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"About Us." Mixedracefaces. Mixedracefaces. Accessed March 10, 2021. https://mixedracefaces.com/about-us.

"American | Indian/Turks & Caicos." Mixedracefaces. Mixedracefaces. Accessed September 16, 2020. https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/american-indian-turks-caicos

Baker, Lee D. *Anthropology and the Racial Politics of Culture.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.

Bal, Amandeep. "Pioneer Punjabis in North America: Racism, Empire and Birth of Ghadar." Journal of Sikh & Punjab Studies 26, no. 1&2 (2019): 7-25. http://www.giss.org/jsps_vol_26/amandeep_bal.pdf.

Bald, Vivek. *Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013.

Bauer, Raymond A. and Alice H. Bauer. "Day to Day Resistance to Slavery," *The Journal of Negro History* 27, (1942): 388-419.

Baxley, Traci. "Taking Off the Rose-Colored Glasses: Exposing Colorism through Counter Narratives." *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education* 14, no. 1 (2014): 20-35. https://doi.org/10.31390/taboo.14.1.05.

Bishop, Wendy and David Starkey. "Anthology." In *Keywords in Creative Writing*, 11–13. University Press of Colorado, 2006. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt4cgr61.6.

Blunt, Alison. "Geographies of Diaspora and Mixed Descent: Anglo-Indians in India and Britain." *International Journal of Population Geography* 9, no. 4 (2003): 281–94. https://doi.org/10.1002/ijpg.287.

Bose, Purnima. "Kamala Harris's The Truths We Hold: An American Journey." *American Literary History* 32, no. 2 (2020): e25-e28. doi: 10.1093/alh/ajaa005.

Bow, Leslie. *Partly Colored: Asian Americans and Racial Anomaly in the Segregated South.* New York: New York University Press, 2010.

Briggs, Charles L. "Power/Knowledge and social inequality." In *Handbook of Interview Research*, edited by Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein, 910-922. SAGE Publications, Inc., 2001. http://dx.doi.org.proxy.library.emory.edu/10.4135/9781412973588.(2001)

Britto, Isabelle. "Along the Color Line: Class, Passing, and the Construct of Colorism in DuBois's Crisis Magazine, 1910-1934." Master's Thesis, University of Leiden, 2019. https://hdl.handle.net/1887/76966.

Camp, Stephanie M. H. *Closer to Freedom Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

Caplan, Lionel. *Children of Colonialism: Anglo-Indians in a Postcolonial World.* New York: Routledge, 2020.

Carter, Greg. *The United States of the United Races: A Utopian History of Racial Mixing*. New York: New York University Press, 2013.

Chang, Aurora. "Multiracial Matters – Disrupting and Reinforcing the Racial Rubric in Educational Discourse." *Race Ethnicity and Education* 19, no. 4 (July 3, 2016): 706–30. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2014.885427.

"Chapter 1." Mixedracefaces. Mixedracefaces. Accessed March 10, 2021. https://mixedracefaces.com/chapter-1.

Chittal, Nisha. "Why Kamala Harris Shouldn't Have to Choose between Identifying as Black or South Asian." Vox, August 14, 2020. https://www.vox.com/identities/2020/8/14/21366307/kamala-harris-black-south-asian-indian-identity.

Clark, Emily. "The Tragic Mulatto and Passing," in *The Palgrave Handbook of the Southern Gothic*, edited by Susan Castillo Street and Charles L. Crow, 259–70. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-47774-3_20.

Crais, Clifton and Pamela Scully. *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story and a Biography.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Damrosch, David. "So Much to Read, So Little Time: Isn't That the Point?." *Chronicle of Higher Education* 45, no. 32 (1999): B7-B8. https://login.proxy.library.emory.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.proxy.library.emory.edu/trade-journals/so-much-read-little-time-isnt-that-point/docview/214713668/se-2?accountid=10747.

Desjarlais, Robert R. *Sensory Biographies: Lives and Deaths Among Nepal's Yolmo Buddhists*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Devarajan, Kumari ."Claim Us If You're Famous." Produced by NPR. *Code Switch.* November 10, 2020. Podcast, MP3 audio. https://www.npr.org/2020/11/10/933631207/claim-us-if-youre-famous.

Dong, Lan. *25 Events That Shaped Asian American History: An Encyclopedia of the American Mosaic.* Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2019.

Dover, Cedric. Cedric Dover Papers. Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book

Library, Emory University.

Dover, Cedric. *Cimmerii?: Or Eurasians and Their Future.* Calcutta: Modern Art Press, 1929.

Dover, Cedric. *Half-Caste.* Calcutta: M. Secker and Warburg, 1937.

Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth. "Strategies and Forms of Resistance: Focus on Slave Women in the United States." In *In Resistance: Studies in African, Caribbean, and Afro-American History*, edited by Gary Y. Okihiro, 143-165. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986.

Gardner, Sheena K. and Matthew W. Hughey. "Still the Tragic Mulatto? Manufacturing Multiracialization in Magazine Media, 1961–2011." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42, no. 4 (March 12, 2019): 645-665. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1380212.

Gist, Noel Pitts and Roy Dean Wright. *Marginality and Identity: Anglo-Indians as a Racially-Mixed Minority in India*. Leiden: Brill Archive, 1973.

"Guyanese | Indo Trinidadian/Irish." Mixedracefaces. Mixedracefaces. Accessed September 16, 2020. https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/guyanese-indo-trinidadian-irish.

Hall, Stuart. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices.* London: SAGE Publications Inc., 2003.

Harris, Kamala. "Kamala Harris & Mindy Kaling Cook Masala Dosa." Kamala Harris. November 25, 2019. Video. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xz7rNOAFkgE.

Harris, Kamala D. *The Truths We Hold: An American Journey.* (New York: Penguin Press, 2019)

Hartocollis, Anemona. "Who Should Own Photos of Slaves? The Descendants, Not Harvard, a Lawsuit Says." *New York Times,* (2019). https://archiv.louverture.ch/KAMPA/AGASSIZ/tamara_renty_NYT.pdf.

Hine, Darlene and Kate Wittenstein. "Female Slave Resistance: The Economics of Sex." In *The Black Woman Cross-Culturally*, edited by Filomina Chioma Steady, 289-299. Rochester: Schenkman Books, Inc., 1981.

hooks, bell. "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators." In *Black Looks: Race and Representation*, 115–31. Boston: South End Press, 1992.

Horne, Gerald C. *The End of Empires: African Americans and India*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008.

Hunter, Margaret. "'If You're Light You're Alright': Light Skin Color as Social Capital for Women of Color." *Gender and Society* 16, no. 2 (2002): 175–93. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3081860.

Hunter, Margaret. "The Persistent Problem of Colorism: Skin Tone, Status, and Inequality." *Sociology Compass* 1, no. 1 (2007): 237–54. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2007.00006.x.

Ibrahim, Farah, Hifumi Ohnishi, and Daya Singh Sandhu. "Asian American Identity Development: A Culture Specific Model for South Asian Americans." *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development* 25, no. 1 (1997): 34-50. https://doi-org.proxy.library.emory.edu/10.1002/j.2161-1912.1997.tb00314.x.

"Indian | Honduran." Mixedracefaces. Mixedracefaces. Accessed September 16, 2020. https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/indian-honduran.

"Indian | Indian/Cuban/Jamaican." Mixedracefaces. Mixedracefaces. Accessed September 16, 2020. https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/indian-indian-cuban-jamaican.

"Indian | Irish." Mixedracefaces. Mixedracefaces. Accessed September 16, 2020. https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/2018/8/indian-irish-na.

"Indian | Tanzanian." Mixedracefaces. Mixedracefaces. Accessed September 16, 2020. https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/indian-tanzanian.

"International." Mixedracefaces. Mixedracefaces. Accessed March 10, 2021. https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories.

Iyer, Deepa. *We Too Sing America.* New York: The New Press, 2015.

"Japanese | Trinidadian/Tobagonian." Mixedracefaces. Mixedracefaces. Accessed March 23, 2021. https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/japanese-trinidadian-tobagonian.

Joshi, Khyati Y. *White Christian Privilege: The Illusion of Religious Equality in America.* New York: New York University Press, 2020.

"Kamala Harris: The Vice President." The White House. White House.gov. Accessed February 22, 2021. https://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/vice-president-harris/.

Kelley, Robin D.G. *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination.* Boston: Beacon Press, 2002.

Khanna, Nikki. *Whiter: Asian American Women on Skin Color and Colorism.* New York: New York University Press, 2020.

Kim, Suzanne A. "Yellow Skin, White Masks: Asian American Impersonations of Whiteness and the Feminist Critique of Liberal Equality." *Asian Law Journal* 8 (2001): 89–109.

Koshy, Susan. "Category Crisis: South Asian Americans and Questions of Race and Ethnicity."

Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies 7, no. 3 (1998): 285-320. https://doi.org/10.1353/dsp.1998.0013.

Ladson-Billings, Gloria. "Through a Glass Darkly: The Persistence of Race in Education Research & Scholarship." *Educational Researcher* 41, no. 4 (2012): 115-20. Accessed March 31, 2021. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41477775.

Lawless, Elaine J. "I Was Afraid Someone like You... an Outsider... Would Misunderstand': Negotiating Interpretive Differences between Ethnographers and Subjects." In *Reciprocal Ethnography and the Power of Women's Narratives*, 80–95. Indiana University Press, 2019. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvpb3z54.9.

Leonard, Karen Isaksen. *Making Ethnic Choices: California's Punjabi Mexican Americans*. Asian American History and Culture Series. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992.

Lesser, Jeff H. "Always 'Outsiders': Asians, Naturalization, and the Supreme Court." *Amerasia Journal* 12, no. 1 (January 1985): 83–100. https://doi.org/10.17953/amer.12.1.033ktptx4431w322.

Ling, Huping and Allan W. Austin. *Asian American History and Culture: An Encyclopedia.* New York: Routledge, 2015.

Malinowski, Bronislaw. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1922.

Mills, Brandale. "Old Stereotypes Made New: A Textual Analysis on the Tragic Mulatto Stereotype in Contemporary Hollywood." *Howard Journal of Communications* 30, no. 5 (October 20, 2019): 411–29. https://doi.org/10.1080/10646175.2018.1512063.

Mirzoeff, Nicholas. *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.

The Mixed Museum. "The Mixed Museum." Accessed November 6, 2020. https://amri.atelier.enfield.chancom.net/.

"Mixedracefaces; a Must-See Exhibition Coming to Copeland Gallery," Copeland Park & Bussey Building (blog), August 7, 2019, https://www.copelandpark.com/blog/2019/08/07/mixedracefaces-a-must-see-exhibition-coming-to-copeland-gallery/.

Office of the Historian and Office of the Clerk United States House of Representatives. "Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Congress: 1900-2017." House Document, Washington, DC, 2017.

Our Shared Cultural Heritage. "OSCH Young Collective," April 17, 2020. https://sharedculturalheritage.wordpress.com/osch-young-collective/.

"Pakistani | Thai." Mixedracefaces. Mixedracefaces. Accessed September 16, 2020. https://mixedracefaces.com/intl-stories/pakistani-thai.

Paranjape, Makarand R. "'East Indian' Cosmopolitanism." *Interventions: The International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 13, no. 4 (December 2011): 550–69. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2011.628119.

Patterson, Tom. "Triumph and Tragedy of Dalip Singh Saund." *California Historian* 38, no. 4 (1992). https://www-tc.pbs.org/rootsinthesand/dalip.pdf.

Prashad, Vijay. *The Karma of Brown Folk.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

Qureshi, Sadiah. "Displaying Sara Baartman, the 'Hottentot Venus.'" *History of Science* 42, no. 2 (June 1, 2004): 233–57. https://doi.org/10.1177/007327530404200204.

Rana, Swati. *Race Characters: Ethnic Literature and the Figure of the American Dream.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020.

Rondilla, Joanne L., Rudy P. Guevarra, and Paul R. Spickard. *Red and Yellow, Black and Brown: Decentering Whiteness in Mixed Race Studies*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2017. http://proxy.library.emory.edu/login?url=http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/j.ctt1q1cqvn .

Reuters Staff. "Fact Check: Kamala Harris Did Not Switch from Identifying as Indian-American to Black." Reuters, August 24, 2020. https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-fact-check-harris-did-not-switch-raci-idUSKBN25H1RC.

Saund, Dalip Singh. *Congressman from India.* New York: E. P. Dutton, 1960.

Scott, James C. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.

Sekula, Allan. "The Body and the Archive." *October* 39 (1986): 3–64. https://doi.org/10.2307/778312.

Shankar, Lavina Dhingra and Rajini Srikanth. *A Part, Yet Apart: South Asians in Asian America.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998.

Sharma, Nitasha Tamar. *Hip Hop Desis: South Asian Americans, Blackness, and a Global Race Consciousness.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.

Sirohi, Seema. "Is Democratic Vice-President Nominee Kamala Harris Too 'Left' or Enough Indian?." The Economic Times, August 12, 2020.

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/is-democratic-vice-president-nominee-kamala-harris-too-left-or-enough-indian/articleshow/77508151.cms.

Slate, Nico. "The Other Kamala." *Tides,* February 25, 2019. https://www.saada.org/tides/article/the-other-kamala.

Slate, Nico. *The Prism of Race: W. E. B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, Paul Robeson, and the Colored World of Cedric Dover*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Slate, Nico. "Race as Freedom: How Cedric Dover and Barack Obama Became Black." *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 37, no. 2 (2014): 222–40. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2012.715661.

Slorach, Roddy. "From eugenics to scientific racism." *International Socialism Journal* 165 (2020): 133-54. https://isj.org.uk/from-eugenics-to-scientific-racism/.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. New York: Zed Books, 2012.

Smith, Shawn Michelle. *American Archives: Gender, Race, and Class in Visual Culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Tagg, John. "Evidence, Truth and Order: Photographic Records and the Growth of the State." In *The Burden of Representation*, 60–102. London: Macmillan, 1987.

Thangaraj, Stanley. "Playing through Differences: Black–White Racial Logic and Interrogating South Asian American Identity." *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 35, no. 6 (June 2012): 988-1006. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2012.661868.

US Census Bureau. "About Race." The United States Census Bureau. Accessed March 22, 2021. https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html.

Walker, Alice. *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose*. Orlando: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2004.

Wilder, JeffriAnne. *Color Stories: Black Women and Colorism in the 21st Century.* Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2015.

Wilkerson, Isabel. *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*. New York: Random House, 2020.

Williams, Blair. *Anglo-Indians: Vanishing Remnants of a Bygone Era: Anglo-Indians in India, North America, and the UK in 2000.* Calcutta: Tiljallah Relief Inc, 2002.

Winfield, Ann Gibson. *Eugenics and education in America: Institutionalized racism and the implications of history, ideology, and memory*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2007.