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For Arti, Maheer and Manarth
&
For All Those Who Spoke to Me
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Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, at this or any other institution.

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(Signature)
Chapter One

Introduction: Indo-Fijian Diasporic Identity and Representation in Popular Culture, Literature and the Everyday.

One Canadian winter, the ‘Lady from Canada’ finds herself overwhelmed by an unexamined feeling. On an impulse she wants to go ‘home’. Her grandchildren are puzzled, ‘What’s gotten in Grandma? They are concerned but have no time for nostalgia, because they have a different notion of home and identity.

Subramani: Altering Imagination (1997)

This opening chapter sites the central problem/thesis for this research. Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representation are the core concern for this thesis in its manifestations in literature, memoirs, and narratives on the diaspora, tourist ephemera, popular culture and the everyday. As the introductory chapter to these concerns and areas of inquiry this first section begins with some of the arguments central to this project and a justification for this research. The chapter is divided into five sections. The second section places a site for research that is largely focused on a diaspora by placing the Geo-graphy of Fiji. The central problem/thesis for this research is outlined in this first section with some of the arguments central to this project. The second section places a site for research that is largely focused on a diaspora by placing the Geo-graphy of Fiji. Geography/Geo-graphy is used as a hyphenated sign to indicate place, cartography and scale but also of its sights, smells and instances that are remembered as a place of origin or a place to belong to for the Indo-Fijian diaspora and its removes by migrations and movements.

In the first instance the diasporic movement or ‘remove’ was from India to Fiji through the indenture system of labour between 1879 and 1916 and later free migration beginning in the late 1920’s. The migration from Fiji since the 1987 coup, in the case of fieldwork in this thesis, to Liverpool in Sydney, Australia, forms the second shift diaspora or diasporic remove. The second shift Indo-Fijian diasporic removes to Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States forms the larger diaspora resulting mainly due to the coups in Fiji in 1987 and more recently in 2000. History and its particular inscriptions and versions of the Indo-Fijian diaspora site the thesis and some of the theoretical underpinnings to arguments on a people, their past, memory and
assignations of identity and representation, forms the basis of the third section. The fourth section looks at some of the main theoretical constructs that inform the main arguments of this thesis, for a more inclusive/secular and heterogeneous reading of the Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representations in their literature, popular culture and in texts/narratives about them. This section ends with an outline of the main research methods of inquiry for the thesis. The final section places words and terms, and provides definitions, disclaimers and guides to their usage in the chapters that follow.

1: The Problem and the Thesis

This thesis examines modalities of identity and representation for the Indo-Fijian diaspora and its second shift diasporic remove in Liverpool, Sydney, Australia. Indo-Fijian Literature in English, Fiji-Hindi, Memoir form of Indo-Fijian diasporic writings along with representations of Indo-Fijians in other texts are examined in the first instance to enable siting of various identities and representations. This is used as a springboard to engage with instances of production; expression and consumption of Popular Culture in Indo-Fijian diasporas are examined towards a critical inquiry into the problematic of Indo-Fijian diasporic identities and representations. The problem at hand is the issue of identity and representation between the binaries of homogeneous constructs of a people and their lives and that of heterogeneous modalities that takes in difference and the place of the individual and their everyday lived space in the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Modes of identity and representation in its various modes, literary, non-literary narratives and in the production, expression and consumption of popular culture is examined in this thesis towards a construct of a diaspora, of a people, beyond convenient reductive homogeneous constructs.
1.1: Diaspora-Meaning and Usage and the Nature of the Indo-Fijian Diaspora.

The wider definition of diaspora by William Safran, as cited by Emmanuel Nelson (1992), is used to provide context to the development of ideas on the diaspora and to cite as it being problematic. Safran suggests that the "concept of diaspora be applied to expatriate minority communities whose members share several of the following characteristics":

1) they or their ancestors have been dispersed from a specific original "centre" to two or more foreign regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision or myth about their original homeland...3) they believe they are not -- and perhaps cannot be -- fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and a place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return - when conditions are appropriate. 5) they believe that they should be ... committed ... to homeland and its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to relate personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethno communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship. (x)

Such a definition, as used by postcolonialist theorists remains problematic, because to speak of an Indian diaspora, is to insist on a claim to an essential psychological and historical unity that girds the spectacular spread of a people. A much more useful definition of diaspora is when it refers to both the historical and contemporary/everyday/lived presence of people and their identities and representation who have origins in other areas of the world but make new worlds in their movements and migrations. This is the definition that is utilised in this thesis.
The use of the term ‘remove’ from the idea of a ‘original’ homeland is deliberate in this definition, to place context on the dispersal of Indian indentured labourers and free immigrants to Fiji. The idea of diasporic removes covers both push and pull factors, of indenture/trafficking of people/free migrants/second shift migrants, as part of the larger colonial project or relates to it through current historical/political circumstances, both as the local or as global projects. The Indo-Fijian diasporic dispersal entails as a first remove from India to Fiji through Indenture and later Free Immigrants, as dis/location, and in more recent times a second shift trans/locations to countries like Australia, New Zealand, United States and Canada. The shifts are accompanied by further hyphens for the diaspora to indicate these new shifts; for example, this thesis has to contend in its case study, the Australian-Indo-Fijian.

The use of the term Indo-Fijian diaspora is an inclusive one, and markers and margins such as diasporic removes or sectarian divides, are hyphenated as necessary, but there is place for the inclusive term for a people, their identity and representations. In this thesis the term Indo-Fijian diaspora in its inclusive use includes descendents of Indian indentured labourers, descendents of free immigrants and on going hyphenated diasporic removes. The Indo-Fijian Australian diaspora as a specific case study in this thesis is one such example. Such a definition is mindful of and takes into account other diasporic removes to countries/locations in New Zealand, Australia, United States and Canada. Smaller but significant Indo-Fijian diasporic movements are to be found in England and are often neglected in studies in their spread to other islands of the Pacific.

Children from the small number of inter-marriages between the major cultural groups, primarily Indo-Fijian and Fijian unions add another dimension to the diaspora. Or the lost generation of Indentured labourers who returned to India after their indenture, ‘Up to 15 May 1957 some 32,995 repatriates, of whom about 24,000 were born in India; thus about 40 per cent. of the immigrants had gone back to India, though some of these later returned to Fiji.’ (Gillion 190) They all carried a trace of Fiji including almost 9,000 Indo-Fijians, though some were later to return to Fiji.

Diasporic shifts as well as sectarian divides among the Indo-Fijian diaspora become part of the interrogation of a people through their literary, non-literary narratives and popular culture constructs in this thesis as well as their representations from outside. Class divides and issues of
gender and place of children in narratives are part of this inclusive definition of the Indo-Fijian diaspora, its identity and representation. The significant sustained engagement of the thesis is with identities and representations of this awareness of an Indo-Fijian diaspora with links to Fiji and by various displacements and links to India. Added to these initial binaries of dispersal are the second shift movements to the various hyphens as indicated in the thesis to note place, location, site and differences. Diaspora and other key terms and their usage in this thesis are explained in the section on words and meanings in this introductory chapter.

The effects of distancing and generation of multiplicity of identity and representation generated in different diasporic shifts for the Indo-Fijian diaspora are looked at in this thesis in two distinct movements. The first dispersal is from India to Fiji, and second (in the case of the fieldwork in this thesis) from Fiji to Liverpool in Sydney, Australia. A beginning point for this thesis is the removal of ideas of homogenous explanations of identities and representations. Instead, through a study of Indo-Fijian literature and non-literary narratives, and that of ‘outsider’ representations and the production, expression and consumption of popular culture, and interrogation of the everyday towards finding and accounting for the multiplicity of meaning of identity and representation. Convenient labeling of people is undercut in this thesis towards heterogeneous possibilities of diasporic identity and representation.

The terms associated with alterity divides, such as ‘self-other’, ‘insider-outsider’ and other such binaries are deployed with a consciousness of its process and products of division or inclusion and exclusion. Its use in any instance is not privileged and as explained later in this chapter, under definitions, alterity constructs are viewed with a conscious attempt to move it towards a dissolve, or resolution of divides. A variety of ideas, ideologies and theories form the myth-making factory that proposes to have a definitive version of a people. This thesis intends to subvert notions of the definitive towards multiplicity of identities and representations. It looks at how an existing combined insider and outsider perspective forms a medium to disseminate powerful myths about a people and its life. It is not an actively promoted or disseminated myth as part of a state apparatus (although this too persists in both colonial and independent Fiji political discourse and
governance) but exists as a powerful latent force used in times of crisis or conflict to raise particular identities.

This thesis discusses the pervasive nature of the processes that come together to present a largely Male, Educated, Middle-Class version of Indo-Fijian identities and representation. This is problematic for my positioning in writing this thesis. I privilege myself in this regard by taking on the position of being aware of limitations of this position and take on the responsibility to provide a much more representative account from this research. There is all the while at play in existing theories and models a negation of the multiplicity of identities and possibilities of representations in favor of more homogenous constructs of a particular ideology and consciousness for a people. In such a determinist mode the crucial interplay between absence and presence of an Indo-Fijians positioning is increasing being lost in established discourse and discourse establishing itself around a diaspora as academic/media/official creative industry.

Theories of the ‘everyday’ and of the ‘lived space’ become increasingly important to counter reductive modalities of Indo-Fijian identity and representation. The ‘everyday’ and the ‘lived space’ can be seen as part of everyday modernity as boring and the relentlessly routine, as a general articulation, that among others forms the essence of Marxist based criticisms of late capitalism. In this thesis the ‘everyday’ and the ‘lived space’ are interrogated as sites for the construct of identities and representations from within the diaspora. Sectarian, class and gender divides become part of the so-called banality of life as underpinnings to the Indo-Fijian diaspora but on closer examination/interrogation/engagement reveal a people and their identities and representations.

1.2: Justification for the Thesis

This justification for this thesis is that identity and representation are keys to a better understanding of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. It contends that present discourse of identity and representation on the diaspora is inadequate. Part of the justification for this research is that present
literary studies on the Indo-Fijian diaspora are limited to a study of four Indo-Fijian writers and their works in English. This thesis expands on this field of literary and cultural studies analysis of the Indo-Fijian diaspora by bringing in the memoir form, Indo-Fijian women writers, juvenilia, representations of children as a means of widening the scope of research, analysis and writing. In order to provide context this thesis brings as a useful expansion to present work outsider/insider perspectives and representations of Indo-Fijian identities in travelogues, travel and tourist images and text in an in-flight magazine, in feature media writing and the novel form. In another significant expansion to present studies the thesis looks at the everyday and the lived space of the Indo-Fijian diaspora as a means an additional point of interrogation for their identity and representation. The inclusion of popular culture and the instances of its production, expression and consumption and a critical engagement in this thesis with its place and meaning is an important addition to the present corpus of study of the Indo-Fijian diaspora.

Present studies of the Indo-Fijian diaspora have been greatly expanded on in recent years by research and scholarship in areas such as sociology, history, and anthropology. A cultural studies approach to the study of the Indo-Fijian diaspora is the valuable expansion of this thesis to such studies. The relationship between identity and representation of the diaspora is crucial to a better understanding of a people and their life-space, past, present and future. A study of Indo-Fijian literature reveals a particular manifestation of discourse of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. As is evident in this thesis in previous research, scholarship and academic debate on the subject that is referred to as foundation for this present research, but also as points of departure and expansion by including a wider cultural studies scope.

To existing discourses this thesis adds the production, expression and consumption of Popular Culture in the Indo-Fijian diaspora in creating a wider world of meanings on identity and representation. The inclusions of Indo-Fijian women writers/artist, juvenilia and representations of children in all forms of Indo-Fijian literature are important additions to existing fields of study. The extensive fieldwork of a significant Indo-Fijian diaspora in Liverpool is another significant expansion on existing studies of this diaspora and diaspora studies in Australia in general. This thesis engages with the absence of adequate alternative theories on questions of identity and
representation of the Indo-Fijian diaspora and provides theories that move beyond convenient labeling or prescriptive analysis of a people and their lives. As such the present research justifies itself by inclusion of theories and constructs about the ‘everyday’ or a ‘lived space’. Previous myths and misconceptions are removed by the thesis towards literary analysis, textual readings, statistical analysis and surveys to present relevant and plausible constructs for Indo-Fijian identity and representation. Beginning with a site. The geo-graphy of Fiji as a starting point for the study of the Indo-Fijian diaspora and their identities and representations, that must begin from a place among places.

2: Fiji’s Geo-graphy: Questions of Identity, Belonging and Representation

Geo-graphy is of prime importance to any study of diaspora. The Indo-Fijian diasporic shifts in this study features geographical locations/dispersal that begin in India dis/locate to Fiji and then re/move on to the second shift diaspora’s. In this thesis the second shift diaspora examined is Liverpool, the city and its suburbs in Sydney, Australia. Geo-graphy is of importance, as a signifier of place, of the origins of the diaspora and its removes through the various forms of migration remain as signified traces. Each place on a map and towns or villages pointed out as a place is remembered as a modality of reference, Geo-graphically, as well as in a myriad other ways. Some of these other associations are brought out in the study of the everyday lived spaces of the Indo-Fijian diaspora and their representations. The main significance of Geo-graphy in any study of the diaspora as its narratives, literary or non-literary shows up place, its remembered landscape and memories, as a prime construct of identity and representation.

Fiji’s geography has not changed much glancing at various historical accounts. Brij Lal’s summary effectively presents Fiji’s cartography and geography:

The Fiji Islands lie in the southwest Pacific between 15 and 22 degrees south latitude and between 175 degrees east and 177 degrees west longitude, astride the 180th meridian. Their total land area of 7,055
square miles is scattered across some 250,000 square miles of water. …

Most of the larger land masses are high islands of ancient volcanic and andesite rocks and cretaceous and tertiary sedimentation. They are mostly rugged, with sharp mountain peaks, deep, winding valleys, and sudden crags. *(Broken 3)*

At various points I interject to point out the relevance of shifts in Geo-graphy to introduce ideas of multiplicity of locations and spaces that make up what is usually termed a homogenous Fiji. This is important to the thesis as it marks beginnings of myths of a people and a place as a composite whole. As the references in various texts later in this study point out being from one valley or another is as significant to the individual as being from Mars or Venus or Madras and Calcutta or Suva and Labasa.

Geo-graphy in a fundamental sense locates and becomes the locus of dislocation/locations of individuals and groups. It is therefore an important consideration in this study of lived spaces and times and its influence on concepts such as identity and representation. For the Indo-Fijian diaspora, Lal’s description of the Fiji Islands even in its scientific constructs of cartographic details there is the beginning of a place that evokes a sense of location either through a life lived/alive in that space, or through memory for the second shift diaspora living overseas. This thesis examines such Geo-graphy and its constructs through its presence/absence in Indo-Fijian Literature and instances of the production, consumption and expressions of popular culture. The early dispersal was from the ships to plantations on the two main islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu and on to the smaller islands. There has also been the continual process of dispersal and the creation of microcosms of Indo-Fijian diasporas within the Pacific Islands and the larger lands of Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States. Such diasporic removals do not conform to any homogeneous totality as we explore later in this thesis.

Indo-Fijian literature provides its own cartography of place and sense of belonging. As “Sautu”, (the title is ironic as it means “Plenty”) in Subramani’s short fiction and as spaces in Vanua Levu in his Fiji – Hindi novel *Daukaa Puraan*. Such descriptions stand alongside the frail wooden
stores and village schools from the same area in Brij Lal’s collection *Mr Tulsi’s Store and Other Stories*. Or in Satendra Nandan’s poem ‘Place of Birth,’ *We ran down the same brown hill/with a pandanus tree/Standing like a girmitya/In his saafa incandescent in the sun:* /*The tall grass, waving in the wind, / like her rich, dark, matted hair.* (‘SPAN’ 52.2002) And its realization in food choices as a harried diesel mechanic eyes seafood from Fiji in Liverpool, Sydney. Walks into the Indo-Fijian meat and seafood shop on Northumberland street and asks if the river mussels, ‘*kai*’, are from Sigatoka River or the Ba River. Or peruses the cardboard signs with their special signifiers of ‘Junglee Murgi-on Special’ (Wild/Free Range Chickens) or ‘N.Z Lamb Chops’ – the Indo-Fijian preference for New Zealand lamb, usually denoted as ‘Pacific Grade’, a marker for sheep rather than lamb. ‘Junglee Murgi’, as a marker for wild or free range chicken, takes its own signifiers of place and people, as part of Fiji-Hindi, a unique cipher code for food from Fiji, given expression/death in a butcher shop in Liverpool, Sydney.

Or a delta is the domain of the tigers in red who prowl dusky ovals in Liverpool, and remember the glory of the Inter-District Championship for their Rewa soccer team back in Fiji, the ‘Delta Tigers’ in their all red strips. Such dissent from unitary Geo-graphy echoes in the linguistic variances from place to place from village to village. Geo-graphy, identity and representation and what each represents and seeks to achieve and how it is received are therefore important considerations which constitute the end point of this study.

2.1: The Case for Indo-Fijian as preferred term for the Thesis

A starting point of this marking of trace/tracing to origins and homelands is the use in this thesis for the term Indo-Fijian to describe its diaspora and individuals. This is an important choice as my later fieldwork reveals neither the inhabitants of the space of descendents of indentured labourers and that of free immigrants agree on any of the given names of bandied about choices. Nor do some sections of the Indigenous Fijians with the popular moniker for the Indo-Fijians in the Fijian vernacular being “Kaindia” or from/belonging to India. Official forms in Fiji from birth to death
certificates and all others in between categorise the diaspora as “Indians”, although nationality in passport and travel documents is filled out as Fijian.

Such naming can also be performative as seen in the use of ‘Fijian’ to describe Vijay Singh, Fiji’s international golfer from the Indo-Fijian diaspora, and its apparent embracing by all in Fiji and in the international media. These and other discussions on naming of the diaspora from within and outside forms an important semantic marker that plays variously on identity and representation and one with which this thesis wrestles at various points in this thesis. At this point it is sufficient to say that Indo-Fijian is the preferred term as it acknowledges place of origin in India and place of birth in Fiji to its rightful place as the defining point of identity in this case at the end of the hyphen. The hyphenating that can go on around this term is endless as the various migratory shifts takes place and rightly provides and will in times to come provide important markers of the evolving nature of the diaspora.

Sudesh Mishra makes discursive interventions in two papers that interrogate the semantics, semiotics and as a poet the poetics of two key terms of “Girmitya” and “Island”. His interrogation of Girmitya in the address ‘On Time and Girmitya’ searches for the ‘measure of translatable discontinuity between agreement and girmitya inasmuch as what is transferred across from the first term is not carried over into signification.’(2-3) The terms ‘Girmitya’ and ‘Girmitya’ is interpreted by Sudesh Mishra as “…it emerged from a sense of an apocalyptic betrayal of general intentionality for a time positive, hence its general applicability as a sign for all that occurred in its aftermath…”(10). And the ‘Island’ for Sudesh Mishra in his essay, ‘No Sign is an Island’, is the coming together of sea and land to form ‘the irreducible third, the ineffable name, the metaphor.’ (337)

A metaphor that changes perspective in the eye of the beholder so it is ‘…through the seasick eyes of the girmitya, prisoner, leper. The island becomes narak, hell.’ (341) From Sudesh Mishra’s discursive turns and word plays a departure is made in this thesis from its complicity with the generation of myths (narak=girmitya=hell) of a point of origin (girmitya as ideology-India as centre) of sites to locate identities and representations of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. The twin of geography as site is history as the process of documenting and remembering a diaspora, its locations and
dislocations as starting points for this thesis. And it is to history we turn now to provide particular form for the Indo-Fijian diaspora and its identity and representation in movements, past and present.

3: A Historical Siting: Contact with People and Places.

The diaspora is much a product of history as it is a performance of the narrative acts of inscribing place, people, event, incident, accident, coincidence, causality and the official record in contradictory practices of living/dying, dis/location, and of dying/living and dis/location as cycle. History becomes the originator narrative for the diaspora as well as of the actual movement/s and then it engages in the task of recording, interpreting and reading the process over and over again. As in the case of the Indo-Fijian diaspora, with the colonizing of India as part of the larger movement of imperialism, the cession of Fiji to Britain, with the Empire forming the nexus between its two migrations of Indian indentured labour and later free migrants. Questions of labour, capital and land and its various interpolations in India, Fiji and in Britain, began the process of a diasporic removal of people through official documentation to engage in the practices of Indenture. Diaspora’s begin with moments of displacement with its insistent reasons for causality that begins the remove of a people, of place, of identities and representations.

The inquiry into an Indo-Fijian diaspora cannot take place without placing in context their fellow dispossessed and colonized, the indigenous Fijians, often misrepresented as binaries of hosts (taukei-Indigenous Fijians) and guests (vulagis-Indo-Fijians). This thesis does not valorize the bulk of popular history from the last century that proclaims Pacific history exists only after “contact” or “discovery” with Europeans. Brij Lal describes early social and political organization of Fijians as “diverse” and admits that at risk of “some distortion and oversimplification” “early Fijian society was hierarchical and based on the principle of patrilineal agnastic descent.”  (Broken 4) This thesis engages the Fijian-Indo-Fijian dialectic as an early engagement in analysis of Indo-Fijian literary narratives as an appropriate marker of the influences of the binary on Indo-Fijian identity and representation.
In this study, the various elements and peculiarities of British colonialism and neo-colonialism are the background to constructions of identity and representations of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Colonialism institutionalized negative alterity practices in Fiji between Indo-Fijians and Indigenous Fijians. This took many forms and can be traced to the institution of "divide and rule" of British colonial practice throughout its empire. Brij Lal (1992) outlines the "divide and rule" practice in terms of the fact that:

Government policy did nothing to encourage the two groups to cross each other's boundary. … The gulf between the two communities that resulted from culture, language, and religion were exacerbated by government policy, which made no attempt to draw them together "into truly common bonds of citizenship" (Broken 107)

Teresia Teaiwa with reference to Sudesh Mishra cites abdication of personal responsibility among Indo-Fijians and Fijians to learn about culture, language and enter into social discourse. She quotes Indo-Fijian poet and academic Sudesh Mishra on his admission that in high school a choice to learn Fijian was thwarted as between, “Teacher and pupil—there was an abdication of responsibility from both sides”. (SPAN: 2004.98) Paul Geraghty points out the imbalance in acquiring language skills and acknowledging knowledge of the ‘other’ being tilted against Fijians by quoting Chandra: ‘Various other writers (e.g Roth 1936:40; Quain 1948:8; Mayer 1973:180; Moag 1979:130) have commented on the common knowledge of Fijian among Fiji Indians. Even in the cane-growing areas, where knowledge of Hindi amongst Fijians is highest, knowledge of Fijians by Indians is still greater. (Chandra 1980:45).” (7) This in itself is of little significance except to counter past and present representation and creation of the Indo-Fijian as a non-secular self-seeking materialist. Language barriers among others is part of the racial divide in Fiji as one of the prime locations from which past migrations were shaped and present second shift diasporic removes of the Indo-Fijian diaspora can be found.
Colonialism in Fiji like in all other specific locations did not follow an essentialised pattern nor did it produce a singular unceasing colonial character. In the alterity binaries colonialism is the negation of the colonised subject/s. Similarly, neo-colonialism provides its own force in determining discursive currents in the major historical, political and social processes and period, which shadow the most productive years of Indo-Fijian literature. This thesis work along the commonly accepted periodisation of Fiji's history in of the pre-cession period prior to 1874, indenture period from 1879 to 1920, colonial period from 1874 to 1970 and the post–independent years since 1970. The different periodical assignations given to the indenture period by various scholars are accepted as valid as long as they fall between 1879 and 1921. To this periodisation are added the coup/s and post-coup/s periods of 1987 and 2000.

The 1970, 1990 and 1997 Fiji constitutions are part of this process of periodisation with its own implications on the Indo-Fijian diaspora and their shifts, migrations and constructions of identity and representation. Identity and representation as present in a constitution can weigh heavily in determining official recognition and subsequent personal and community stances on belonging and displacement. The coups of 1987 and 2000 brought with it a mass exodus and diasporic dislocation that is important in the study of the second shift diaspora from Fiji to places like Liverpool in Sydney, Australia. The study of literature and popular culture of the Indo-Fijian diaspora is informed by an awareness of Fiji’s history, and the global practices of history and politics. History and politics are important markers for the Indo-Fijian diaspora that began with a periodic displacement, literally, from the first five-year period of indenture.

Within the Indo-Fijian diaspora there have been removals and shifts based on issues such as land, migrations, rise and fall of crops like sugar, timber, banana and copra. Historical / political upheavals and conditions in the 1970's linked to general elections and Fijian nationalism between 1974 to 1977 and thereafter, the 1987/2000 coups and the 1990 constitution, have engendered or added to these shifts and removals. There is now significant internal migration of the Indo-Fijian diaspora as part of the re-location of mostly farming groups due to non-renewal of leases on their land. These shifts in many ways relate to recent politics in Fiji. The post 1987 indigenous fundamentalism institutionalized by the 1990 constitution was another decisive factor in
determining migration trends, both to the second shift locations or to new locations within Fiji. The promulgation of a fairer 1997 constitution was seen as being equally decisive in dictating the trends on Indo-Fijian migration from Fiji and the place of Indo-Fijians within Fiji until the political upheavals and civil unrest of 2000.

The breaking up, further dispersals and removals of diaspora and arrests of migration/dispersal is overlooked by diasporic theories which foreground a unitary modality as the discursive position. The creation of new geography and culture-bound diasporic literatures indicates widening-shifts/breaks/removals of the circles away from the original centre of the diasporic group. Indo-Fijian literature exemplifies in some instances the original geographical space or "homeland" of India, as it continues to inhabit the diasporic removals in varying aspects of the cultural/historical/religious ties, and continues in biological/ethnic/racial links. This thesis aims to prove the link to Fiji through historical, economic and familial/friendship ties for the second shift diaspora and for the Indo-Fijian diaspora in Fiji overshadows the link to India, to the extent that the latter becomes ‘a trace of a trace’. This becomes a significant argument in the thesis that follows through engagements with Indo-Fijian literature, memoirs, insider/outsider representations, and the everyday and in popular culture instances.

In the historical siting of an Indo-Fijian diaspora it is important to begin with a document of their first dislocation. The success of an indentured workforce in the West Indies was touted as an example by Sir Arthur Gordon, Fiji’s first Governor, for an easy and workable system to solve Fiji’s labour shortage. In a speech to planters at a meeting organised to gain their consent for Indian indentured labourers on September 8 1878 Gordon began on the following premise:

An ample and steady supply of labour is absolutely essential to the Colony. From when and under what management shall we obtain it most certainly, most cheaply and with the least probability of abuse?” Gordon makes his speech with the purpose of obtaining a vote from the planters on question “that the Government should undertake the conduct and management of the immigration of labour?
Gordon goes on to argue in clear clinical terms of his proposition for Indentured labour from India:

I have nothing to urge against Polynesian labour, but I think we must admit that the supply of it is decreasing and the cost of it increasing. All the evidence I have been able to obtain tends to show that this state of things will continue.

The supply of labour which is to be obtained from India is practically boundless. The amount of wages given to Indian coolies is well known. I hold in my hand some statistics as the probably expenses of their introduction here.

My calculations are _3/18/-, the expense for recruiting: 10/-a head, per man, for the agent; passage money, _12; cost of returning same, _3: in all _19/8/-; deducting from this amount of one third as paid by the Government, we arrive at the fact that for $12/18/8 we obtain a coolie servant for five years with his wages of 5d per day additional with rations.

(6-7)

Gordon’s speech forms an ur-text for the Indenture experience in Fiji for the some 60,537 Indians who registered in this labour trade between 1879 and 1916, some of whom made their final journey in 1921. In 1879, the first shipload of indentured formed part of the economies of scale that Gordon purports to “hold” in his hand as “statistics” in his speech of British colonialism in Fiji and elsewhere. Gordon’s speech makes clear the relation between land, labour and capital that forms the basis of the market economy in which control over all three equates to political and economic power. In this instance the labour market from India was the ideal source with its
‘practically boundless’ supply and the ‘well known’ cheapness of labour from “Indian coolies”. The indenture system that evolved from the actions taken and choices made from this speech provide discursive patterns that greatly influence the creation of an Indo-Fijian ideology and world-view.

Indo-Fijians as a diasporic group has existed in Fiji through historical continuities and accidents as an evolving society, like any other. The indenture period is important in terms of the influence it has had on the Indo-Fijian diaspora, its growth and on questions of identity and representation. Attempts to create a unitary history of the temporal and spatial heterogeneity of the indenture period are bound to fail. It is not my intention in this thesis to try such a unitary exercise. Nor does this thesis claim to provide a starting point towards some new unitary theory on the history of indenture. Instead this thesis for the most part concentrates on the “histories” left out by such claims for a unitary definition for an inherently heterogeneous exercise in colonial practice aimed at securing some measure of economies of scale for Fiji by procuring labour to complete the land and capital theorem. What cannot be denied is that the indenture period as seen by scholars and critics from the various disciplines is an important point in the generation of an identity and of representations for the Indo-Fijian diaspora.

The history of indenture is placed as context at this point. Displacement is a key word in any discussion of diaspora. For Indo-Fijians displacement has been a periodised process carved out by indenture, land tenure systems and agreements, second-shift diasporic shifts to Australia, New Zealand, United States and Canada that gathered force after the 1987 and 2000 coups in Fiji. For the Indo-Fijian diaspora displacement began in the processes of the indenture system well before the first lot of 498 of the 60,537 indentured labourers that came to Fiji were quarantined in the waters off Levuka on May 14, 1879. This first displacement was “Under agreement with the Fiji Government to Fiji for five years of compulsory work as the Government directed, under penal sanctions.” (Mayer 6)

The system provided the opportunity for the indentured to leave at the end of this period on their own expense. Alternatively they could leave at the end of a further five years under indenture
conditions with return passages paid by the Government for them and their children. There was no compulsion under the indenture system to return to India. 24,655 of the 60,537 Indentured labourers chose repatriation during the initial five and ten year periods of their displacement. (Gillion 139) The rest chose to stay on past the overall displacement period between 1879 to the cessation of the indenture system in 1916, and 1920 when all outstanding contracts were cancelled. (Mayer 6) They were joined by later waves of Sikh and Gujerati free immigrants by the 1930’s to add to the complex picture of the Indo-Fijian diaspora.

The idea of indentured life being akin to a living hell, was expressed by historians like Ahmed Ali as Narak or hell as opposed to the idea of Swarag or the paradise they had been promised by the recruiters or Arkatis. (15) However, Ali inserts an important marker in concluding that:

"Though girmit had been narak, Fiji was itself not a permanent hell. Once one's karma had been fulfilled through the agonies of girmit, a new incarnation was possible at contract's end; the new karma enjoined utilising opportunities and succeeding in this world, material success was the new moksha." (15)

Ali utilises the religious theorem of hard-work/endurance/hardship (girmit) leading to new work/life (karma) opportunities, as being the path towards salvation from material and worldly hardships or (moksha). Ali uses the theorem in admittedly simplistic terms, but he does make important delineations of continuity and flux in the Indo-Fijian diaspora. This idea of continuity and flux distinguishes his work from Vijay Mishra's idea of a "fragment" or "rupture" or "fossilised moment" in constructing the Girmit Ideology and consciousness. Mishra posits instead the idea of a "failed millennial quest" and that the "bitterness of displacement and its consequent dehumanisation in coolie line" meant that for the "typical indentured labourer...this was not the hoped-for-moksha" (Tiffin 54). Ali's idea of continuity and flux is an important marker of diasporic sensibilities ignored or neglected by theorists and critics on diaspora, like Vijay Mishra, William Saffron and Emmanuel Nelson among others. The idea of continuity as an alternative to the idea of a "fossilised" historical moment as the basis for the construction of complexes and...
ideologies to examine Indo-Fijian literature and Indo-Fijian diaspora becomes one of the central arguments for this thesis.

The analysis afforded by Ali in his girmit-karma-moksha theorem is applicable to the post-1987 coup / post-1990 constitution/1997 constitution/2000 coup periods. This rise and fall of arbiters of identity and representation in Fiji was evident in the promulgation of the 1997 constitution and revisited in the political upheavals of 2000. The promulgation of the 1997 constitution effectively nullified the prediction of the 1990 constitution as a 'permanent arrangement'. 2000 and the political aftermath of an overtly racial retaking of power by force forced many historians and writers to rethink their attempts at some sense of continuity.

These examples from two Indo-Fijian historians are deployed as an important marker of the inherent quality of continuity as the basis for questions of identity and representation. The examples point to the problems of marking a convenient definition as captured moments from history as being a definitive and defining force in identity and representation. This is inherent in some of the early explanations of the Indo-Fijian diaspora that is questioned and moved away from in this thesis. These examples engage whole industries of theorizing and reading, some of which are explained in the next section on ‘Theoretical constructs and Methodologies’.


This thesis uses various theoretical constructs to sustain arguments against a reductive and homogenizing prescriptive modality of identity and representation for the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Beginning with the works of Arjun Appadurai’s article “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy” to form the initial theoretical basis of inquiry and analysis. Appadurai outlines five dimensions of global cultural flow which he terms as ‘first ethnoscapes; second, mediascapes; third, technoscapes; fourth, finanscapes; and fifth, ideoscapes.’ (221) In choosing this rather slight work in terms of volume I am mindful of some of the constraints imposed by the brevity of his constructs. At the same time excited at the possibilities of extension of the same constructs in
achieving the aims set out for the first part of this thesis on various narratives from Indo-Fijian literature, memoir writing and of representations of the Indo-Fijian diasporic identity from ‘Outside’.

Narratives and texts on or from the Indo-Fijian diaspora arguments are sustained against a homogeneous reading of Indo-Fijian diasporic identity using the scapes of Appadurai. This is deployed alongside theoretical constructs of Stuart Hall, Gayatri Spivak, John Fiske, Michel de Certeu, Henri Lefebvre, and Edward Said, among others. These arguments are directly mainly against constructs of the Indo-Fijian diasporic identity against the modality of the ‘Girmit Ideology and Consciousness’ as proposed initially by Vijay Mishra in his essay Rama’s Banishment: Indo-Fijian Literature and Girmit Ideology and Consciousness’. In this article and its subsequent series of revisions Mishra, modifies structure and makes new inclusions and disclaimers. However, Mishra does not move away from his basic premise, of placing ‘Girmit’ as a point of origin, ‘a fragment’, to which the Indo-Fijian ideology and consciousness writes back to and is continually informed by. This thesis does not argue against the initial arguments or indeed its welcome revisions, but against the continual positioning of the inherently reductive and homogenizing construct of ‘Girmit Ideology and Consciousness’ as the modality against which Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representations must be sited. This thesis sustains arguments against such reductionism of a people and their diaspora through interrogations of their literature, memoirs, and the everyday as a narrative, texts/narratives about them and in instances of their popular culture.

Arguments against such reductionism are informed by relevant theorists particularly Arjun Appadurai and Stuart Hall. Chapter four on representations of women, children and instances of juvenilia appropriate the theoretical constructs of Gayatri Spivak and T.Minh-Ha Trin to engage with issues of gender and the place of the child in the Indo-Fijian diaspora. The final chapter based on fieldwork of the Indo-Fijian diaspora in Liverpool moves away from the scapes to incorporate works of Michel de Certeau on the ‘everyday’ and ‘lived spaces’. Certeau’s concept of the ‘Strategy’, as the dominant discourse of the status quo, of those in power, and their compradors against the ‘tactics’ of the disempowered. In this instance the Indo-Fijian diaspora through a
variety of means to undercut or make compromises to better their condition in Fiji or in Liverpool. Reading soccer in Liverpool as a replication of the game in Fiji is placed alongside a reading of the narratives of the ‘everyday/lived spaces’ and constructs of identity based on linkage to place in Fiji as site for following soccer and negotiating geographical spot as place of belonging. In this latter section of the thesis case studies, interviews, questionnaires, maps, and statistics are analysed alongside various textual readings of place, people and narratives towards a more heterogeneous construct of the Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representations.

Appadurai’s work especially on issues in globalization and modernity as important determinants of identity and diasporic sensibilities and directions are discussed in this introduction as recurrent theoretical constructs on which this thesis is framed. The five scapes are followed at various points in the beginning of this thesis based on the need to formulate specific ‘perspectival constructs’ (Appadurai 221). Constructs that explore ideas of identity, difference, popular culture, literary culture, and Indo-Fijian literature and other narratives and texts, like memoir writing, airline magazines, tourist brochures, cityscapes, streetscapes, houses, shop windows, shop shelving and organization and architecture as used in the thesis. This thesis examines Indo-Fijian diasporic identities and representations in its multiplicity towards theoretical perspectives and readings of heterogeneity. The aim is to come to terms with multiplicities of the self and the other found in Appadurai’s construct of diasporic community, ‘nation states, multinationals, diasporic communities, as well as sub-national groupings and movements (whether religious, political or economic), and even intimate face-to-face groups such as villages, neighbourhoods and families.’ (222)

Appadurai’s work is prefaced by an examination of related theories and definitions on diaspora. A variety of theoretical constructs and justification for its usage in this thesis are given. Other postcolonial critics such as Stuart Hall and Vijay Mishra among others are used in various instances for an examination of their works and its applications within the heterogeneous implications of the study of a literature of a diasporic society such as the Indo-Fijians. The critical and theoretical works of Pio Manoa, Pamela Kacimaiwai, Vijay Mishra, Raymond Pillai, Subramani, Sudesh Mishra, John O’Carroll and Satendra Nandan deal more specifically on Indo-
Fijian literature and concerns on its diaspora. These writers and critics are examined for points of agreement and of departures in reading Indo-Fijian literature and the production, expression and consumption of Popular Culture. Feminist criticism of Shaista Shameem on Indo-Fijian literature is another point of reference. Other critical viewpoints on Indo-Fijian literature are included where appropriate and are outlined and defined for their usage in the thesis in the first instance.

The next chapter begins with an examination of diaspora theory, particularly the work of Vijay Mishra on Indo-Fijian literature and his construct of the “Girmit Ideology and Consciousness.” Mishra’s construct and revisions of the “Girmit Ideology and Consciousness” is examined and justification provided for a departure from it. This thesis departs from the idea of a ‘girmit ideology and consciousness’ or the idea of some cathartic angst associated with it and moves forward, to a more heterogeneous plane for identity and representation for the Indo-Fijian diaspora. “Girmit ideology and consciousness” does not take into account the flow and flux of people and ideas within the diaspora. In accord with the core aim of this thesis to find multiple planes for identity and representation there is the prioritization of the idea that there is in a sense always a flowing societal condition, diasporic or otherwise.

As a fairly rigid middle-class male Indo-Fijian academic construct it fails to account for women and their responses to the changes around them. Or the crucial role of children and their responses to the bewildering assortment of stimuli and confusions that come from growing as part of a diasporic society. Or to account for the everyday in terms of life lived and discourse entered into as a vibrant yet always discordant whole that daily routines press upon humankind. Subaltern viewpoints are summarily dismissed, instead a reading of convenience is given to a group of writers who can be construed as being conformist to the middle class Indo-Fijian academic literary critic cum writer paradigm.

This thesis can be divided into two parts out of convenience to illustrate the main methods of research, collection of narratives, data and interviews, and research for published sources. The primary method of research on Indo-Fijian literary and other narratives, narratives and texts on the Indo-Fijian diaspora from ‘outside’, and the study of Indo-Fijian women’s writings, juvenilia and
the place of children relies mostly on published texts. Personal interviews with Subramani, Satendra Nandan, Brij Lal, Raymond Pillai, Larry Thomas and Seona Smiles are referents to their works. As is an email interview with Sulochna Chand. Various theoretical models, some of which are explained in the section on structure in this chapter, and expanded on in the next chapter forms the basis of engagement with these texts and narratives in the study of the Indo-Fijian diaspora and their identities and representations. The final two chapters of this thesis on the second shift Indo-Fijian diaspora in Liverpool, Sydney, is based on primary research and fieldwork. This involved the collection of data and personal responses through interviews and questionnaires, and through observation and interaction with individuals and their lived spaces, both private as in their houses/garage and the public as in community groups/Liverpool City/Memorial Park for soccer. The thesis moves from the establishment of ‘published’ texts and narratives through primary and secondary research towards a reading of popular culture and the Indo-Fijian diaspora in its second shift removes largely through primary research. Underlying any research, primary or secondary, are words, their definitions and usage, a task engaged with in the next section of this chapter.

5: Some Definitions and Contexts

These words and phrases and their definition and usage in this thesis is intended as an introductory guide. The words and phrases are further expanded on in their definitions and usage in the particular instance in the first place and any deviations from such inclusions noted as appropriate. Non-English words or terms are defined or translated, and are placed in context in text, providing immediacy of reference to the reader, and removing the need for an exhaustive glossary. Girmi is a vernacular Fiji-Hindi variant of the word ‘agreement’ arising out of the contract or agreement of indenture thumb-printed/signed at the beginning of the indenture process. The capitalization of the word Girmi without any other typographical markers remains consistent in the thesis as are the typographical emphasis of the capitalization of ‘Girmi Ideology and Consciousness.’ The twin terms ‘identity and representation’ as a construct comes after references to the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Identity is taken as a constituent of past practice for a diaspora as well as the production of identities through a continual process of definitions and re-definitions of ‘who we are? /Who
are we?’ by ourselves as well as by Others. Identity is thus a product of a shared past, history and commonalities of ethnicity, language, as the starting matrix. To this is added the idea that identity is in a continuous process of change from within as well as in relation to changes from outside, including diasporic shifts and removals, migration, and re-location. Within such transformations of identity there is the continuous interplay of politics and race relations for the Indo-Fijian diaspora in Fiji since 1879, particularly the effects of coups in 1987 and 2000.

Identity is a performative act, as we act out certain identities in certain situations. As performance we can begin with the various roles that we play, for example, as mother, wife, sister, daughter, and the interplay of relationships associated with these identities, as well as in various roles/performance/enactment of identities both the private and public domain, for the individual and the diaspora. Questions are asked in the thesis of identity in the three interrelated modes of the shared past, the shared present and its transformations of ‘who are we’, and the process of acting out particular responses of ‘this is who I/we am/are’. Representation is used in the sense of the everyday use of denoting a particular modality or of ‘who we are/who are we’ in this instance in its myriad forms, of narratives, cliches, stereotypes, images, aural codes and all other texts imaginable. The use of representation as a symbiotic term is intentional as a means of a constant interrogation of their meanings, usage and retrievals of a diaspora and its people. For identity seeks representation and each such inscription for the Indo-Fijian diaspora becomes part of the continuous process of definitions and escapes from definitions for a people.

The terms essentialising/essentialist/essentialism mean the same as reductionism, for example in the creation of stereotypes as convenient representations. Given the enormous part that cultural criticism has in this thesis the study of how a culture understands and represents itself and is represented by Others, alterity construction and the convenience shop style usage of stereotypes becomes very important. An important locus of this thesis is to try and understand how stereotypes are generated/integrated in literary and critical works and disseminated/perpetuated to create particular identities and representations. Stereotypes are analysed through an examination of its production, use and embedding in ‘cultural artifacts (texts, in the widest sense of the word), and, most important, how once sanctioned in this area they form the basis for action.’ (Gilman 11)
Stereotypes are discussed within the referents of the internalization of complicated images inherent in individuation and separation into simplified images reduced to manageable generalities. This process is inevitable and indeed desirable, because even as a crude set of mental representations it makes possible the structural dichotomies or the splitting of thesis and antithesis as the base of scholarship. In this thesis given the large theoretical framework of alterity practices, there is a continual disruption and shifting of existing stereotypes towards the generation of representations as positive counterweights. Or as Gilman points out that "In our mental representations of the world, paradigms can and do change within our symbolic representations of the world." (13) And such mental representations and their inscriptions as text become crucial to the argument for a heterogeneous identity and representation for the Indo-Fijian diaspora.

Ideology refers to, "...forms of perception, particular ways of seeing the world; and as such they have a relation to the dominant way of seeing the world which is the "social mentality" or ideology of an age." (Eagleton 6) Consciousness is used to refer to the awareness of being, in relation to the particular contextual ideology or social mentality that works as the prevalent or presupposed mode for a society. Texts refers to the wide field of discursive instances, moments, subjects and objects carried in various artefacts, where the written text is one among many. Context refers to the wider social, ideological, historical, educational, political, economic framework to the textual instance, moment, subject or object. The paratext refers to particular instances or moments of texts that frame a text without being acknowledged as part of the text, or implicitly excluded from the text by design or otherwise. An example of this would be a foreword in a book or a dedication in a poem. These texts/contexts/paratexts come mainly from the various studies and discursive statements made by different academic disciplines, most notably from the fields of history, anthropology, literature and literary criticism. The inclusion of these texts/contexts/paratexts is selective given the constraints of length in this type of research, and is by no means exhaustive.

Popular culture and folk culture and variants on ideas of a subaltern perspective to both are a problematic in any study. In this thesis folk culture is taken as a dynamic set of practices achieved
over the course of history, and while references are made to it, there is no sustained study of its influences. However, references to folk culture are made on the basis that it is the product of social consensus as well as social conflict. This aspect of its growth and process is stressed as interesting points of reference and illumination in the debate between Fiji-Hindi and standard Hindi as official/unofficial languages of inscription that is pursued only to a point of definition in this thesis. Popular culture follows John Fiske’s definition that, “…popular culture is not consumption, it is culture-and the active process of generating and circulating meanings and pleasures within a social system; culture however industrialized, can never be adequately described in terms of the buying and selling of commodities.” (Cultural 23) A point made in the commodification of soccer and its particular relevance as part of popular culture to the people to a focus on turning turnstiles and its reminder of the comprador relationship at the apex of cultural constructs between the dominant classes. The arguments in this thesis based on this definition works against the rather stilted and static take on history, culture and signifiers at work in presenting the aesthetics of a popular or indeed folk culture, based purely on binaries of consensus or conflicts.

Indo-Fijian subversion through folk culture for example in the form of the bidesia as a potent weapon disguised as folk song against the harshness of Indenture as systematic and legalised slavery is evident in studies by Vijay Naidu, Brij Lal, K.S Gillion, and Kanwal Singh. The nexus beyond folk and popular cultures in the Indo-Fijian diaspora is in the form of a largely ordered consensus based form in folk songs that brings with itself the symbols of a past. Mostly Hinduism based devotional songs as bhajans or from the Urdu tradition of the Qawali challenge song. Folk songs and its influence on Indo-Fijian diasporic definitions and representations is placed here as a point of reference that informs the main arguments on soccer as the main popular culture constructs in this thesis. Folk like popular culture are commodified and find a place as potential of the present and future, while engaging with our pasts, our memories of the everyday and of lived spaces. Janet Batsleer explains the four major conceptualisations of popular culture: as the material of the working class; as the product of a culture industry; as myth; as an ideological apparatus of the state (Batsleer 257). There is as always an awareness of the various hierarchies at play in all popular culture fields and the football pitch is not exception, and is not privileged as the material of the working class, the folk, or of the everyday, or as the popular. Instead, it is placed
among the various heterogeneous possibilities of engaging with a diaspora and its people and places.

The ‘everyday’ and of the ‘lived space’ become important dimensions to add to the existing modalities of the scapes of Appadurai or the constructs of the identity and difference of Stuart Hall for the diaspora. In this thesis the following definition of ‘Everyday’ is used as a starting point for inquiry:

As the notion of ‘everyday life’ circulates in Western cultures under its many guises (*Alltagsleben, la vie quotidienne, run-of-the-mill* and so on) one difficulty becomes apparent: ‘everyday life’ signifies ambivalently. One the one hand it points (without judging) to those most repeated actions, those most travelled journeys, those most inhabited spaces that make up, literally, the day to day. This is the landscape closest to us, the world most immediately met. But with this quantifiable meaning creeps another, never far behind: the everyday as value and quality. (Highmore 1)

The ‘everyday’ becomes part of the scapes inescapable for the diaspora but also for any meaningful narrative to be written about it or to sustain arguments on the heterogeneity of the Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representations. It is a site of interrogation of diasporic identities but it also interrogates the identities and its sites, by a casual shift of status from process to product and vice-versa. Modernity and the global phenomena of diasporic shifts and scapes thus become part of this routine that threatens boredom and repetition but contains within the ‘everyday’ prospects of discovery of ‘the heterogeneity of social life, the name for an activity of finding meaning in an impossible diversity.’ (Highmore 174) The sustained argument in the engagements with popular culture is to find such meaning in the statistics, streets, sites and scapes of the Indo-Fijian diaspora and in particular in its second shift remove in Liverpool. The ‘lived space’ then becomes not just past tense of the ‘everyday’ as in memory and remembering but a constituent of present actions or in-actions, in defining identity and finding in it meaning for a people.
Typographical representations are afforded to "Achievement"/"Achieved" and "Literature", singly or in combination to distinguish their particular use in this thesis. John O’ Carroll in his essay ‘Pacific Literature; Sketch of a Problematic’ shows ‘Pacific Literature’ to be an ‘achieved category’. (57-8) He speculates on the meaning of the word, "achievement" as referring ‘…as much to the constituting of a corpus by critics as it does to the simple activity of recording.’ (59). “Achievement” is used in this thesis, in terms quite contrary to its usual connotations of finality and success. Instead "Achievement" is used in the sense of creation and reinforcement of critical perspectives to the point of saturation. This point of saturation is realised when it achieves "finality" in the creation of a non-contending critical and theoretical institution. "Achievement" of a "Literature" refers in implicit terms to the creation of a self-privileging and self-privileged critical and theoretical framework with its own terms of reference, metalanguage/metacritique.

The term comprador indicates a ruling elite or dominant class along the basic Marxist definitions that cuts across ethnic and cultural divides as a construct that controls ‘Strategy’ and ‘tactics’, following Fiske’s earlier definitions. Within this comprador class are the ethnic and cultural divides that dictate place and roles of subservience based on history, such as the British colonial divides between the White Colonisers, Ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians in Fiji. ‘Subaltern’ is used with the acknowledgement that inscription in texts/narrative of those who are ‘voiceless’ and on the outer of narratives, there is the inherent paradox of ‘giving ’ them voice. Such as in this academic construct, that brings with it the tools and technologies of the Western epistemological tradition as well as of class divides of a bourgeois diasporic/postcolonial researcher/writer. The ‘Subaltern’ as the ‘voiceless’ as per mainstream or Western discursive practices, is brought into this narrative through retrievals of their ‘everyday’ or ‘lived spaces’ but does not intend to speak for them, or pretend to give them voice.

In the context of colonial and postcolonial social history and literature, subaltern texts are marginalised by the dialectic of the knowledge and power theorem as outlined in the theories of Edward Said and Michel Foucault, among others. The subaltern exists as voices, thought-patterns and alternate paradigms consigned to the realm of shadows by the dominant comprador discursive
practices. It is used firstly, to debate the validity of totalising and hegemonic theoretical and critical frameworks such as those proposed by the Girmit Ideology and Consciousness. It is then used as the basis for the textual readings afforded in the study of people, places, objects, colours, soccer, movement and space among other things in this thesis.

Borders are key instruments of power and exclusion, but they can also contribute to the formation of new identities and social movements. In the post September 11 world it takes on added meaning. In Australia border control became a political catch phrases leading to the 2004 elections. It was exemplified in the media on the coverage mandatory detention of illegal immigrants including the Pacific solution of incarceration of illegal immigrants on Nauru. Borders in this age of globalisation and modernity brings with it questions on the safeguarding of certain rights and liberties and the exclusion and suppression of others.

The basic definition of market is ‘a place for the exchange of goods’. Today the language of markets has profoundly infiltrated diverse spaces to the extent that it is hard to talk from outside this discourse. From the supply of public services to the production of academic knowledge, all different facets of public life are being affected by the market economy. The idea of a "global society" endorses notions of free movement and mobility. Yet the flow of people, goods, capital and ideas hasn't lived up to the hype of globalization and remains largely unidirectional. In a similar fashion, social movements that are supposed to provide a space for resistance and the mobility of identities, often prove to be highly institutionalized and centralized. Questions on this process of a monolith arise for the Indo-Fijian diaspora in their attempts at defining place/location/belonging.

The terms self and Other are used as an anthropological bracketing of viewpoints in the creation and privileging of a site of discourse. Thus, alterity creation and practices in this thesis refers to the basic demarcation of self in terms of "I", "We", "Us" and the Other as "You", "They", "Them". Alterity creation and practices is one of the main theoretical precepts used in this thesis to explore the ideological and critical frameworks on Indo-Fijian Literature and Indo-Fijian diaspora. R.S Khare advocates alterity creation and practices in terms of the model in which the "Other or "not-
us" seems to be as closely intertwined with our knowledge (cultural, historical, and political) of ourselves as of others living at other places and in other times” (1). Where capitalized the Other in the thesis it is ‘to refer to a comprehensive conceptual construction of alterity, distinguishing it from the empirical "other" or diverse "others" encountered by anthropologists as they document and explain cultural diversity’ (17). These definitions and clarification on usage of terms and phrases provides an epistemological foundation that enables us to move to the next section to outlines the structure of this thesis.

6: The Structure

This first chapter provides a background to the main arguments at the core of this thesis. The two major sections of this chapter deal with history and geography as starting points and background to the study of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. The historical and geographical are examined along with its ideological and epistemological underpinnings in their respective sections. The aim of this chapter is to outline the various modalities engaged with in this thesis in its examination of identity and representation for the Indo-Fijian diaspora and its second shift diasporic remove in Liverpool, Sydney, Australia. Indo-Fijian Literature, Memoirs, representations of Indo-Fijians in literary and non-literary texts, the everyday, and in Popular Culture, forms the texts for the critical inquiry into Indo-Fijian diasporic identities and representations. Research methodologies and theoretical frameworks are engaged with in the second chapter. Other theoretical constructs are explained and their usage in this thesis explained as they appear in the chapters that follow.

The second chapter frames some of the existing literary theory constructs of the Indo-Fijian diaspora and their identities and representations beginning with an inquiry into Indo-Fijian Ideology, Consciousness, and Diasporic Identity by interrogating a selection of uncollected essays on the Indo-Fijian identity and representation by Vijay Mishra. These theoretical constructs are referred to as the Girmit Ideology and Consciousness. Mishra’s work is an important point of beginning and a departure against in this thesis. Unitary model of the centre-periphery type of critical and theoretical frameworks do not acknowledge or accept the
multitude of oppositions inherent in the colonial experience, and all other inter/intra-supra cultural experiences.

The third chapter begins with an examination of Indo-Fijian literature. It ends with an extended inquiry into the multiplicity of identities and representations present in the movement towards memoir and autobiographical writing of more recent years. The movement between these two forms in this chapter is from a ‘canonised’ Indo-Fijian writing/writers to that of the multiple identities and representations possible especially through collections of memoir writing, essays and reflective pieces many by first time or writers out of the existing canon. Memoir and associative writing adds greatly to the canon and brings in elements of recollection and fiction that moves away from descriptions of Indo-Fijian literature as an ‘Achieved Corpus’.

Chapter four analyses Indo-Fijian women writers, narratives about them and feminist criticism of it, and instances of juvenilia and representations of the child in Indo-Fijian narratives. And adds to existing studies on Indo-Fijian literature with an extended section on Indo-Fijian women and children and their issues with identity and representation. This chapter begins by looking at some arguments on identity and representation in theoretical frameworks of Stuart Hall, Brij Lal and Arjun Appadurai. A substantial inquiry into Indo-Fijian women writers engages theories of feminism-diaspora/colonial postcolonial discourse of Gayatri Spivak and T.Minh-Ha Trin on issues of identity and representation. The section on ‘Achieved’ Indo-Fijian literature and its practices aims to establish the main focus of Indo-Fijian literature before embarking in the final section on an expansion on Indo-Fijian women writers, some instances of juvenilia and the representations of children. This final section reflects on Indo-Fijian literature to critical links to readings that follow of representations of Indo-Fijians in other texts in the next chapter.

Chapter five engages narratives from travelogue, newspaper feature articles, magazine columns, performance pieces, a novel, and interplay of text and images in in-flight magazines to analyse the fabrications and relation of exterior reality in representations of Indo-Fijians. The introductory section analyses theoretical constructs, from Stuart Hall on identity and
representation and Arjun Appadurai’s ‘Mediascapes’ as a scape of inquiry, towards theoretical perspectives in this chapter. The chapter examines the texts/narratives for representations and re-presentations of Indo-Fijians as stereotypes, types, others, traces and absences. The narratives begin with the travelogue of Paul Theroux’s Happy Isles of Oceania. This next section engages text/image/meaning in travel brochures and in-flight magazines for the presence and absence of Indo-Fijians. The final section of the chapter interrogates the creation of identity and representations of the Indo-Fijian diaspora in the writings of Seona Smiles and Larry Thomas to act as signpost texts into the magic-realist formulations on the same subject by Salman Rushdie in his novel Fury. Rushdie’s ‘Fiji’ from his collected non-fiction, Step Across This Line is analysed as genesis for his inclusion of Indo-Fijian diasporic identities and representations in Fury.

The sixth chapter is divided into three sections and covers fieldwork in Liverpool, Sydney on Indo-Fijian diasporic identity, their replication of soccer as an instance of popular culture, and their everyday in their homes and the city they now claim as their own. The first section provides a textual reading of tournament soccer in Liverpool with comparisons to Fiji. The second section engages with the placing of statistics on Liverpool as place, as both city and as a Local Government Area and on migration and demographics. Individual and Communal spaces are examined in this section through a study and interpretation of data and information collected from interviews and questionnaires. The final section moves from the main commercial hub of Liverpool City to the suburbs to read individual lived spaces in houses of Indo-Fijian diasporic identity as well as of the new hyphenated identity of their new location. Each section is prefaced with an argument on the particular theoretical models deployed and its application towards determining Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and their expression, production and consumption of popular culture.

A conclusion for the thesis is the seventh and final chapter. This chapter provides an overview of the main arguments of the thesis. Included in the conclusion are some disclaimers for the research as well as an outline of possible areas of further scholarship. Some of these emanate from areas of
scholarship that have been used as referent points in this present study and invite further, expanded or better qualified research. The conclusion brings together the main arguments as an initial modality. It provides further arguments justifying the choice of research area, its relevance and the particular arguments sustained in the complex ideological formations that come about in the quest to define and interrogate identity and representation for a diasporic community.

For a basis to the explorations of identity and representation this thesis begins with an engagement with existing theoretical constructs for the study of the Indo-Fijian diaspora through its history and literature. The aim is to outline some of the theoretical considerations on which this thesis is based as well provide markers for points of departure from reductive and homogeneous models of exploring identity and representations. ‘Girmit Ideology and Consciousness’ by Vijay Mishra is a significant literary criticism that exists on the Indo-Fijian diaspora. This important contribution by Vijay Mishra towards an understanding of the Indo-Fijian diaspora is used to provide arguments for shared constructs and also for significant departures from the matrix of ‘Girmit Ideology and Consciousness’ as part of the sustained questioning of reductive constructs. Arguments are placed for alternative practices of reading the Indo-Fijian diaspora, its literature and narratives, literature and narratives about it, and their particular production, expression and consumption of popular culture. To this task we now turn.
Chapter Two

Theoretical Constructs towards Indo-Fijian Diasporic Identities and Representations.

"Living in a borrowed culture, the West Indian, more than most, needs writers to tell him who he is and where he stands."

V. S Naipaul: The Middle Passage (1963)

This chapter looks at the main Indo-Fijian literary and diasporic theoretical constructs to site the central arguments of the thesis. It begins with a short overview of Indo-Fijian literary history as background to an engagement with the theoretical models by Vijay Mishra in his series of essays on the Indo-Fijian diaspora, based on his assertion of the ‘Girmit Ideology and Consciousness’. The next section outlines the central arguments of the Vijay Mishra theoretical model on the Indo-Fijian diaspora and argues against some of its main tenets. These arguments are strengthened by analysing other centre-periphery theories exemplified by relating some of the reductive practices of Edward Said’s construct of ‘Orientalism’ where a historicised political legacy of colonialism is reduced to a all or nothing, one or the other, binary, of the ‘Oriental’ or the ‘Occidental.’ This engagement moves the thesis towards heterogeneous theoretical constructs that take identity as performative.

The exploration of the ‘everyday’ and of ‘lived spaces’ is placed as alternative paradigms for the study of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. The third section analyses Stuart Hall’s constructs of ‘Identity’. The fourth section questions the place of modernity, global technology and constructs of the diaspora in its various migratory removes. Arjun Appadurai’s scapes provide the theoretical tools to move this study from reductive and homogenizing theoretical constructs. In the final section the five scapes are engaged with particular instances of the Indo-Fijian diaspora in its larger migratory shifts as exemplified in Indo-Fijian literature, literary criticism on Indo-Fijian literature, memoirs and associated writings, the everyday and Indo-Fijian popular culture.
Appadurai’s scapes and the textual/visual/cultural/digital manifestation of the Indo-Fijian diaspora are used to explore interpretations of plurality and heterogeneous generation of identity and representation. And a disassociation with attempts to provide them with identity or representation that does not take into account the multiplicity/hybridity of cultural forms and discursive systems for the Indo-Fijian diaspora and its diasporic shifts/removes.

1. Indo-Fijian Literary History: A Short Overview.

This sub-section provides an overview of Indo-Fijian literary and educational history as a preface to the “Achieved” quartet of Indo-Fijian writers and their ensuing literature. Brij Lal provides a succinct historical background to Indo-Fijian literary culture and the educational history of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. The starting point according to Lal was that ‘Indians had already started to reconstitute fragments of their ancestral culture and fashion a new moral universe, helped after the turn of the century by visiting religious figures from India.’ (Broken 57) The origins of education based in Indian/Muslim religious/cultural traditions according to Lal was due to ‘colonial indifference’ and the fact that the ‘Indians marked lack of enthusiasm for Christian schools in the early years, helped produce a distinctively ‘Indian’ education for the children.’ (57) In terms of a beginning this is an important marker of Indo-Fijian identity that writes, and speaks to this common cultural past in education and by extension in literature.

Brij Lal prefaces the growth of a literary culture with the importance of religion in maintaining overseas Indian cultural identity. So that ‘In Fiji by the 1890s, most Indian settlements had the basic texts of popular Hinduism.’ (55) Of these popular texts the ‘most significant of all, Tulsidas’ Ramcharitramanas, the story of Lord Rama in some 10,000 lines of verse in the Avadhi dialect of Hindi familiar to most of the North Indian migrants.” (56) Brij Lal than goes on to add to achievement of a particular title of Indo-Fijian identity and representation in maintaining that
Rama’s story struck a particular chord with the Fiji Indians. Rama was exiled for fourteen years for no fault of his own, but he did return; good ultimately did triumph over evil. His story gave them hope and consolation: one day, their ordeal, too, would come to an end. (55-6)

Lal places this early affinity with Rama’s banishment within the context of other texts in the early period of indenture until the 1920’s when systematic religious, cultural and educational forms and began their roles as providers and controllers of education, literature and other art forms. The two main Hindu organisations, the Sanatan Dharma and Arya Samaj “were joined in 1920 by Muslim, South Indian, Gujarati and Sikh organization. (56) This completion of the major sectarian groups, which had in turn had their own splinter or sub-sectarian divisions, following divisions in Islam or from India, severely undercuts the notion that Rama’s banishment became a common totem pole for the Indo-Fijian diaspora. In this early division of the Indo-Fijian diaspora into sectarian divides and further divisions based on intra-religious or caste differences we see the creation of a myriad of identities and representations.

Brij Lal refers to a range of texts circulating in this period from religious and instructional texts like (Shigrabodh-Astrology), (Indrajal-Witchcraft), and (Rampatal-Ablutions). The more secular works according to Lal were “ballads, folk songs (Allaha Khand) enchanting tales of ghosts and goblins (Baital Pachisi) and poems and stories of romance and heroism and adventure (Salinga Sadabraj and Indra Sabha) which provided relief from the distress of the work place. (56) To these were added a variety of festivals (Ram Lila-a dramatic depiction of the life Lord Rama) and Holi (or Phagwa), and Tazia, a Shia festival, in Lal’s account. The beginnings of an artistic and literary culture here embodies elements of both definitions offered by Stuart Hall on cultural identity, where it is linked to a shared historical past and ancestry and to the processes of change or of ‘becoming’. Part of this process of becoming involved the act of writing.

Not only literature in standard Hindi but also folksongs, and embellishments to the Ram Lila, and incorporation of Fiji into all these narratives and art forms. Subramani, for example, makes
reference to Indo-Fijian stories in the form of folktales that abound in the accounts of the occult, and that one of the first stories written by an indentured Indian in 1922, was called ‘Bhut Len ki Katha’ (Tale of the Haunted ‘Line’). (Altering 102) The later incorporation of Western education in the curricula of such schools was the recognition of the need to have qualification in English in order to move beyond the early world of tenant farming, into the civil service and the professions. And with language came one of the weapons of the coloniser, and the promise to inscribe the stories of the Indo-Fijian diaspora in words that find currency with much of the published world. Or as Sudesh Mishra declares ‘The looped cerements of my non-presence. /Some day I will name myself in their script. (Tandava 71)

1.2 Indo-Fijian Ideology, Consciousness, and Diasporic Identity

In this section a selection of uncollected essays on the Indo-Fijian identity and representation by Vijay Mishra are analysed for theoretical constructs that are subsumed in this thesis as the ‘Girmit Ideology and Consciousness.’ Vijay Mishra defines "Girmit Ideology" as a "fictional directive" embedded in "the historical experience (that) has taken root in the minds of Indians in Fiji (as a result no doubt of that experience) as something broadly akin to a failed millennial quest" (Indo-Fijian 171). "The Girmit Ideology" and the idea of a "Consciousness" referred to in the original thesis has been the subject of a continuing series of re-visits and re-visions by Mishra of his original thesis.

Mishra presents the second part of the construct,

As an act of ideological formation I argue that the girmit consciousness developed as a consequence of the forty years of direct indenture (1879-1919) is false … (it) is a conscious falsification of reality… There is an inherent paradox in this: the conscious falsification was not created by the ruling classes, but by the proletariat, the girmityas themselves, who began to espouse values and cling to systems of
beliefs quite alien to their own real conditions of servitude. (Rama’s Banishment 243)

Mishra then offers "a reading of Indo-Fijian literature in terms of this ‘…ideological matrix.’ (244). Some of these readings of Indo-Fijian literature are critically discussed in the context of Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representations as the basis of alternative readings towards a more progressive reading and analysis of Indo-Fijian literature, memoir and associated writing and of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. A central argument of this thesis is to develop theoretical constructs that looks beyond a singular controlling centre, India, or the Indenture Period, or ‘Girmit’ as the beginning and end of Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representations. This thesis points out intra-cultural divides and a sense of Geo-graphy, history, class divides, gender constructs, place of children and the on-going shaping of people and their identities in the ‘everyday’ of modernity as diasporas globalize as part of the process of identity and representation for the Indo-Fijian diaspora. The plantation and late modernity shifts of the Indo-Fijian diaspora has become part of this globalising web of the digital master narratives of capitalism. The present age of the diaspora is one that renders origins, as much as borders, as obsolete and artificial, at least for those caught in or choosing the matrix of migration or movement from place to place.

Origins and borders as markers of a people remain as traces as the diaspora finds meaning in new locations. Borders, maps, origins remain real, even in the world of late capitalism with the reach of finance capital and in the case of the diaspora, such as the Indo-Fijians with their particular denials of place, in place of birth, and place of origin. In Fiji this was effected largely through land tenure systems and more recently in indigenous assertions of ‘sovereignty and paramountacy’ through the 1987 and 2000 but of course much earlier as part of the colonial projects of Britain in Fiji, and the early post-Independence years of Fiji’s history and politics. For India, the Indo-Fijian diaspora remains an alien entity, requiring visas to travel in and out, and not eligible for citizenship on the basis of place of origin. So borders, constrain the Indo-Fijian diaspora in Fiji on leased land, or land under threat of reverting to original ownership, or
borders that do not permit them to migrate, or a homeland that does not give them citizenship. Or borders that are negotiated by those not in the transnational global loop of professional migration, at the hands of family sponsorship or the doubtful economics of ‘bureau marriages’ or unions of convenience in order to gain residency and citizenship in the countries for the second shift diasporas.

Mishra’s work is an important initial point of inquiry into any study of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. The critical analysis of existing literary theory is a bid to move away from the solidly binary opposites of centre-periphery created by Vijay Mishra and other writers and critics on the Indo-Fijian diaspora who have theorised on the social construction of knowledge and it relationship with power. Edward Said’s *Orientalism* is used as a comprador referent point to site the basic arguments and problems this thesis has with Vijay Mishra’s construct of the ‘Girmit Ideology and Consciousness’ as a critical tool for inquiry into Indo-Fijian literature and the Indo-Fijian diaspora. A problem that begins with Vijay Mishra’s contention that his argument:

...is based upon the theory that there is a singular readily identifiable "Consciousness" which is specifically Fiji-Indian and that that consciousness is expressed in the creative work of Indo-Fijian writers; or if this is not overtly evident, it must form the ideological "base" against which Indo-Fijian fiction must be evaluated. (Mishra, 1978, p53)

Girmit Ideology and Consciousness are critically examined on the basis that it is fallacious and prescriptive in advocating a critical and theoretical basis for the Indo-Fijian literature/diaspora. The linkages explored in this thesis on Indo-Fijian identity and representation includes an analysis of the interweaving of history, power, politics, and ideology in text, narratives, fieldwork and other textual forms. The constitutive elements of Mishra's theoretical approach reduce and homogenize, through allusions to a Girmit Ideology and Consciousness, an essentialised Indo-Fijian devoid of gender, class, caste, ethnic, social, psychological, sexual, professional and religious markers. The exclusive concern of this essentialised Indo-Fijian is in his relation to and role in the Girmit Ideology and Consciousness.
Vijay Mishra, in a 1992 revision/expansion to his original premise for the, ‘The Girmit Ideology and Consciousness’, places it in, ‘... the field or idea of Mother India as a controlling mechanism in the lives of the diasporic Indian. And ‘...how in the nostalgic transmission of culture the diaspora itself becomes a fossilised fragment of the original nation.’ (‘The Girmit Ideology’ 2) Mishra, in this revision, bases the ideology of this fossilised fragment in the indenture moment where, ‘... the structural inadequacies of the fragment produces a psychology that leads to the construction of ghostly enemies-the colonial masters, the indigenous race generating a sense of threat which in turn necessitates the unity of the fragment itself.’ (2) This psychology forms the consciousness, according to Mishra because of the ‘...special conjunction of a fragment of India and a Pacific culture of a different social order that a specific ideology developed.” (2). While this construct of ‘ghostly enemies’ and the generation of ‘unity’ provide a useful starting point, it is difficult to stretch its premises as the basis of meaningful inquiry into Indo-Fijian literature or diaspora, and its identity and representation.

Girmit Ideology and Consciousness as used by Mishra interface in these discussion with superficial inclusions of historicity that does not qualify his initial position on the "Girmit experience as an ideological dominant in Indo-Fijian society…” (11). The Girmit Ideology and Consciousness construct, as the basis of Indo-Fijian literature and Indo-Fijian diasporic sensibility subsumes any notion of heterogeneity. This criticism is in line with that of Marxist critics like Aijaz Ahmad, in relation to Edward Said's theoretical underpinnings of postcolonialism in theories such as ‘Orientalism’ as having overtotalling tendencies. Like Said, Mishra is also guilty ‘... of creating a meta-narrative that encompasses all the fecundity of real narratives.’ (Mukherjee 28) The idea of a shared matrix of reference and a shared set of problems for postcolonial cultures is extended to Indo-Fijian society, culture, literature and sensibility as alternatives to Mishra’s theoretical position. Mishra places a meta-theory that creates an Indo-Fijian monolith based on the Girmit Ideology and Consciousness.

Mishra finds the writings of Subramani, Raymond Pillai, Satendra Nandan and Sudesh Mishra a suitably homogenous literary microcosm that he assumes can be examined and analysed by dwelling upon instances that refer to the indenture past as a source of angst. The collusion in the
‘Achieved Literature’ is made possible by the shared class and professional interests among Indo-Fijian writers of the ‘canon’. Mishra bases his claim upon the perceived homogeneity of Indo-Fijian literature as the result of inextricable links between Indo-Fijian culture and society and their indenture past. This thesis questions whether it is not possible that our cultural productions are also created in response to individual and cultural needs and desires in the contemporary time and space that we continuously navigate. The margins of the everyday is ignored or distanced by class, professional and ideological factors, matters for comprador discussions and inscriptions that stretch from literature to soccer for the Indo-Fijian diaspora.

Mishra maintains the idea of an essential psychological and historical unity connected to the idea of home that is now a ‘damaged concept’. "The word "damaged" forces us to face the up to the “scars and fractures, to the blisters and sores, to the psychic trauma of bodies on the move.” (‘The Girmit Ideology’ 7) Even as he speaks of a move to, ‘...a much more fluid and contradictory definition of nations as a multiplicity of diasporic identities…’ the diasporic as individuals are doomed to ‘…forever negotiating and fashioning selves,’ as ‘there is, in fact, no future, no sense of a teleological end.’ (8) What remains is the ‘...past, unreal as it may be...” and the linkages from it in the ‘...absence of teleologies...’ to the ‘...ever-present time of historical (messianic) homecoming...’ which is not ‘...projected into the future but introjected into the present thereby both interrupting it and multiplying it.’ (9)

Mishra’s reading of diasporic identities and selves appropriates individuals and groups and situates them in an ideological construct of suspension. This idea of suspension is evident in the ‘neither here nor there’ construct of fluidity constructed by Mishra. And the essentially centre-periphery base to Mishra's theoretical and critical frameworks is transparent even as he argues for the idea of ‘... the postcolonial differend…’(9), which paradoxically, even in the phrasal construct, is totalising, and commits itself to defining a centre and periphery. Mishra dwells on India/Girmit as a centre to which Indo-Fijian literature writes back to and for which the Indo-Fijian diaspora mourns/laments as part of a collective corrosive angst. This thesis looks at
alterity practices and subaltern/oppositional stances towards theoretical and critical positions that respond to a multitude of cultural/textual productions to move away from such constructs.

The reductionism of Vijay Mishra’s theoretical construct of the Girmit Ideology and Consciousness finds a comprador position in some of the reductive practices inherent in Edward Said’s construct of the ‘Oriental’ and the ‘Occidental’. Dutton and Williams problematise Said’s ‘Orientalism’ as "in some versions and contexts (it) seems to subsume the entire human history of differentiating, classificatory or alterity practices geo-political and inter-cultural relations of power and knowledge" (347). Dutton and Williams in their critical engagement of Vijay Mishra's collaboration with Bob Hodge, Dark Side of the Dream: Australian Literature and the Postcolonial Mind (1994), as a text that, ‘…can be read as actually contributing to the "Aboriginalism" that it explicitly seeks to dispel…’ (347). They attribute this to Hodge and Mishra's appropriations which ‘…enables generalising and loose analysis of historically, socially and culturally specific and differentiated alterity practices on the basis of invocations and appeals to Orientalism.’ (347)

John O’Carroll has questioned and tried to re-site the body of works that exists as uncollected essays by Vijay Mishra on his formulations and revisions of the Girmit Ideology and Consciousness. O’Carroll places in context Vijay Mishra’s work in this area as he seeks to ‘trace another, as yet uncollected, set of essays that, taken together, are and important and controversial contribution to the debate about the Fiji Indian community in Fiji.’ (‘Envisioning’ 102) O’Carroll claims, ‘…despite the range of modeling contraptions Mishra devises, there is a picture which builds in composite fashion, into a powerful, if at times contradictory, “reality” for anyone who is part of Fiji, or who has shared in its times of anguish and laughter.’ (102). O’Carroll in this article also refers to various responses by Sudesh Mishra to Vijay Mishra’s works particularly on its reductionism of Marxism and the place literature has in defining a diaspora. Sudesh Mishra in discussing Vijay Mishra’s formulation of ‘ideology’ extends an understanding of “the struggle over the ideology of location” and concludes:
Curiously the struggle over the ideology of location implies the dialectical dislocation of both in relation to and in the space of the non-indigenous other. Similarly, when the subject announces its proper place in history via the discourse of *girmit*, it simultaneously announces the dislocatory moment that renders this history possible. (‘The Time’ 144)

This is an important extension of the debates over ideology and location that goes beyond the works of Vijay Mishra and his early set of works. It is this expansion of the works of Vijay Mishra that this thesis aims for in this study of identity and representations of the Indo-Fijian diaspora.

Mishra's formulation of the Girmit Ideology and Consciousness the various essays he has written on the subject construct India/Girmit/Indenture as an overarching centre to which all Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representation must write/be written back to. Instead of responding to Indo-Fijian literature and the Indo-Fijian diaspora and their instances of popular culture and experiences of the ‘everyday’/‘lived space’ the Girmit Ideology and Consciousness appropriates aspects of Orientalism's simplifications and elisions in promoting ideological, social, political and historical imperatives. These assertions by Vijay Mishra form a point of acknowledgement of, and departure, for this thesis. It is an acknowledgement of India as the point of origin for the Indo-Fijian diaspora among the larger Indian diaspora. And a departure from the assertion that traumatic moment of movement/migration from the homeland should form the basis of future identities and representations. Arguments to sustain such a departure form the central argument in this thesis as alternative ways of addressing issues of identity and representation and constructions of alterity are to be found in Indo-Fijian literature, for example.

Subramani’s short story, ‘Exiles in a Park’, sifts through the continuities of diasporic removals and shifts of Indo-Fijians gathered in a park in Australia. Instead of ascribing negative alterity ascription Subramani’s text moves through the ‘exiles’ in their various stages of assimilation,
denial, angst, segregation, nostalgia, guilt, love, lust, anger and so on. He achieves this by taking on the zoom lens of the objectified voyeuristic camera as his narrative modus operandi. There is no growth of centre-periphery imperial alterity ascription, as the camera lens moves on, returns, shifts, zooms in, fades out, obscurantises, scrutinizes the making of diaspora in process. Narrative constructs extended in this thesis in the interrogation of Indo-Fijian literature, instances of popular culture, representations from outside, and the engagement with the ‘everyday’ and the ‘lived space’, sites where we find Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representations. Or as Subramani ends his story, ‘We were living the afterlife of that story. Or altogether a different story. Probably someone else’s story. When does one story end, another begin?’ (‘Exiles’ 67)

We see similar possibilities in reading Subramani's short story ‘Sautu’ where the idea of reciprocal representation and sharing is present in the relationship between Dhanpat and Tomasi. Dhanpat derives a certain pleasure from Tomasi's ‘friendly antagonism’ while, ‘…Tomasi is eager to test Dhanpat's response to his newly acquired ideas.’ (Fantasy Eaters 4-5). The sharing of the self is also prominent in ‘Gamalian's Woman’ where, ‘Only when he had gone did Mrs Gamalian discover with a shudder that without his painted face and straggling curls, the gatekeeper was the very image of her dead husband.’ (57-8). Subramani recognizes the validity of the privileging of the Other in terms of discourse parity, reciprocal knowledge sharing and interdependent authenticity towards a genuine and reciprocal representation of the Other.

A second option on the alterity axis works on the premise that literature makes it possible to formulate an ideal and philosophical position on the self-Other axis. The associated fields of literary criticism, and authorship are able to consciously or unconsciously "decentre" but neither neutralize nor remove the politics of privilege. In such cases "self", "us", "not-us" and Others may get defined by a given or a revealed order of moral values and precedence, with assurances of self-renewal and self-justification. When tackling the problematic Other, such an option on alterity may choose to underplay the visible force of historical, cultural and political distinctions. The underplaying of the problematic Other can be used as the basis to forge ‘…that
Invisible Absolute, that ultimately annihilates all traces of the self as well as the Other, without leaving any traces.” (Khare 5) Sudesh Mishra invokes these alterity shifts and dissolves in the poem ‘Pole Vaulting’:

Panther deliberation of the self
Against another. The measured
Approach hints more at an intimacy
Of dissolved identity, the
Freedom to lose selfhood in the moment's
Tableau. his trick resides purely
In the conjurer's ability to
Describe a ritual curve, pushing
Against the earth. First the liberating
Heave, then, a crossing of frontiers. (Rahu 8)

Sudesh Mishra vaults poetry beyond ascription of a prescriptive ideological centre to capture the flight of the self through a physical act transcending "frontiers" and the pull of gravity. The idea of the "dissolved identity" comes from the physical act breaking free of constraints, natural or man-made. The poem also evokes in a vivid fashion and exemplifies the possibilities of the dissolve of advaitaa or vacuity beyond the physical act. It is also an act of the literary that works as a remove against constructs ending in an "ideological standpoint and consciousness" that leads to "Indo-Fijian literary works re-issuing versions of that falsification without the conflicts and contradictions within the ideology.” (‘Girmit Ideology’ 243)

The next section inquires into ideas of identity and representation for the Indo-Fijian diasopra, moving away from Vijay Mishra’s totalising and homogeneous theoretical constructs. Mishra fails in the series of essays to develop the ideas in his original paper, as an alternative among alternatives, in his later re-visions/re-visits/re-affirmations of the Girmit Ideology and Consciousness. A number of alternative theories and readings towards the Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representation are pursued in the next section. It begins with an examination of
some theoretical perspectives of Stuart Hall on diasporic identity and representation. This second section of this chapter aims to consolidate theoretical perspectives with an incorporation of some of these ideas on identity and representation for the Indo-Fijian diaspora with the ideas of modernity and global shifts present in Appadurai’s scapes that follow.


This section deals with concepts of representation and identity. It aims to define the usage of the concepts of representation and identity and its application in this thesis. Stuart Hall provides a suitable starting point for identity and representation in his statement that ‘we speak or write-the positions of *enunciation*.’ (392) Hall begins by outlining that:

What recent theories of enunciation suggest is that, though we speak, so to say ‘in our own name’, of ourselves, and from our own experience, nevertheless who speaks, and the subject who is spoken of, are never identical, never exactly in the same place. Identity is not transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an accomplished fact, which the new cultural practises than represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a ‘production’ which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation. (392)

Hall’s view problematises the term ‘cultural identity’ as a fixed label. In studying identity and representation in Indo-Fijian diasporas, identity as process rather than product, becomes of primary importance. Such a stance sustains the movement away from traditional theoretical models and constructs such as the definition of a historical moment, the Indenture Period or Girmit in this instance, as starting points and a continuum of identity and representation for Indo-Fijian diasporas.
Two traditional ways of thinking about ‘cultural identity’ are popularised in recent academic debates on the issue. The first definition follows what Hall sees as ‘cultural identity’ in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective ‘one true self’, hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’, which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common.” (393) That is that our cultural identities reflect shared historical experiences and shared cultural codes that Hall points out as providing us “as ‘one people’, with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history.” (393) Hall promotes the idea that “This ‘oneness’, underlying all the other, more superficial differences, is the truth, the essence, of ‘Caribbeanness’, of the black experience.” (393) A similar position is taken by Vijay Mishra as he point out that in Indo-Fijian literature there is a preoccupation with a ‘fictional directive’ derived from a, ‘historical experience’. Hall says inasmuch when he claims, “It is this identity, which a Caribbean or black diaspora must discover, excavate, bring to light and express through cinematic representation. (393)

Hall expands on his first definition of cultural identity and turns to Franz Fanon to make the point that:

In post-colonial societies, the rediscovery of this identity is often the object of what Fanon once called a Passionate research…directed by the secret hope of discovering beyond the misery of today, beyond self-contempt, resignation and abjuration, some very beautiful and splendid era whose existence rehabilitates us both in regard to ourselves and in regard to others. New forms of cultural practice in these societies address themselves to this project for the very good reason that, as Fanon puts it, in the recent past, colonisation is not merely satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native’s brain of all form and content. By a perverted logic, it turns
to the past of oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it.

(393)

Hall obviously takes liberties with the term ‘native’ as oppressed and the application of this argument is as much relevant for diasporas such as the Indo-Fijian. In this thesis the term diaspora begins with the traditional ideas of dispersal of people, but is used with an awareness of the grave conditionality of the usage of such terms in homogenous application to all migrations and movements of people. For the purposes of outlining theoretical departures at this point of the thesis I am retaining the universality of the colonial experience on the coloniser colonised dialectic regardless of specificity for the sake of continuing towards definitions of identity and representations. What this thesis concerns itself in this early part is the universal applicability of the ‘motherland’ for the diaspora along the lines of Halls vivid outline that images from the “Passionate” research:

Offer a way of imposing an imaginary coherence on the experience of dispersal and fragmentation, which is the history of all enforced diasporas. They do this by representing or ‘figuring’ Africa as the mother of these different civilisations. This Triangle, is after all, ‘centred’ in Africa. Africa is the name of the missing term, the great aporia, which which lies at the centre of our cultural identity and gives it a meaning which, until recently, it lacked. (393)

This thesis does not deny the existence of such emotion as that prevalent in all diasporas of a recognition and usually symbolic acknowledgement of a ‘motherland’. What this thesis is concerned with in terms of identity and representation is the question of what happens when this is established. Hall goes on to say that the,

..rift of separation, the loss of identity and recognition of such as ‘resources of resistance and identity’, with which to confront the fragmented and pathological ways in which that experience has been
reconstructed within the dominant regimes of cinematic and visual representation of the West. (393)

This viewpoint is consistent with some of the existing theoretical constructs on identity and representation on Indo-Fijian diasporas, from critics such as Vijay Mishra, Sudesh Mishra, Subramani, Satendra Nandan, Paul Sharrad, Raymond Pillai and John O’Carroll, among others, who have written variously on Indo-Fijian literature. Vijay Mishra ends his initial article on Girmit Ideology and Consciousness with the argument that ‘the visions of a failed ‘millennial’ quest and the images of a distinctive indenture eschatology are ideological structures against which the fictions of Indo-Fijian writers to date must be evaluated.’ (Indo-Fijian 181) A point that Hall also makes in his assertions on Africa. This thesis acknowledges such assertions of a ‘motherland’ or ‘homeland’ as a necessary starting point for the need to conduct a passionate search of identities and representations. The point of this thesis is to acknowledge the historical past and its moments of bathos/pathos and move on towards heterogeneous analysis of diasporas and people.

Hall then offers what he calls:

There is, however, a second, related, but different view of cultural identity. This second position recognises that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute ‘what we really are’; or rather-since history has intervened – ‘what we have become’. We cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about ‘one experience, one identity’, without acknowledging its other side-the ruptures and discontinuities which constitute precisely, the Caribbean’s uniqueness. Cultural identity in this second sense, is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’. (394)

It is this transformative sense of identity and representation that is privileged in this thesis. It moves away from theories and practices in which Indo-Fijian diasporas are positioned, re-
presented, identified and subject-ed to a dominant and/or homogenous codification of a past, present or future. In this thesis the regimes of representations are studied from the traditional modes of a critical exercise of cultural power and normalisation under dominant regimes of colonial and western literary and media practices to constructs and instances of representations from writing, criticism, and media forms. It also looks at representation from within as important instances of power/knowledge nexus of a primarily middle-class academia and literary sensibility that has the power, knowledge and means to re-present Indo-Fijian diasporas. Or as Hall states:

It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture and power. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuos ‘play’ of history, past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. (394)

It is this continuos play of narratives and identities in a constant state of transformation that are at the centre of this thesis and its concerns. Representation/s and the various permutations of the word re-presentation/ re-present/ and associated metonymic shifts become the means by which the naming of identities takes place for the Indo-Fijian diaspora and its various narratives. In Indo-Fijian literature, for example, the various narratives in prose and verse wait to find these identities through its re-presentation of a people. The movement being towards a more heterogeneous narrative at play than what is afforded by seeing identity as a monolith of types and stereotypes. Or as Sudesh Mishra writes on the construction of identity based on a stereotype, ‘The stereotype has the characteristic of a contagion that evades reason, enlightenment, and the historical march of modernity.’ (‘The Time’ 137)
The power of narrative makes us see our identities in repeated representations that end up placing the Indo-Fijian diaspora as the Other of all narratives. ‘Not only, in “Said’s ‘Orientalist’ sense, were we constructed as different and other within the categories of knowledge of the West by those regimes. They had the power to make us see and experience ourselves as ‘Other’. Every regime of representation is a regime of power ‘formed’, as Hall quoting Foucault, reminds us, by the fatal couplet, ‘power/knowledge.’” This same power of representation and the ability to ‘make us see and experience ourselves as the ‘Other’’, comes from various pens, keyboards and forces within and around Indo-Fijian diasporas. The internalisation of this knowledge in this thesis is examined in terms of its ability to position and subject the Indo-Fijian diasporas to such representations and to point out instances of resistance to this process in the instances, expression and consumption of popular culture. Or as Sudesh Mishra points out:

So it was the that the “cunning and grasping” stereotype of the indentured labourer, dislocated from India and relocated in Fiji, passes haphazardly from colonial bureaucratic tracts to James Michener’s Tales of the South Seas (1956) to Sitiveni Rabuka’s account for the reasons for the 1987 coup d’etat in No Other Way (1989) to Asele Ravuvu’s so-called “historical” narrative of ethnic perceptions (The Fa_ade of Democracy, eventually surfacing in George Speight’s televisual justification of a democratically-elected government led by an Indo-Fijian on 19 May, 2000. (“The Time”139)

In this instance the engagement is with how the various processes and siting of Indo-Fijian diasporas can fall victim to what Hall calls, ‘This inner expropriation of cultural identity cripples and deforms’, and how, ‘If its silences are not resisted’, they produce in Fanon’s vivid phrase, ‘individuals without an anchor, without horizon, colourless, stateless, rootless-a race of angels.’ This idea of a ‘race of angels’ ‘without an anchor’, in a more literal sense than that of Hall or Fanon, appeals in the first instance in the culling of definitions for an Indo-Fijian diaspora.
Sudesh Mishra in discussing dis-location/dis/placement places translocated fragments of Indian culture standing in place of India itself. This idea of the metonymic shift is important to discussions on identity based on the girmit transportation/transplanting and later migratory movements. The distinction between this two shifts are usually seen in the former being a product of a ‘dislocatory moment that renders history possible’, according to Sudesh Mishra and the latter post 1987 migrations as ‘a direct consequence of the two coups, it is also less ostensibly, linked to their marketability and mobility in the age of advanced capital.’ (‘The Time” 144) Sudesh Mishra concludes, “Where the first group of dislocated subjects were impoverished peasants ignorant of their place in modernity, the second are successful professionals educated in various dialects and discourse.” (144) Sudesh Mishra presents a convenient reason for movement/migration of a people, as a result of a diverse twin of related historical moments, such as the coups in Fiji in 1987/2000. As this study intends to show dislocation in both times is an inescapable grappling with more than the economics of a migration, indentured or otherwise. The emotional and economic dislocations present in both are evident in well-documented historical, sociological and literary accounts and in the memoirs and associated writing in this thesis.

The scape may have changed from that of sugar canes and banana and coconut leaves against a warm tropical sunset or downpour to that of the cityscape of Sydney, Auckland, Vancouver or San Francisco between these two dislocations. Human nature and emotions from lamentation to celebration carry a conduit of two centuries much of the same pains, tears, laughter, colours, tastes, smells, touch, sounds for the diasporic movements. This discussion is extended in later engagements in placing memory and the act of remembering in a study of Indo-Fijian memoir writing and its relationship to the two diasporic shifts. Firstly from India to Fiji. And from Fiji to various locations for the second shift diaspora from Vancouver to San Francisco to Auckland to Sydney to London, among other sites, and their relationship and influence on determining identity and representations. The next section of this chapter expands on the theoretical premises of this thesis by applying Arjun Appadurai’s scapes to an examination of the Indo-Fijian
diaspora in order to bring to bear upon its narratives on identity and representation the twin of Globalism and Modernity.

3: Arjun Appadurai and Scapes: Justification and Usage

Arjun Appadurai uses five scapes to discuss issues of globalism and modernity that is used as an important lead-in theoretical basis of inquiry and analysis to this thesis on the Indo-Fijian diaspora, its identity and representation. Appadurai outlines five dimensions of global cultural flow which he terms as ‘...first ethnoscapes; second, mediascapes; third, technoscapes; fourth, finanscapes; and fifth, ideoscapes.’ (221) Appadurai’s scapes are valuable tools to examine issues in globalization and modernity. In this instance they are deployed as important determinants of identity and representation for placing the Indo-Fijian diaspora. The scapes are utilised as theoretical constructs that are relevant and reflect more accurately the place of change, transition, plurality, hybridity, history, memory, performance, lived experiences, the everyday space that among other factors contribute to the exterior reality of a people, their lives, past, present and future.

The five scapes is used in this to formulate specific, what Appadurai calls ‘perspectival constructs’, that explores ideas of identity, difference, popular culture, literary culture, Indo-Fijian literature and other narratives in this examination of Indo-Fijian diasporic identities and representations. This is used deal with multiplicity’s of self and Other from ideas such as ‘...nation states, multinationals, diasporic communities, as well as sub-national groupings and movements (whether religious, political or economic), and even intimate face-to-face groups such as villages, neighbourhoods and families.’ (222) Appadurai’s contention that ‘...the individual actor is the last locus of this perspectival set landscapes...’(222) for this thesis brings in the individual and the everyday as dimensions missing from much of existing critical literary (as well as historical, sociological and anthropological studies) of Indo-Fijians. This forms the basis of inquiry in the chapters on instances of popular culture and its forces on identity and
flows in landscapes, on reading the everyday and on the textual and statistical readings of Liverpool, Sydney as part of the fieldwork for this thesis.

Appadurai insists, ‘...landscapes thus, are the building blocks of what, extending Benedict Anderson, I would call ‘imagined world’, that is, the multiple worlds which are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe’. (222) Appadurai’s work finds currency and relevance to the particular concerns of this thesis with the world/worlds lived in and imagined in and about by the Indo-Fijian diaspora in their expressions in popular culture and literature as well the lived everyday life. An important part of this ‘imagined world’ is the fact that the process of Indo-Fijian migrations, dispersals, locations and re-locations during the Indenture Period led not only to cultural transformations and associations but also to linguistic shifts and interplays. This thesis does not dwell on the sociolinguistics of Fiji-Hindi as a prime linguistic arbiter of/for/by the Indo-Fijian diaspora, for both Indentured Labourers, late free immigrants, and inter-cultural expressions between them (following the normally ascribed official denominations of ‘race/s’ in Fiji) Fijians, Part-Europeans, Chinese, and Others.

The works of Rodney Moag (1978) and Jeff Siegal (1972; 1975 and 1987) provide better scholarship and research in this area than is possible in this thesis. Moag and Siegal sustain arguments on the process of sociolinguistic transformations that are directly linked to migrations patterns and periods from India to Fiji and the prevailing languages and dialects from this process that led to Fiji-Hindi. Siegel presents an overview of Fiji-Hindi based on his work and that of other linguistics:

Their language, known as Fiji Hindustani (FH) or Fij Hindi has been described in detail by several writers (Siegel 1972; 1975; Pillai 1975; Moag 1977; 1979a; Tiwari 1979). In these studies FH is shown to have features from several Hindi dialects, but, in terms of inflectional morphology in both the noun phrase and the verb phrase, it is less
complex than these varieties. It is also characterized by a large number of loanwords from both English and Fijian. (185)

Fiji-Hindi is as an important and sustaining part of Indo-Fijian diaspora that finds site as linguistic icon in the everyday lived spaces. It also finds expression in popular culture, for example, in the works of Fiji’s comedian John Mohammed or various radio serial, print and television advertisements and radio jingles or in literary forms such as Raymond Pillai’s play ‘Adhuraa Sapnaa’ or Subramani’s epic novel Daukaa Puraan.

The second point, in this introductory siting of theoretical constructs is that Fiji-Hindi forms part of the ‘landscape’, linguistically and culturally, as an important signifier of expression of a people for the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Or as Brij Lal says ’ ‘It is our mother tongue. It comes to us naturally. We use it effortlessly to communicate with each other.’ (Bahut Julum npn) The use and place of Fiji-Hindi as the lingua franca among Indo-Fijians is usually not debated but its use in formal occasions, as a medium of instruction or language of literary expression does not go unchallenged. The battle lines are drawn up by purists who prefer proper Hind the usual medium of expression in large formal social, political, religious or cultural gatherings, against Fiji-Hindi as a ‘broken’ bastard’ language suitable only for the everyday spaces of the home, fields or market-place. The irony is that ‘Hindi’ as standard language is accepted by linguists as a composite of a large variety of dialects, and not being a pure form in the first instance.

Standard Hindi is also the medium of expression on radio and in newspapers, and the relatively large Indo-Fijian literary and journalistic narratives that exist in it, mostly written between the 1930’s and 1970’s. Lal relates the division to the particular forces of history on sectarian identities, religious practises-‘sanskritisation’ of rites but also of naming people that led to the removal of markers of castes. And acceptance of standard Hindi, as the linguistic verification/expression of ‘belonging’ to a leveled diasporic playing field. Lal asks for a cultural value for Fiji-Hindi, for, ‘it is as if proper Hindi is required for public performance: the real business of life is conducted in Fiji Hindi, the language of spontaneous communication, the language of the heart.’ (Bahut Julum npn)
Appadurai’s recognises that:

An important fact of the world we live in today is that many persons on the globe live in such imagined ‘worlds’ and not just in imagined communities and are thus able to contest and sometimes even subvert the ‘imagined worlds’ of the official mind and of the entrepreneurial mentality that surrounds them. (222)

Appadurai’s construct of the ‘imagined’ is applied in various instances to the literary study of Indo-Fijian literature in this thesis as well as in the various textual readings of the Indo-Fijian diasporic worlds of popular culture and the everyday and that of the individual actor. Appadurai extends this outline so that “…scape also allows us to point to the fluid, irregular shapes of these landscapes, shapes which characterize international capital as deeply as they do international clothing styles.’ (222) The idea of fluidity/irregularity of landscapes sustains arguments in this thesis on expansion of current theories and models on Indo-Fijian diasporic analysis towards heterogeneous alternatives that better help us understand concerns on identity and representation.

The “Call Centre”, fast becoming one of the iconic instances of the digital global tentacle of multinational capitalism, provides a multiple metaphor for the linguistic, economic, cultural-popular and otherwise sleights possible in the imagined worlds today. Fiji, far behind India as the call-centre capital of the world, also finds a growing industry in this masquerade of voices on imagined nuances to bring brilliantly into play the idea of fluidity and irregularity that is characteristic of much of the world, imagined or otherwise. This ‘scape’ linked to Appadurai’s idea of “technoscape” finds relevance in this thesis in the examination of technology based instances of popular culture such as Bollywood films, Popular Hindi music and the world wide effects of the internet on the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Indo-Fijian websites such as IndoFiji.com, Kai-India.com, Fiji Voice.com among others exemplify the creation of the global digital world of the Indo-Fijian diaspora who share and interacts on areas of common interest. On these sites
Fiji, India, soccer, Bollywood, matrimonials, Fiji Day and other cultural festivals, religion are among scapes that find currency in the everyday and lived space of the individuals and communities.

Appadurai’s “ethnoscape” as used in this thesis deals with the:

…landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guestworkers and other moving groups and persons constitute an essential feature of the world, and appear to affect the politics of and between nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree. (222)

While this thesis does not operate within the classical notion of diaspora as simple dispersal of persons from their original homelands or the notion of a homogenous “ideology or consciousness” as the basis of identity, it recognizes the importance of the “ethnoscape” as outlined by Appadurai. This thesis is a study of the Indo-Fijian diaspora whose world has been/become one of movement/migration, internal or overseas/, where the spatial shifts have sometimes threatened to overtake the temporal, as a result of experiences such as indenture, coups and institutionalized racism. The particular baggage and burden of such experiences invokes feelings of being the ‘doomed transmigrasi’. Resigned to ‘girms’, as emotive recourse, upon them by history whether as indentured labourers, coup victims, land-less leasee, or migrant workers/exiles starting over again in Liverpool, Sydney among other addresses. And yet, within this are celebrations of an evolving Indo-Fijian diaspora evens in these dislocation and displacement as we see in this thesis in the various chapters on Indo-Fijian literature, memoir writing, narratives on the diaspora, the everyday and in popular culture.

Appadurai’s insists that such movement does not mean ‘…that there are not anywhere relatively stable communities and networks of, of kinship, of friendship, of work and leisure, as well as of birth, residence and other filiative forms.’ (223) These networks and the shared sense of a diaspora are the areas of study in this research that aims to account for the heterogeneous
formations of identity and representations. Such communities and networks and their expressions in filial relationships and forms of leisure are found in entertainment-Bollywood/Indian satellite TV, Hindi/remix/fusion/bhangra music/dance, sports, particularly soccer, and the everyday space of city, home, garage, and suburbia in Liverpool. Particular Indo-Fijian forms of social entertainment and cultural expressions such as, ‘sittings’-Indo-Fijian social gathering usually around drinks and food), weddings, religious gatherings and celebrations are instances for interrogation and add to the overall shared space for the diaspora. There is always an awareness and inclusion into the arguments of the divides that underlie such communal expressions in terms of gender, class, sectarian and religious layers that undercut any notion of a homogenous Indo-Fijian diaspora. This is exemplified in its popular culture, literature, memoirs, and narratives on the diaspora, the everyday and in fieldwork in Liverpool.

What is particularly applicable from Appadurai’s work to this thesis is his contention that such instances of stability is undercut by the ‘…woof of human emotion, as more persons and groups deal with the realities of having to move, or the fantasies of wanting to move.’ (222) The textual readings in general and empirical analysis of fieldwork in Liverpool, Sydney, provide more than ample evidence of such yearnings to move among the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Appadurai points out these ‘…realities as well as these fantasies now function on a larger scale…’ and just as villagers in India no longer think of a move to “Poona or Madras” but to “Dubai and Houston.” (222) Settlements in Fiji no longer think just of shifts from Batinikama or Tabia in Labasa to Suva but to Sydney or Auckland or San Francisco or Vancouver. And their shifts are shadowed not only by their realities and fantasies but also by the larger specter created as:

…international capital shifts its needs, as production and technology

generate different needs, as nation states shift their policies on refugee

populations, these moving groups can never afford to let their

imagination rest too long, even if they wished to.” (222)

Migration figures from Fiji marks dramatic changes in the Fijian demography reflecting the push and pull factors around 1987 and 2000 related to political instability, communal
discrimination, non-renewal of land leases and the major push for education as a means to migrations that characterise the Indo-Fijian as a moving population.

Appadurai defines ‘technoscape’ as ‘…the global configuration, also ever fluid, of technology, and of the fact that technology, both high and low, both mechanical and informational, now moves at high speeds across various kinds of previously impervious boundaries.’ (222) This is an increasingly important area in the study of the diaspora relating to ideas on globalisation and modernity. The temporal and spatial realities in the digital world have a real place in accessing past temporalities and spaces, evident in diaspora based websites. The movement defines and re-defines the diaspora as the digital technoscape that makes movement between the everyday narratives of past and present diasporas in ever increasing flows of information. The internet/digital information highways as technoscape for diasporic communities influences, their definition of past, present and the links and continuities between the two and their futures.

Instead Appadurai’s work on the technoscape become relevant in the micro study of the Indo-Fijian diaspora and their increasing dependence on technology, especially digital information networks on the internet, telephone-mobile and landlines, and satellite television as part of the analysis of the fieldwork in Liverpool, Sydney. As Appadurai points out the ‘…complicated technoscapes (and the shifting ethnoscapes)’ (223) which underlie traditional economic indicators or comparisons makes it difficult to provide comfortable grids of inquiry into the diversity and multiplicity of labour, markets and economies that determine identity and diaspora.

This thesis makes only a tenuous connection between Appadurai’s next ‘scape and the central concerns of this inquiry into the Indo-Fijian diasporic condition. Appadurai finds it

…useful to "speak as well of ‘finanscapes’, since the disposition of global capital is now a more mysterious, rapid and difficult landscape to follow than ever before as currency markets, national stock exchanges, and commodity speculations move mega-money through
national turnstiles at blinding speeds, with vast absolute implications for small differences in percentage points and time units. (223)

Global capital markets and movements for better or worse affects every person on earth and plays its own role in determining identity and representation for the Indo-Fijian diaspora as well. The increasingly important area of remittances from the second shift diaspora to the original Indo-Fijian diaspora in Fiji is documented as an important source of national income. Currency fluctuations linked to the complex global money and investment traffic have an immediate effect on such transactions involving the diaspora. This is without doubt an important area that will surely attract the attention of a better-qualified and expanded study by some economist but remains outside the scholarship of this thesis.

Appadurai sees ethnoscapes, technoscapes and finanscapes as related concepts that he calls ‘…disjunctives (which hardly form a simple, mechanical global ‘infrastructure’ in any case) are what I have called ‘mediascapes’ and ‘ideoscapes’ though the latter two are closely related landscapes of images.’ (223) Appadurai’s “mediascapes” relate directly to the creation of images through ‘…electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information…’ (223). This formation of ‘disjunctives’ is a used for inquiry into the creation of images/narratives/texts on the diaspora as well the images of the diaspora that creates in its own sense of identity and fissures, by expressions in popular culture and in the everyday as a lived space.

The ‘disjunctives’ and relationships between the scapes and its particular deployment in this research require some further clarifications on the formulations presented by Appadurai. Appadurai in discussing ‘mediascape’ states ‘These images of the world involve many complicated inflections, depending on their mode (documentary or entertainment), their hardware (electronic or pre-electronic), their audiences (local, national, transnational) and the interests of those who own and control them.’ (223) The complicated relationships of consumer/consumption-expression/control/production of popular culture forms such as films, television, websites as instances of mediascapes provides it own modalities of creating/presenting identity and representation. For the Indo-Fijian diaspora these
representations in film, for example, are various constructs of India, from the mythological dramas of the 1940’s to the socialist inscriptions of the 1950’s to the increasing glamour of the Indian middle class and their sojourns in the Alps in the 1960’s and so on. Bollywood films increasingly cater for the Non Resident Indian market by including the locales and often glossed over lives of the diaspora, by including them, invariably as stereotypes. Each of these filmic inscriptions carry with it definitions of India, that invariably influences the diaspora, mostly as fads and fashion, rather than as a centre to think/write/emote back to.

Appadurai expands the idea of mediascapes by asserting that:

What is most important about these mediascapes is that they provide (especially in their television, film and cassette forms) large and complex repertoires of images, narratives and ‘ethnoscapes’ to viewers throughout the world, in which the world of commodities and the world of ‘news’ and politics are profoundly mixed. (223)

This mixing of ‘worlds’ forms an integral part of the textual readings afforded to instances of Indo-Fijian popular culture consumption of ‘television, film, cassette’ dvd forms of mediascapes and their construct of India. These mediascapes inhabit the space between reality and fantasy in much the same way as the distinction blurs between the addresser and addressee in the closed confines of a cinema. Enthralled in the melodramatic melodies and populist appeal of the formula masala (lit. "mixed spice") films from Bollywood of the Indian diaspora from Houston to London to Auckland to Sydney to Suva. It is this function of the Bollywood dream factory that provides the illusion of India in all its types and formulaic presentations of generational, filial, gender, mytho-religious, musical, universalities that becomes real. For the garment factory worker in Suva watching a Sunday matinee featuring current Bollywood heartthrobs say Shah Rukh Khan and Preity Zinta.

Appadurai explains:
‘Mediascapes’, whether produced by private or state interests, tend to be image-centred, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality, and what they offer to those who experience and transform them in a series of elements (such as characters, plots and textual forms) out of which scripts can be formed of imagined lives, their own as well of those of others in other places. (224)

In this thesis a variety of media forms and productions mainly from India particularly Bollywood Cinema, Popular Hindi film playback music and Indo-Pop fusion variants, Hindi satellite television programs are examined as in terms of the transformations, growths and retardation that they have on the Indo-Fijian diaspora. The other important mediascape central to this thesis is Indo-Fijian passion for soccer and the forms of observance of this sport that elevates it a ritual of identity and representation.

Appadurai outlines his ‘ideoscapes’ as ‘…also concatenations of images, but they are often directly political and frequently have to do with the ideologies of state and the counter ideologies of movements explicitly orientated to capturing state power or a piece of it.’ (224) In this thesis the idea of counter ideologies or the idea of a movement aimed at capturing state power or bits of it does not seem to be relevant. Especially in light of the particularities of the political past and present of the Indo-Fijian diaspora in both its original state in Fiji and various second shift diasporic communities outside it, per se. On the other hand many of the tactics employed by the marginalised and ethnically discriminated Indo-Fijian diaspora, include skilled migration, education as a means to power/movement, marriages of convenience for migration, group solidarity in elections, setting up of community based foundations for self-help projects. These examples among others form a counter ideology to the forces that place them on the margins.

And as part of this ideology they are the composition as Appadurai puts it of ‘…elements of the Enlightenment world-view which consists of a concatenation of ideas, terms and images, including ‘freedom’, ‘welfare’, ‘rights’, ‘sovereignty’, ‘representation’, and the master term
‘democracy’. (224) This thesis reconciles these ‘ideas, terms and images’ in the political context of the Indo-Fijian diaspora and its exile from its own construction of a homeland, real and imagined. As a beginning this thesis, for example, engaged with the ideoscapes of Fiji’s colonial past towards a historical and context for the study of the Indo-Fijian diaspora and its evolution.

Appadurai outlines the ‘…internal coherence which held these terms and images together in a Euro-American master-narrative and provided instead a loosely structured synopticon of politics, in which different nation states, as part of their evolution, have organised their political cultures around different ‘keywords’.’ (224) Some of these ‘keywords’ and their place in ‘master-narratives’ and ‘counter-narratives’ among other narrations are searched for and placed in the context of Indo-Fijian identities and representation at various points of the thesis. The sections on Indo-Fijian literature, memoir writing and associated narratives, representations from outside in narratives/images link with another important part of the Appadurai contention. Appadurai states:

As a result of the differential diaspora of these keywords, the political narratives that govern communication between elites and followings in different parts of the world involve problems of both a semantic and a pragmatic nature: semantic to the extent that words (and their lexical equivalents) require careful translation from context to context in their global movements; and pragmatic to the extent that the use of these words by political actors and their audiences may be subject to very different sets of contextual conventions that mediate their translation into public politics. (224)

Again this contextualisation, both the semantic and pragmatic of the ‘keywords’ forms an important marker for the Indo-Fijian. It begins with the creation of the word ‘Girmit” as a variant of ‘agreement’ to words and code switches in terms from English to Hindi in this case and to Fijian other instances in the telling and hearing of political narratives. This is an
important marker in the determination of values and ‘readings’ that are central to this thesis in the ‘textual readings’ of instances of the everyday of the Indo-Fijian diasporic. For example in reading the Indo-Fijian diaspora in Liverpool, Sydney and on soccer, identity and representation.

Appadurai expands on ‘contextualisation’ by arguing that,

These conventions also involve the far more subtle question of what sets of communicative genres are valued in what way (newspapers versus cinema for example) and what sorts of pragmatic genre conventions that govern the collective ‘readings’ of different kinds of text. (224)

This thesis in its use of textual readings and more conventional literary analysis of Indo-Fijian literature and the production, expression and consumption of Popular Culture in Indo-Fijian popular culture instances will look at values placed on particular communicative genres. This is based on fieldwork data interviews, questionnaire respondents, and anecdotal reviews and personal experiences. This fieldwork section moving between statistical analysis and textual readings aims to identify and represent a people caught in the pendulum of multiple diasporic shifts. There have been multiple movement of bodies and spaces from India to Fiji to specific locales geographically in the islands and later movements to in this instance Liverpool in Sydney, Australia. Appadurai’s next qualifier of the fluidity of processes and relationship of reading to hearing and seeing is also central to the ‘readings’ of a diasporic people in this thesis in order to ‘…determine the morphology of these different ‘ideoscapes’ as they shape themselves in different national and transnational contexts.’ (224)

Appadurai sees ‘democracy’ as a ‘master-term’ that ‘creates every new terminological kaleidoscopes, as states (and the groups that seek to capture them) seek to pacify populations whose own ethnoscapes are in motion, and whose mediascapes may create severe problems for
the ideoscapes with which they are presented’. (225) In this thesis various other terms such as ‘diaspora’, ‘girmit’, ‘ideology’, ‘identity’, representation and ‘consciousness’ are problematised through this disjunctive relationship of ethnoscapes, mediascapes and ideoscapes and new directions sought for meaning or meanings that have relevance towards a study of Indo-Fijian diaspora, literature and popular culture. In the thesis particular attention is paid to as Appadurai points out to complication of the fluidity of ideoscapes ‘by the growing diasporas (both voluntary and involuntary) of intellectuals who continuously inject new meaning-streams into the discourse of democracy in different parts of the world. (225)

Appadurai’s next concept of relevance to this thesis is the concept of ‘Deterritorialization’. He describes it as ‘…one of the central forces of the modern world, since it brings labouring populations into lower-class sectors and spaces of relatively wealthy societies, while sometimes creating exaggerated and intensified senses of criticism or attachment to politics in the home state.’ (225) Deterritorialization and Appadurai’s outline of this concept in action finds qualified use in this thesis. Of more relevance is the core of Appadurai’s model ‘…about the conditions under which current global flows occur: they occur in and through the growing disjunctures between ethnoscapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, mediascapes and ideoscapes.’ (225) Appadurai explains this formulation as:

First, people, machinery, money, images, and ideas now follow increasingly non-isomorphic paths: of course, at all periods in human history, there have been some disjunctures between the flows of these things, but the sheer speed, scale, volume, of each of these flows is now so great that the disjunctures have become central to the politics of global culture. (225).

In this speeded up movement of people, space and place Appadurai’s contends that while some ‘…guestworker groups maintain continuous contact with their home, like the Turks, but others, like high-level South Asian migrants, tend to desire lives in their new homes raising anew the problem of reproduction in a deterritorialized context.’ (225) This idea of ‘problems and
possibilities’ of reproduction is related to a whole range of popular culture instances and icons in the ‘deterritorialized context’ of the Indo-Fijian diaspora in the thesis. Liverpool features as a ‘derritorialized’ scape that is evolving into a ‘territorialized’ scape, for example the populating of Northumberland Street in the city centre by commercial and professional concerns run by the Indo-Fijian diaspora, catering mainly for their specific needs of consumption or services.

“Derritorialization” as used by Appadurai is also applied to ‘money and finance’ and the consequences of such movements on national boundaries and impact on consumerism and commodities. In this thesis such analysis forms first of all part of the study of the pull and push factors in the movements of the Indo-Fijian diaspora from the initial shift from India to Fiji and subsequent placements and displacements of instances of internal and external migration. Appadurai’s states:

Deterritorialization, in general, is one of the central forces of the modern world, since it brings labouring populations into the lower-class sectors and spaces of relatively wealthy societies, while sometimes creating exaggerated and intensified senses of criticism or attachment to politics in the home state. (225)

These constructs of class shifts and displacement is applied to the particular form of Indo-Fijian ‘deterritorialization’ in the analysis of fieldwork from Liverpool, Sydney and of the main Indo-Fijian diasporic cultural organizations and their politics. The whole idea of ‘deterritorialization’ takes on new meaning and constructs of identity and identification when the Indo-Fijian diasporic shifts are seen in its entirety from the docks of Calcutta in 1879 to the frequent flier miles traveled since 1987, and speeded up since 2000. The study of ‘fundamentalism’ or specifically the lack of it in the Indo-Fijian diaspora is used in the opening sections to make a significant case for the creation of ‘homeland/s’ other than of ‘mother India’, Fiji and Liverpool, two among others. The Indo-Fijian ‘deterritorialization’ as examined in this thesis takes the view that it takes place within markedly different paradigms to that of Appadurai’s contention.
that ‘problems of cultural reproduction for Hindus abroad has become tied to the politics of Hindu fundamentalism at home.’ (225)

At another level Appadurai’s concept of ‘derritorialization’ is applied in more direct terms from his description of its impact on consumerism and commodities through the textual readings of Liverpool, Sydney Indo-Fijians. And its role “in which, money, commodities and persons are involved in ceaselessly chasing each other around the world, that the mediascapes and ideoscapes of the modern world find their fractured and fragmented counterpart. For the ideas and images produced by mass media often are only partial guides to the goods and experiences that derritorialized populations transfer to one another’. (226) Appadurai makes the important point in his next statement the production of ideas and images are only ‘partial’ guides. This important qualification of the ‘partial’ is extended to all forms of ideoscapes and imagescapes derived from Indo-Fijian literature, popular culture and other textual readings. They are studied in this thesis as only part of the whole and cannot and do not stand on its own for a whole people or their lives or history.

Appadurai presents instances of the ‘multiple loops of his idea of fractured deterritorialization’ in his examples of the cabaret dancers, prostitutes, pornographic films in India and makes a qualified statement on:

…‘the tragedies of displacement’ which tie together fantasies about the other, the convenience and seduction of travel, the economics of global trade and the brutal mobility fantasies that dominate gender politics in many parts of Asia and the world at large.’ (226)

Instances of this ‘brutal mobility fantasies’ are highlighted in this thesis to be found in the narratives practices of ‘marriages of convenience’ and mail order brides, for example in Brij Lal’s short story “Marriage/Maarit”. This informs the larger movement of the Indo-Fijian diaspora and its own gender politics. In Australia Appadurai’s description of ‘mobility fantasies’ finds currency in the underground trade in brides, sex workers, drugs from Asia and outbound sex tours to Asia and related movements of people and ‘fantasies’.
Appadurai looks at the ‘role of the nation state in the disjunctive global economy of culture today’ after expressing the possibilities that ‘far more could be said about the cultural politics of deterritorialization and the larger sociology of displacement that it expresses.’ (227) This thesis for the most part concentrates precisely on these possibilities of the cultural politics of deterritorialization and its instances found in Indo-Fijian literature, memoirs and other narratives/text in English in the first instance. This examination is continued in narratives/texts/media representations of the Indo-Fijian diaspora, Indo-Fijian popular culture as well as in the textual readings of people, places, spaces, commodities, movements and ideologies of the Indo-Fijian diaspora in Liverpool, Sydney to inform this thesis from another perspective.

Appadurai nexus of states and nations in its ‘embattled’ state is inverted in this thesis as ‘statelessness’ and ‘nationlessness’ of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Original displacement and subsequent placements and displacements of a people ‘without land’ are ‘tragedies’ of deterritorialization that forms a running thread through this thesis. This ‘tragedy’ by definition and in practice does not need to be one steeped in nostalgia, romanticism or even tragedy. Although such sentiments are expressed at various times and in various forms this thesis moves away from the tragic to expressions in the everyday. And as such runs the whole gamut from comic towards world views where the dispersed no longer seek a ‘nation’ or a ‘state’ just a small corner of the earth to live their lives in. ‘Nationhood’ for the Indo-Fijian diaspora in original displacement from India to Fiji and to other parts of the globe remains not as a fixed idea of land and space. In this thesis it works towards more of an acceptance of past contributions, marginalised present lives and the vagaries of a lived future. Of course, within this generalised and perhaps a tad romanticised notion of a nation for a marginalised diasporic people are the exceptions where capital and politics mix across borders of race and forms the Realpolitik of the state in Fiji.

Indo-Fijians have not expressed the desire to form, ‘separatist, transnational movements’ similar to that under examination by Appadurai among the Sikhs and Tamil Sri Lankans. Appadurai
states that such movements seek to ‘represent imagined communities which seek to create states of their own or carve pieces out of existing states’ (227). Yet Indo-Fijians in Fiji through both their real and imagined lives and by filial and homeland connections to the second-shift Indo-Fijian diaspora live in the ‘seedbed of brutal separatisms, majoritarianisms that seem to appear from nowhere, and micro-identities that have become political projects within the nation state.’ (225) How Indo-Fijian literature and diasporic productions, expressions and consumption grapple with such politics is an important part of this thesis. In various instances, for example in memoirs, is an exploration of such brutalities and its effects on identity and representation for the Indo-Fijian diaspora, and its responses and strategies of resistance.

In this thesis the re-shaping, re-membering, re-creation of the Indo-Fijian diaspora as ‘micro-identities’ as a result of colonialism, coups and separatist policies thrown up in the wake of coups in 1987 and 2000 is of grave importance on questions of identity and representation. It plays an integral part in determining the particular responses and options taken in Indo-Fijian literature and instances of their popular culture towards this process of marginalisation and movement. Within its history of polarised racial politics Fiji finds itself forced to accommodate the marginalised. As they are, …‘pressed to stay ‘open’ by the forces of media, technology, and travel which had fuelled consumerism throughout the world and have increased the craving, even in the non-Western world, for new commodities and spectacles.’ (225).

Added to this is Fiji’s dependence of an island state economy on their traditional aid donors that are linked to staying in line with global standards on accepted levels of racial separatism and marginalisation. For example, in Fiji under the present regime the “Blueprint” of affirmative action programs in commerce, education and employment after the 2000 coup for the advancement of indigenous people, forms part of the ‘new ethnoscapes, mediascapes and eventually ideoscapes’ that institutionalises racism and policies of apartheid. This, of course, becomes of significance to the thesis in the sections on migration and movements in the Indo-Fijian diaspora. The Indo-Fijian diaspora in Fiji and their second shift diasporic communities elsewhere engage in political activity aimed at protecting their group rights through ‘new ethnoscapes, mediascapes and eventually ideoscapes, such as ‘democracy’. (228)
Between 1987 and 1997 and after 2000 the Indo-Fijian diaspora has engaged in a contest ‘over
the ideoscapes of democracy’ against regimes that ‘…cannot tolerate as threats to its own
control over ideas of nationhood and peoplehood.’(228) For example, the coups in 1987 and
subsequent constitutional and legal changes in the 1990 constitution substantially changed the
shape of the Indo-Fijian diaspora and the forces that creates identities and influence
representations, for example, demography, migration and movement. The marginalisation of the
Indo-Fijian diaspora under the 1990 constitution was by enforced by a series of decrees. They
included cultural and religious (Sunday as national day of Sabbath with punitive measures for
breaking the rules on work and recreation); political (communal political representation system
was changed to ensure an Indigenous majority); and totalitarian measures (sweeping powers of
detention and interrogation under the Internal Security Decree).

The proliferation of diasporic websites and linkage of electronic and digital mail brings in a new
dimension to Appadurai’s return to ‘ethnoscapes’. He sees it as ‘the central paradox of ethnic
politics in today’s world is that primordia (whether language or skin colour or neighbourhood or
kinship) have become globalized.” (228) This study of identity and representation of Indo-Fijian
diaspora finds similar grounds or a locality, such as Liverpool as city, Northumberland Street as
a marker of a staging ground of identity along the lines of Appadurai’s contention:

Sentiments whose greatest force is their ability to ignite intimacy into a
political sentiment and turn locality into a staging ground for identity,

have become spread over vast and irregular spaces, as groups move, yet
stay linked to one another through sophisticated media capabilities.

(228).

This new direction for the diaspora becomes evident in the analysis of the interviews and
questionnaire responses to questions on identity and technical mobility from the fieldwork of the
diaspora in Liverpool, Sydney and of their ‘diasporic’ Othered-self in Fiji. The survey analysis
tests Appadurai’s contention that:
This is not deny that such primordia are often the product of invented traditions (Hobsbawn and Ranger 1983) or retrospective affiliations but to emphasize that because of the disjunctive and unstable interplay of commerce, media, national politics and consumer fantasies, ethnicity, once a genie contained in the bottle of some sort of locality (however large) has now become a global force, forever slipping in and through the cracks between states and borders. (228).

This definition of globalisation is interrogated in the fieldwork in Liverpool and its influence on identity and representation for the Indo-Fijian diaspora, for example in their replication of spaces, narratives, images, instances of popular culture, such as soccer and Bollywood films and music. Appadurai’s conclusion deploys the markers on the global as a ‘deeper change, itself driven by the disjunctures’ between all the landscapes discussed and their continuously fluid and uncertain interplay, which concerns the ‘…relationship between production and consumption in today’s global economy.’ (229). He goes on to construct and explain his twin ‘mutually supportive descendents’ that he calls ‘production fetishism’ and ‘fetishism of the consumer’. This is outlined in terms of the transformation of the forces of production to one of:

…‘alienation’ in complicated spatial dynamic which is increasingly dynamic’ and consumption where the consumer is transformed through commodity flows (and mediascapes, especially of advertising, that accompany them) so that the they are ‘helped to believe that he or she is an actor, where in fact he or she is at best a chooser.’ (229)

This distinction between ‘actor’ and ‘chooser’ is used in the thesis to discuss forces that determine movement of people and their siting in new places of living. The performance of identities whether as ‘actor’ or ‘chooser’ is an integral part of the arguments sustaining heterogeneity and a plurality of identities and representations, in the individual as well as the diaspora. According to Appadurai, the forces of ‘global advertising’ and:
‘.globalization of culture is the same as its homogenisation, but globalization involves the use of a variety of instruments of homogenisation (armaments, advertising techniques, language hegemonies, clothing style and the like), which are absorbed into local political and cultural economies, only to be repatriated as heterogeneous dialogues of national sovereignty, free enterprise, fundamentalism etc. (229)

Questions of heterogeneity arise in these ‘instruments of homogenization’ as core questions on Indo-Fijian diasporic identities/representations, for example language hegemonies sustained by terms like ‘Girmit’. In this instance the impact is not on nation states as Appadurai uses it, but as markers of identity and representation in determination of individual and diasporic scapes within the larger globalised hegemonies of definitions of people sustained in homogenising terms such as the ‘global village’. Appadurai’s concludes with the remark:

Thus the central feature of global culture today is the politics of the mutual effect of same and difference to cannibalise one another and thus to proclaim their successful hijacking of the twin enlightenment ideas of the triumphantly universal and the resiliently particular. (229-30)

In this thesis the push and full of the forces of the ‘triumphantly universal’ and ‘resiliently particular’ are important to the examination and analysis of instances of identities to be found in Indo-Fijian diaspora in their everyday primarily but also in popular culture, other narratives, memoirs and Indo-Fijian literature. And it is to some of these instances that we next turn to in the next chapter, the universal and particular come full cycles in Indo-Fijian literature as a starting point of engagement of narratives and texts on identity and representation.
Chapter Three

Indo-Fijian Literature: Narratives of Identity and Representation.

“It may be argued that the past is a country from which we all have emigrated, that its loss is part of our common humanity.”


1: The Writers and their Writings.

This chapter examines literary and memoir narratives and narratives from other forms of writing to develop larger ‘texts’ on Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representation. Chapter three begins a critical examination of some instances of Indo-Fijian literature and their contribution to Indo-Fijian identity and representation. This beginning also provides the basis for the inclusion of memoirs and other associated narratives from the Indo-Fijian diaspora to present further heterogeneous perspectives on identity and representation. The term memoir is used to describe personal recollections by individuals of lived experiences handed down from generation to generation, orally, through individuals or as part of the domain of common knowledge among a people, to constitute narratives of time, place and people.

The term ‘associated’ writing is added to include personal narratives that approximate various forms from opinion pieces to essays to feature articles to anecdotal styles of personal recollection. This chapter begins with an examination of Indo-Fijian literature. It ends with an extended inquiry into the multiplicity of identities and representations present in the movement towards memoir and associated writing of recent years. The movement between these two general forms of narratives is to trace, analyse and situate identities and representations in both
the ‘canonised’ or ‘achieved category’ of Indo-Fijian Literature and in collections of memoir and associated writing, many by first time or writers who are not in the existing canon. The argument is memoir writing adds greatly to the canon and brings in elements of recollection and fiction that moves away from descriptions of Indo-Fijian literature as an “Achieved Corpus”.

Writers/academics/critics like Subramani, Nandan, Pillai and Sudesh Mishra play a two-fold role in the process towards an ‘Achieved Literature’, as outlined by John O’Carroll. Subramani’s, South Pacific Literature from Myth to Fabulation, is referred to by O’Carroll as an "example par excellence of a classic literary history: it writes a body of texts in terms that arrange them as a corpus, a "Literature."(‘Sketch’ 61) The contribution of a writer/academic/critic like Subramani, for example, makes up the discursive economies and institutions that create and perpetuate the "Achievement" of a "Literature". This process of the constituting of a "Literature" can take particular forms and create a sustainable and usually self-sustaining metalanguage, such as that engendered by the creation of an Indo-Fijian Consciousness/Girmit Ideology by Vijay Mishra. Subramani, Nandan, Pillai and Sudesh Mishra in their criticisms on Indo-Fijian literature and diaspora as writers/academics/critics engage in a process summed up by O’Carroll as:

Simultaneously records the achievement of "a Literature" and in the process of so doing, it actually partakes in that "achievement." In this sense, the critic is no mere observer, but is an active participant in the process s/he purports to describe. This view of the critic-as-writer (in the Bartesian sense) is necessary to any understanding of the way "a" Literature, any Literature, is "achieved." (62)

"Achievement" of Indo-Fijian "Literature" in one instance is through the expositions and revisions on Indo-Fijian literature by Vijay Mishra and the continuum "Achievement" of the original thesis by Subramani, Nandan, Pillai and Sudesh Mishra as writers/academics/critics. This thesis contends there is no monolithic, unchanging “oneness” or essence of the immigrant/indentured/diasporic Indo-Fijian, and that texts often refute even the writer’s
expectation in churning out “truth”, as becomes evident in some of the examples of memoir and associated writing analysed in this thesis. Texts and readers bring their own individualized historical / class / gendered / sexual (straight /not)/regional /ethnic /religious / linguistic agendas to bear upon interpretation/consumption and influence on their definitions of identity and representation for the Indo-Fijian diaspora.

Raymond Pillai, Satendra Nandan, Subramani, and Sudesh Mishra through their works and literary and critical appraisal of such works are widely regarded as the prominent Indo-Fijian writers. Pillai, Nandan and Subramani began writing at about the same time, with similar paths in secondary studies in Fiji before embarking on tertiary studies abroad. This trio of writers became part of the first wave of writers from the Pacific. Sudesh Mishra joined that trio to make a quartet of Indo-Fijian writers of note, through his literary contributions since the mid-eighties. Almost a generation apart, his inclusion was "canonised" by Vijay Mishra. The thesis does not engage with the biographical background to the writers in analysing their work in this thesis. Personal interviews conducted with various writers including Raymond Pillai, Satendra Nandan, Brij Lal, Larry Thomas, Seona Smiles and Subramani are referred to as required.

This study is not an exhaustive study of these writers and their writings, but an analysis of their works on issues of identity and representation of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. These texts are subject to literary analysis and criticism based on the demarcation between the purpose and meaning of literary texts within narrative and mimetic referentiality and its role in identity and representation for the Indo-Fijian diaspora. The present and popular identification, and one used in this thesis, of Indo-Fijian writers as a ‘achieved corpus’ ignores the vast body of Indo-Fijian literature in Hindi as literary texts and as various periodicals, including works or translations in English especially between 1930 and 1970. This voluminous chapter of Indo-Fijian cultural scape was brought to my attention by the substantial private collection held by Brij Lal. As Brij Lal, suggested in a personal interview, it was a collection ready for a substantial study of its own.
As part of the movement away from the accepted ‘canon’ of Indo-Fijian literature Brij Lal’s edited collection of memoirs, essays, fiction/faction and verse in *Bittersweet* (2004) and Kavita Nandan’s *Stolen Worlds* (2005) are examined as a means of extending the scape of Indo-Fijian identities and representation in text. *Bittersweet* and *Stolen Worlds* are used as texts that come up with multiple narratives of identity and representation, to expand on existing literary and non-literary studies of the Indo-Fijian diaspora through its literature. In this section Appadurai’s ‘scapes’ are applied to the various stories and prevailing concerns of memoir writing for the Indo-Fijian diaspora.

This critical engagement is linked to globalization and modernity as important determinants of identity and diasporic sensibilities and directions towards determining Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representation using Appadurai’s concepts. The need to formulate specific ‘perspectival constructs’ is the basis for analysis in memoirs and associated writing of Indo-Fijian identity and representation. This analysis is a point of expansion to the interrogation of popular culture, literary culture, Indo-Fijian literature in English and Fiji-Hindi as sites of examination of Indo-Fijian diasporic identities in this thesis. The resulting study is thus an engagement with multiplicities of identity and representation in ‘…nation states, multinationals, diasporic communities, as well as sub-national groupings and movements (whether religious, political or economic), and even intimate face-to-face groups such as villages, neighbourhoods and families.’ (222) The gamut of ‘communities’ that Appadurai insists on here, finds immediate relevance and intimacy, in the heterogeneous Indo-Fijian ‘landscape’ in memoirs and associated writing.

Memoir and associated writing from the Indo-Fijian diaspora is analysed using theoretical works of Arjun Appadurai, Stuart Hall, Michel Foucault and Gayatri Spivak towards delineations of identity and representation. The various concerns of identities and representations in *Bittersweet* and *Stolen Worlds* constructs worlds, narratives and texts presenting modalities of heterogeneity from the world/s of the lived space and individual preferences of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. The examination of memoirs from *Bittersweet* and *Stolen Worlds* is prefaced by personal memoirs, autobiography, essays, opinion pieces, public
addresses among associated writing in the works of Subramani, Brij Lal and Satendra Nandan, in their respective works, *Altering Imagination* (1995), *Mr Tulsi’s Store* (2001) and *Requiem for a Rainbow* (2001). Memories/memory/remembering of Fiji found immediate expression after the coups in Fiji in 1987 and 2000 in literature, the mass media, websites, marches, placards and perhaps most expressively in the voting by feet on a place through the Indo-Fijian exodus to the second shift diasporic locations.


This thesis moves from the post-1987 Indo-Fijian literature as a referent point for the engagement with memoirs and associated writing in this chapter. The next chapter on Indo-Fijian women writers, juvenilia and children in Indo-Fijian fiction provide further insights that add to the engagements of Indo-Fijian literature with the post 1987 period. These additional narratives from the Indo-Fijian diaspora provide heterogeneous insights that are often highly individualised and personal to form post-1987 Indo-Fijian narratives and texts, other than that from the ‘canon’. Memoir writing on coups and trauma and/or joy of migration/dislocations finds recurrent articulation of the past/present in remembered memory as well as of the everyday lived space.
Indo-Fijian literature is read to subvert or resist “centre” and “margin” binary frameworks. Instead Indo-Fijian identity and its representation as constructs of the past, the present, mindful of future anxieties and aspirations of the lived/everyday space of a people towards a heterogeneous reading of a diaspora is prioritized. The analysis of the works of Pillai, Nandan, Subramani and Sudesh Mishra among other things critically engages with questions on where/when/how/why a particular identity is created and represented in their words and those words/worlds absent from their narratives. All representations in literature affect questions on how the Indo-Fijian diaspora sees itself, sees others and allows others to see its various identities.

The fundamental function of literature as a cognitive, conceptual medium that creates knowledge related to and usable in non-literary experience is examined in the sections that follow. The addition of memoir and associated writing brings in the multiplicity of lived worlds, remembered memories, individual preferences and instances of cultural expression, both in its sense of a tradition and that of expressions, consumption and production of that which is popular. The transition from the ‘canon’ of Indo-Fijian literature to memoir and associated writing is not part of a ‘one or the other’ dichotomy, but as a part of complementary pieces of texts that works towards a more detailed expression of its diaspora as we engage with it in the next section by providing come background and context to it.

2: Indo-Fijian Literature and Assignation of a Past.

Indo-Fijian literature in English is given a definite point of origin through the works of Raymond Pillai, Satendra Nandan, and Subramani being published from 1969 onwards. (South Pacific Literature 96) Along with origins comes the assignation of the idea of an “Indo-Fijian predicament” to Indo-Fijian literature from writers and critics. Kerry Gough, for example, in a review of South Pacific Stories devotes a paragraph outlining this ‘predicament’:
The stories of Subramani and Satendra Nandan constitute an imaginative contribution to our understanding of the Indo-Fijian predicament. The displacement of Indians brought to Fiji under the indenture system resulted in disintegration of Indian religious and value systems (caste in particular). These writers attempt to articulate the nature and extent of this dislocation, of individual and community, in the context of the resulting cultural and spiritual limbo. (53)

This identification of Indo-Fijian literature in English with a particular value system derived from individual and communal complexes has featured heavily in ensuing critical literary works on the literature of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. The idea of ‘disintegration of Indian religious and value systems’ is part of the erroneous criticism of a beginning or particular character of a community that characterizes much of early literary criticism of Indo-Fijian writing. The fieldwork in Liverpool, Sydney, for example, shows a consolidation of religious affiliation and value systems that is contrary to the evocation of terms such as ‘cultural and spiritual limbo’ by Gough. Assumptions like Gough’s on ‘value systems’ and by association ‘ideology’ or ‘consciousness’ begins the end game of prescriptive theoretical models that are reductive in its definitions of Indo-Fijian identity and representation. In this instance the insistence that Indo-Fijian literature exists only in a permanent state of ‘cultural and spiritual limbo’ in writing back to the dislocations/rapture/fissures of Indenture/Girmit.

Various differing, complementary and expansionary theoretical stances exist in addition to ‘The Thesis’ of Vijay Mishra by critics such as John O’Carroll, Satendra Nandan, Subramani, Sudesh Mishra, and Raymond Pillai, and Pio Manoa among others. Pio Manoa, for example, as a point of departure from Vijay Mishra’s theoretical constructs on Indo-Fijian identity and representation states:

Vijay Mishra has provided a theoretical model for looking at Indo-Fijian “fiction”, a model which I do not find wholly useful because it dismisses aspects of social history that might make for a more fruitful
theory, and because it implies a questionable view of Indians, who seemed to be an idiotic bunch of dreamers who could not distinguish between dream and reality and who persisted in such innocence with consequent mental anguish. (198)

Pio Manoa adds to the criticism of reductive and homogenising analysis of Indo-Fijian literature and the Indo-Fijian diaspora inherent in Mishra’s construct of the ‘Girmit Ideology’. The next substantial rebuttal of Vijay Mishra on the ‘Girmit Ideology’ is by Sudesh Mishra. Sudesh Mishra’s questioning of the inherent reductionism in the Marxist models employed by Vijay Mishra prefaced Pamela Kacimaiwai’s, questioning of the place/assignation of history in Indo-Fijian literature. Kacimaiwai among other things questions Vijay Mishra’s model and asserts Indo-Fijian literature lacks ‘…integrity when held up against the society it purports to portray.’ (58). Both Sudesh Mishra and Kacimaiwai agree with Manoa’s assertion:

The argument seems to me to run somewhat like this; “indenture consciousness” was an abstraction of the indentured labourer’s mind, the fictions that transmuted this were therefore an abstraction of an abstraction. Where would this leave literary criticism? Would it be placed as an abstraction at a third remove. I personally would not be happy to see myself three times removed from a social reality I happen to be exploring unless it could be proved that the process of abstraction was somehow a factor in that social reality. I would like to believe that the bulk of Indo-Fijian writing up to date depicted, delineated, or indicated a reality. (199)

Pio Manoa’s reference ‘abstraction of the third remove’ as the literary site of discourse on the Girmit Ideology and Indo-Fijian identity and representation singles out the core problem with Mishra’s construct. This is in terms of the field of signifiers where language begins to speak to itself, to play its own games, so that there is a ‘remove’ from the real or the heterogeneous, towards a singular abstraction as theory, as the definitive. A field of self-referentiality of
language, which is commented upon by Foucault (1980), who brings out the image of language's survival force discovering its own self-referentiality, its own mise-en-abyme:

Before the imminence of death, language rushes forth, but it also starts again, tells of itself, discovers the story of the story and the possibility that this interpenetration might never end. Headed towards death, language turns back upon itself; it encounters something like a mirror; and to stop this death which would stop it, it possesses but a single power: that of giving birth to its own image in a play of mirrors that has no limits. (54)

This self-referential movement of language and its usage in the self-Other axis redirects the text to the real, the proper and the signified. This self-referential movement within the context of the search to fuse literature with knowledge and experience and reality forms part of a more people focused criticism. This is connected to historical, social, ideational, creative and political issues in Indo-Fijian literature and the various other expansionary narratives to be found in memoirs and associated writing, popular culture and that of the everyday/lived space. As such this thesis provides a widening of a historical/ideological/everyday experience for the Indo-Fijian diaspora as a point of expansion/addition/departure from Indenture/Girmit as an all-pervasive ideology of identity and representation.

The approach to Indo-Fijian narratives/images or narratives/images about the Indo-Fijian diaspora is based on the creation in literary texts of the "self" or (Ourselves) with the goal of refiguration of a fugitive truth or truths, as a personal cultural locution aimed at establishing an identity or self field. It is the creation of a world, which due to its position and existence as a binary opposite becomes a case among cases, a world among worlds. This thesis interrogates the particular layers of this world and how it forms and re-forms from the multitude of given or present influences and forces, rather than from a solitary defining historical moment. And the interrogation of a vibrant part of the heterogeneous constructs of memory, place and people begins in the next section with memoirs and associated writing from the Indo-Fijian diaspora.
3: Memories and Memoirs: Indo-Fijian Post-Coup Writings.

The links, semantic and lexical, between translations, languages and authors in Indo-Fijian literature in English and Fiji-Hindi and with memoir and associated writing engages with another important Appadurai contention. The underlying contention of Appadurai’s concern with the deployment of ‘keywords’ from the ‘master text of democracy’ finds a parallel in the deployment of language as the ultimate master text, and its place in governing relations of meaning and context for the Indo-Fijian diaspora, their identities and representations. This thesis works along the basis that deployment of meaning and context in all forms of writing and that of the lived space as text brings in important concerns, similar to that of Appadurai’s of:

‘… political narratives that govern communication between elites and followings in different parts of the world involve problems of both a semantic and a pragmatic nature: semantic to the extent that words (and their lexical equivalents) require careful translation from context to context in their global movements; and pragmatic to the extent that the use of these words by political actors and their audiences may be subject to very different sets of contextual conventions that mediate their translation into public politics. (224)

This expansion of Appadurai engages the politics of ‘elites and followers’ in communication. In this section on memoirs there is no assumption that this is a representative ‘voice’ of a diaspora. Nor is there an assumption of a subaltern position. Instead this thesis proposes a shift away from traditional binaries of a centre and margin or academic/comprador/bourgeois and subaltern as designated sites for words, meaning and context. Texts are read for meaning as assumptions on such binary positions detracts from the task at hand and engages in the politics of ‘who speaks’ and ‘who listens’. Instead the instances of memory in memoir writing as words, meaning,
context on an individual basis makes comments on its achievement of interrogation of lived spaces and individual spaces where the binaries come together or stay apart as per dictates of each remembered moment, for the Indo-Fijian diaspora. And taking into account that this thesis treats identity as performative, similarly memory can be channeled to be perform particular acts of remembering of inclusion and inclusions, a feature common to all texts, words and meaning. Memory is performative and when it is remembered and assembled as text the various devices of narratives, selection, exclusion, diction, plots, intertextuality and a sense of privately ordered linearity or a dabbling in linear chaos. And it is on this basis that the sub-genre of memoirs along with other texts is engaged with in the thesis.

Appadurai explains ‘contextualisation’ by arguing that, “These conventions also involve the far more subtle question of what sets of communicative genres are valued in what way (newspapers versus cinema for example) and what sorts of pragmatic genre conventions that govern the collective ‘readings’ of different kinds of text. (224) The memoir form for the diaspora has been popular. Anne Frank’s Diary exemplifies this text of a Jewish diaspora, in the making of an in-process text, effected/affected by the cold rationality of ethnic cleansing as part of Hitler’s fascist vision for Germany. The additions to memoir writing from the Indo-Fijian diaspora since 2000 is substantial and provides a fairly comprehensive text to examine lived spaces and the everyday through the recollections of various writers.

A critical inquiry that begins with ideoscapes in Brij Lal’s Mr Tulsi’s Store on issues of identity and representation in the collection of essays, autobiography and ‘factions’ as a starting point to this study of the memoir and associated forms in the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Brij Lal, in a personal interview, uses the word ‘factions’ as the attempt to bring together ‘fact’ and ‘fiction’ into his writing. The collection begins with the fairly straightforward autobiographical pieces, ‘Tabia’, to site his beginnings/birthplace, and ‘Bhraich’ to site origins, people and place from where one came and to where one came to be/from. These are ruminate pieces that run seamlessly with nostalgia, and often imagined, implied, felt in the ‘dusty and stunted’, physical environment and engages wistfully with the multiplicities of identity and representations by the self, and by Others. Moving from the reflective academic, to the child in the words that seek a
past, not yet too distant, so chinks in a community are seen as clearly as the social and cultural fabrics that bind a people. ‘Mr Tulsi’s Store’ is a revelation that the other two stories build up towards. It weaves the autobiographical magically with the narrative tools and devices of the fabulist, the fictionalist.

The next five pieces, ‘Labasa Secondary’, ‘From Labasa to Laucala Bay’, ‘The Other Side of Midnight’, ‘A Sojourn in Hawaii’, ‘Sunrise on the Ganga’, serves as a tracing of life. From school to the various travels and travails in the performative identities of academic, parent, and spouse. Strongly autobiographical, the stories persist in carving out a personal identity in the midst of personal, professional, academic growth and a searching sense of the larger identities that shape Brij Lal. He becomes one teller of memories and narratives from the Indo-Fijian diaspora, and the world that he inhabits, informs and is informed by. The writing of history and providing lexicons and epistemologies on a people becomes intimate. ‘Ben’, is both aberration and affirmation of this unity and sense of an ordered universe of an autobiographical tracing.

It grows from a moving account of personal grief over the death of elder brother and father figure ‘Ben’, into indebtedness to sacrifice - individual, familial and communal. A common feature in Indo-Fijian memoirs, where education was the means out of the girmit ghetto, as moksha, deliverance from the morass of leased land and unbending poverty and various ‘cul de sacs’, a persistent Lal trope. ‘Submissions’ and ‘On the Campaign Trail’ serve to further the road, un-bending it towards some semblance of a path of hope, as ever tempered by the cautious, sometimes cynical, but rigorously trained prose of the academic. ‘Kismet’, is the Other as text to the rural rusticity of the title story of the collection. A romance, that moves beyond the genre, with a gentle belittling of the title and its invocation of fates/fate/fatalism. Even as there is a succumbing to it, in the midst of falling for the fabulous Mumtaz, a mahal, in her own right, from the classrooms of Labasa to the cafes of Liverpool.

Brij Lal’s personal journeys and fictionalized accounts of his connections to a past cross paths with the increasing shelf space being occupied by Indo-Fijian biographical and memoir writing. *Mr Tulsi’s Stores*, Subramani’s *Altering Imagination* and Satendra Nandan’s autobiography
*Requiem for a Rainbow*, along with the collections *Bittersweet* and *Stolen Worlds*, are among the increasingly weighty collected tomes on memoirs, recollections, biographies and autobiographies and associated writing from and on the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Brij Lal and Kavita Nandan both describe their collections as efforts to mark the 125th year of the arrival of Indentured labourers to Fiji. Subramani engaged in a similar exercise to Lal and Kavita Nandan editing *The Indo-Fijian Experience* in 1979 as a collection of essays, prose fiction and fiction to mark the centennial celebration of Indenture.

Each of the writers, Subramani, Brij Lal and Satendra Nandan, in many ways prefigure the memoirs in the two collections examined in this section, through their journeys into childhood and inscription of their journeys through education, academic and public life as academic and literary figures. Mention must be made of the larger range of personal memoirs and histories published but no detailed analysis is carried out in this section. Among these publications are: *Beyond the Black Waters-A Memoir of Sir Sathi Narain* by Satya Colpani (1996); *The World of the Broken Hearted-A Book of Verse* by Dr Umanand Prasad (2001); *Tears in Paradise: A Personal & Historical Journey 1879 - 2004* by Rajendra Prasad (2004); *Fiji-A Precarious Coalition* by Shubha Singh (2001); and *With the Gods and the Sea* by Narendra P. Singh (2003).

Subramani prefigures the memoirs, autobiography and ‘fiction/faction’ of Brij Lal, Satendra Nandan and Kavita Nandan in the centennial tribute, *An Indo-Fijian Experience* (1979) and *Altering Imagination* (1995) a collection of essays, critical articles, personal recollections and public addresses. *An Indo-Fijian Experience* is an influential text of collected essays, fiction, verse and memoirs that started off many of the larger theoretical and literary debates and research on Indo-Fijian literature and diasporic studies. *Altering Imagination* is a collection of Subramani’s fiction, essays, speeches and addresses that moves from the personal to engage with the polemics of post 1987 Fiji in a strong affirmation of inclusiveness and calls for ‘a political arrangement where no political, religious, or ethnic group, is permitted special advantage.’ (252) This engagement with a post-coup (1987) as a starting point and 2000 as interruption/continuum in Indo-Fijian literature is also evident in various scapes of the Indo-Fijian diaspora as written text such as memoirs or as responses from the everyday lived space.
Alter 

Imagination, as a starting point and as startling personal memoir by Subramani includes the autobiographical ‘Drought’ as an intro/context/epilogue/prologue to ‘From the Web of Memory into Forgetting’. Subramani remembers, and represents past, present and future in a series of vividly sketched memoir style anecdotal visits to a mela (a fair), that is politics and Labasa in ‘Drought’. Labasa as memory as place of visit is still imbued with the dust and stunted tree imagery of ‘Sautu’. The town centre ‘Nasea is hot like a desert town’ (59) and a pointless visit to Seaqqa does not realize the “…visions of green haze, a lot of water and expansion. Instead we met one jaundiced village after another”. (62) A replication of the ennui of fictions from Subramani is etched strongly in autobiography. A raw landscape painting strongly naturalistic sans symbols or a pretence at the pastoral or the surreal seems to be the norm in descriptions of Labasa, of Vanua Levu, the smaller of two islands from where many journeys are recounted and set out from. But many return. For “Labasa is hospitable. It is generous to visitors. Everyone hopes to return.”(64)

“Drought” ends with the hope that politics will “…do the miracle. One day it will take away the malaise.’ (64) The problematic sketch sets the stage for the opening lines for ‘From the Web…’ where/when, 'Mother dies on May, 1988, in the middle of our troubles in the country.” (65 Author’s italic) Subramani journeys by waiting by his mothers deathbed to a beginning, his, where “Childhood is a myriad pieces, existing only in fragments.” (67 Author’s italic) And these fragments come together as a powerful narrative where “Our world is complete and we enter it as complete. No one ever leaves the village.” (68-9) This motif of a complete world from which no one leaves is a common thread in the memoir writing analysed in this thesis. Leaving here is not the physical act of movement/migration/eviction but in the creation of a complete world of the mind. This recurring motif is evident in the recollections in the two collections, Bittersweet and Stolen Worlds. This motif of a closed world of the past seems to run across the various generations whose writing is included. An instance when memory has elided into a complete world, where stories began and ended with the imprint “The End” at the bottom of the page. But it is the generation that Subramani belongs to and which overlaps with those of Lal and Nandan not in a pure division of sociological definitions of a generation, that looks back

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at this complete, closed circle. And mention the little breaks in this circle. The little movements of Subramani’s world/childhood where:

The good-looking daughter of the ex-sea captain is married off to a nondescript farmer from a faraway village. The event that causes the most excitement is the departure of the ex-sea captain’s son for Suva to be trained as a policeman. At about the same time, a young man from the other side of the backhills leaves on a ship to become a school teacher. These are the only movements. (Alterting 69)

This idea of a remembered closed world is an important marker in the inquiry into identity and representation for the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Among other things it brings into perspective Fiji as a complete home as a remembered instance. The islands are the larger world, within this worlds we have location/locale/local world that of the ‘Batnikamans’ for Subramani, the ‘Tabians’ for Brij Lal and the ‘Votualevuans’ for Satendra Nandan, as villages of origin. In a personal interview Nandan emphasised his link to place as, ‘My umbilical cord is buried there where I was born and it will always link me to the soil, the earth of ‘Maigania’ and to Fiji. That will not change.” This is an important marker in discussions of location that is overlooked in much of diasporic theory and postcolonial studies even as it scrambles to engage with issues of heterogeneity via constructs such as subalternity, example. There is no prescribed centre common to the diaspora and the diasporic imagination/reality is fused with this almost umbilical cord definition of a sense of belonging and refusal to be categorized according to convenient geographical, national, spatial carets into identity and representation.

Subramani’s recounts childhood through the scapes of the ‘Gujarati jeweller,’ ‘the Chinese vegetable seller,’ ‘George, the photographer,’ ‘Muni the madman,’ ‘Mithailal-the scavenger with a sweet name’, Shanker, the potter,’ and ‘…finally, Lovely Singh, the movie billboard man.’ (69) And each writer of memoir, collector of memories from the childhood, engages with different variations of these characters to make whole the ideas of identity and representation. Subramani in a personal interview mentioned that growing up in and around the environs of the
parallel colonial construct of the Colonial Sugar Refinery compound on the outskirts of Labasa taught him at an early age the need to remember, to recall and to write…’the three ‘R’s”. Each location is its complete world for the individual and the shared space evoked for the diaspora. Added to this is the general feeling of isolation, detachment, and neglect, from that of the remnants from the indentured labourers. Those who arrived in the latter part of the agreement or those with long lives and there are spaced out from this generation of Lal and others, by their sons and daughters, most of whom belonged to the first generation of Fiji-born Indians. The ‘Great FBI diaspora’, a reminder as a T-shirt emblem at Sydney Airport, the bold large century gothic font of the proud exclamation of a reversed black on white, ‘FBI’, with the explanation in plain text underneath it- “Fiji Born Indian.”

Words and imprint bring timely reminders of how ephemeral the idea of belonging can be and yet it can be as concrete and demonstrative as the ‘FBI’ T-shirt. At this point it is perhaps timely to extend inquiry into location and belonging in the Indo-Fijian diaspora. As becomes evident from reading the memoirs and pieces in Mr. Tulsi’s Store, Bittersweet and Stolen Worlds, location and belonging for the Indo-Fijian diaspora is all sorts of places to all sorts of people. And takes on new meaning for the second shift diaspora in Liverpool, Sydney and elsewhere in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States. In this instance it is evident in the memoirs in the collections discussed. And from the data collected in the field study later in this thesis, from the Liverpool Sydney Indo-Fijian diasporic respondents. Place of birth and place of belonging can also be two distinct places for Indo-Fijians as Vijay Mishra points out in his piece ‘Dilkusha’ in Bittersweet:

My mother was from Suva Point and because she was the daughter of Hankar Singh, the horse-trainer and polo player, we were born there. That’s the way births took place; mothers went to wherever they felt comfortable to be delivered of their child. But we never said we were from Suva, although our birth certificates, declared as much. Yes, to the traditional Fijian opening remark for a Talanoa (being
Nakelo people we spoke Fijian), ‘Where are you from?’-’O vaka tikotiko mai vei’-we always said, ‘Nakelo’. Yes, wretched, sickly, festering backward Nakelo, that’s where we were from. (116)

Vijay Mishra in ‘Dilkusha’ indicates beginning and location through a performative modality of identity, ascribing Nakelo as place of being, from/of. The ‘Ideoscape’ of Appadurai here is linked to the retrieval from memory of a space, inscribed by the author, but authorized by its expression in Fijian, as a response to ‘Where are you from?’-’O vaka tikotiko mai vei’. Nakelo.’ The response/answer/affirmation exemplifies Appadurai’s ideoscape as a means of employing defining/placing place/location in memory as a means of subverting prevailing ideologies. The shifting politics in Fiji ensures the eviction from leased/reserved land of Indo-Fijians, or of migration or removal of the self from land for the second shift diaspora. Thus Vijay Mishra in assigning Nakelo as origin engages the ‘imagined world’, that is, the multiple worlds which are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe’. (Appadurai 222) Ideoscape here links the world of Nakelo to connect to in this instance of Vijay Mishra’s world as part of Appadurai’s “ethnoscape” of the ‘…landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live…’ (222)

Appadurai’s scapes are used to explore issues of identity and representation in this section to formulate specific ‘perspectival constructs’. (221) This section on memoirs and associated writing explores ideas of identity, difference, popular culture, literary culture, and acts as important additions to departures from Indo-Fijian literature in English and Fiji-Hindi in the examination of Indo-Fijian diasporic identities. Appadurai’s scapes provide the tools to deal with multiplicities of self, in identity and representations. The memoirs perform the onion peeling exercise of removals from ‘nation states, multinationals, diasporic communities, as well as sub-national groupings and movements (whether religious, political or economic)’ to the ‘intimate face-to-face groups such as villages, neighbourhoods and families.’ (Appadurai 222)
There is another ‘ideoscape’ that continually informs Indo-Fijian writing and cultural expressions and consumption, the various constructs of India: ‘Girmitic’, mythic, as music or as the filmic. Satendra Nandan’s grandfather, ‘was not much of a storyteller’ and his jehajibhais were ‘…old men and women who had traveled across the seven seas from the cobwebbed corners of India. (Requiem 111) This realisation in Nandan leads to the conclusion, ‘Their story was no story. They were girmityas. Even when I went to India in 1958; my grandfather’s world had no interest for me.’ (111-112) Again this response is part of the heterogeneity and individual lived/thought spaces that is left out in the construct of Girmit as ‘Ideology’ or ‘Consciousness’ or any other homogenizing and totalising attempts to inscribe a people. It raises important questions on issues of the generational shifts and removal of scapes/scars/escarpments implicit in the breakdown of people and their lived spaces from 1879 as part of the ongoing continuum for a diaspora, evolving, changing and responding to various ideoscapes. For Nandan this multiplicity and recognition of the creation of a closed world result in the declaration, ‘The idea of roots held no fascination for me: the sensation of rootlessness is perhaps closer to my identity and destiny. I’d imagined our history began in Fiji, with their arrival in the archipelago.’ (112)

Nandan’s lack of roots or affirmation as individual preference for this particular state exemplifies Appadurais ethnoscape where ‘…tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guestworkers and other moving groups and persons constitute an essential feature of the world, and appear to affect the politics of and between nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree.’ (222) The Indo-Fijian diaspora does not make up the numbers that Appadurai refers to as their movement is largely that of the migrant and not in the other categories. Yet, concentrations of this migrant Indo-Fijian diaspora as in Liverpool, Sydney can and do change the landscape of their new world and find importance in numbers, for example in local government politics and more recently as a group to be wooed for State and Federal elections in Australia. Or sometimes as an additional category in statistics of ‘overstayers’ in Australia, that of the illegal immigrant, where they can make the top ten list. This thesis does not engage with this aspect of the scape of the global movement of people. Illegal immigrants brings with its own sense of a permanent
fear of removal and discovery, part of reason that such groups do not come forward and proclaim their status as respondents for a thesis such as this.

Nandan is blas_ about his girmit grandfather’s death and order returns to the complete world of Votualevu, 'Soon the neighbours came and the sound of yaqona being pounded in Father’s bure was a most comforting sound.' (112). To make clear the clean lines of demarcation between the girmitya and his descendents he asserts, ‘…our grandparents were our ruins. In their broken lives, there were hidden stories of valour and betrayal, devotion and duplicity.’ (113) This is left as part of a life according to Nandan of a people, who ‘had not left any great manuscripts except their lives, if only we could decipher them.’ (113). Nandan here clearly marks out the lines of the generational shift and concentrates instead of the complete world of his parents and their home and lives in Votualevu near Nadi. Nandan is regarded as among comic writers of note from the Pacific. This is largely because of the wide readership afforded to two of his short stories, ‘The Guru’ and ‘A Pair of Black Shoes’ anthologized in school textbooks in Fiji and parts of the Pacific.

Nandan’s mocking self-deprecating humor comes across in his memoirs in among other things in recollections of his school days. An education that he passes of as leaving ‘many gaps in my life.’ And concludes that ‘Whatever I picked up about Fiji is mainly through politics, journalistic pieces and even tourist brochure.’ (119). Whatever the truth behind this mock-heroic assertion, Nandan outlines with great pleasure and in great details the adventures and misadventures of this education in his autobiography. There is also the breaking out of this complete world of the post-Indenture Indo-Fijian; ‘So when I was awarded the Indian Government’s scholarship to study in Delhi, I was leaving more than a small world: I was entering another reality, from an island to a sub-continent.’ (134) This entry to the next world through education is a common point in many of the other writers on the Indo-Fijian diaspora in scattering of autobiographies, memoirs and associated writing that we turn to in the next section.
3.1: Stolen Worlds and Fragments of the ‘FijIndian’ Memory.

*Stolen Worlds* extends the world of Brij Lal, Subramani and Satendra Nandan (and those of the other two writers included in the Indo-Fijian canon Raymond Pillai and Sudeesh Mishra) by including new writers and their memoirs and recollections. *Stolen Worlds* with its add on title ‘Fijindian Fragments’ includes works that stays true to the editorial note, ‘They write about villages, farms, rivers, schools, towns, teachers, friends and relatives—an integral part of their childhood and youth.’ (npn) And this is adhered faithfully to in each act of remembering and writing where childhood becomes an entry point into the many identities and representations of individual writers. Childhood and memory is linked to later movements and the process of migration, translocation and accommodation of the self and identities accrued/bestowed/taken/performed along the way. Identity and representation in this many varied form approaches but does not always give a sense of ‘unique worlds connecting our lives.’ Commonalties of the larger geo-politics of Fiji in each act of remembering and inscription is a private world, a personal perspective that comes under the title of this collection more out of convenience of definition, of the process of labeling stories/literature/writers as this, or that.

In effect, it is always this or that, as found in the stories in *Stolen Words*, echoes and extensions on other works. An echo found on ‘Ancestors: Distant Mirrors’ by Satendra Nandan as foreword that opens the collection. So the lived world is always different from the Nadi of Vijendra Kumar’s ‘FijiTimes-Brief Lives’ to the “Levuka –An Island Lost’ of Sulochna Chand in the next two stories. Chand in an email interview asserted, ‘The fact I am from Levuka, always placed me away, from what is seen as normal ‘Indo-Fijian’, for the rest of my life. I had grown up on Ovalau, the small island, and interactions with Fijian friends, language, culture and even ways of thinking became part of my identity.’ Chand’s personal comments and her story and that of Kumar approaches the lived spaces and ideas of a complete world, yet different worlds, of Levuka and Suva, that recur among various locations in *Bittersweet* and in *Stolen Worlds*. Yet, places remain distinct, seeming to fill in gaps, but
there are no gaps to fill. For each memory creates its own personal and performative identity and the words/means/absences to represent/repress the past/present. Kumar moves between childhood and his privileged position as a journalist and later editor of the Fiji Times, to present contrasting and colliding worlds that challenge each or diffidently make mention of the closed world of a generation past. Or the world of Natabua Secondary, the first high school started by the Colonial Government in 1930 for Indo-Fijians.

This memory of school is deeply entrenched in the memoir genre universally and the formative period of early adulthood is a prime and common subject in all the stories across both collections, *Stolen Worlds* and *Bittersweet*. Although these worlds can as different as the mostly single sex schools of the pre-1960’s of Vijendra Kumar in *Stolen Worlds*, with a pubescent obsession with girls. ‘The hostel boys lining up to kiss a torch illuminated film image of Betty Gable to clandestine readings of Lord Byron’s, ‘The Bride’s Letters’ with panting breath at its intimate disclosures.’ (26) To the inculcation of a love of drama and literature in Sulochna Chand as she recalls her education in Methodist and Catholic schools on Ovalau where much of early colonial settlement took place around Levuka, the first capital of Fiji. Chand takes her place in spirit, language and outlook among students like “Aileen”, ‘…socially representative of much of the mixed blood and multicultural population of the island.’ (47)

This polyphony of perspectives is expanded so that Bhaichand Patel in ‘Suva-Electric Shadows’ adds to the images and worlds of the hyphenated Gujerati-Indo-Fijian as work that informs and stands alongside but distinct from Kanti Jinna’s account of Suva in *Bittersweet*. Patel, who left Fiji in 1956, was to never return permanently to his birthplace, yet his first twenty years in Fiji is ingrained in his memory. Like many other contributors to both collections, there is a careful symmetry to his act of remembering. Placing the obvious aspects of growing up along nonchalant looks popular culture that present their own realities, to map particular identities and representations. And films, both Bollywood and Hollywood are an integral part of this childhood act of remembering for Patel growing up in the relatively metropolitan ambience of colonial Suva in the 1940’s and 50’s.
Within his filmic recollections there is a clear demarcation the divided colonial city with important markers in the relative position of the two movie theatres. So ‘Regal was the classiest cinema hall in Suva’ and ‘showed only English language films’ while the ‘Lilac Theatre, up on Waimanu Road, was more welcoming to the Indians and the Fijians.’ (Patel 67) This was an important marker of place and division within the idea of Fiji or even Suva as a homogenous entity. Instead the Lilac is closer to Toorak, “Where we did not see many white people in this unfashionable end of town.” (68) Patel brings into his recollection a great deal of detail that marks memory and acts of pointing out inscriptions, instances and acts of identity and representation to firmly underline one of the central arguments of this thesis. That each act of remembering stands apart and does not hold up any superstructure, in the Marxist or usual sense, of a diasporic entity or identity and its representations.

Divakar Rao’s “Vitidays-An Indian Passage’ is prefaced by his introduction that creates it own series of dislocations and locations in a series of nomadic movements. Rao

‘…born in Rajahmundry, India,’ migrates to Fiji at age 5, studies in India, teaches in Fiji, does further studies in England, marries and moves to Suva, after the military coups migrates to New Zealand, teaches and is given permanent residency in the Cook Islands, retires to Brisbane, moves again to Perth, Western Australia and ‘at present’

‘…is in the process of registering in WA for teaching.’ (Rao 116)

This paratext to the Divakar Rao memoir presents its own processes and performances of identity and representation, different things at different times to different people. Identity in this case becomes the truly performative and sublimely transnational.

Self-published poet and philanthropist physician Umanand Prasad in ‘Labasa-Market Force’ begins with a strong polemical diatribe against the coups in Fiji and its apologists. Especially those who backed the argument of Indians ‘outbreeding’ Fijian and effecting demographic dominance, present in the writings of James Michener, for examples, and repeated in various
colonial documents to find currency in a continuum of nationalist sentiments through independence to the coups in 1987 and 2000. Prasad interpolates, in a series of anecdotal memories, of a particular Labasa the nostalgia and inscription of growing up to recognition of a world where ‘linguistic patriotism’ is only one avatar of the forces of cultural and racial divides.

Christine Singh makes a generational and conceptual fillip in ‘Flagstaff-Nani’s Home’ of the Indo-Fijian Christian family, another hyphenated expansion that brings in its particular forms of identities and representations. And Flagstaff, as a central Suva suburb, becomes the hub of life for a varied and sometimes motley assortment of friends, foes, family and finicky aunts. All gathered around the central figure of ‘nani’ the maternal grandmother and matriarch of the Singh family of Flagstaff. Singh puts forward another aspect of the complete world of a past generation of her grandparents as she reminisces, “I can never remember a time when the front doors of Flagstaff were closed. We never needed an invitation to visit and were sure to be fed whenever we turned up.’ (Singh 172) A sense of family often repeated in other pieces to be found in both Stolen Worlds and Bittersweet. As each piece finds another identity, another representation, another place, another time; a feature of recollections and memoirs that serves to underline the essential heterogeneity of people, diasporic or otherwise.

Ravindran Robin Nair carries on this quest for memory and to place dislocations as a third generation grandson of indentured labourers with roots in Nadi that now spread to Canberra, Australia. Nair makes another attempted summation of race and politics to add to the many other writers. Concluding that racial division was a major ‘ingredient for what happened in 1987, the first of three coup d’etat by racial fundamentalists on the Fijian side.’(197) And that ‘This division was exacerbated by other unfortunate divisions within both the communities-some cultural and religious.’ (197) This is a point that is repeated in various forms in the collections to explain and to some extent comes to terms with the realities of Fiji since 1987 and 2000. Nair also marks out the cultural and social ostracism prevalent in mixed Indo-Fijian and Fijian marriages citing the example of his ‘father’s eldest brother, Krishnan Nair’ who was ‘…no longer welcome in his parents home. After the death of the Fijian wife from
tuberculosis, ‘An arranged marriage with an Indian Fijian bride and from our Indian sub-group (a Keralan) was quickly organized by his parents lest he strayed again.’ (201).

In an indictment of the sometimes exclusionist nature of Indo-Fijian families, the ‘two half Fijian offsprings’ from this marriage become little more than servants in the new household with their stepmother and ‘were not allowed to come and play with other children. They always had a cowering look.’ (201) While this is not representative of mixed marriages nevertheless it is an account repeated in various other texts, most notably the poem ‘The Bastard Child’ by Sulochna Chand, that is examined in greater detail in the next chapter. Nair also brings out political divisions and prevalence of prejudice from the beginning of indenture against those from the Indo-Fijian diaspora who assume positions of authority or power in the colonial administration or later with the ruling Alliance and more recently with the post-1987 and post-2000 coups. Each comprador is a traitor. Real, imagined or rumored. From coolumbers a Fiji-Hindi derivative from the practice of ‘calling numbers’ of indentured labourers for tasking by the overseers to colonial administrative clerks such as Nair’s father, Raman Nair. As Ravindran Nair points working with ruling elite meant that the coolumber and the civil servant were deemed a traitor to the diaspora.

This part of the memoir brings out forcefully the multiple modalities of prejudice faced by such individuals who were seen as ‘comprador betrayers’ or given the Indo-Fijian moniker of ‘Jai Chand’ or an informant from the girmit period in their own community. Thus “Raman Nair was not served yaqona at all” at Provincial Council meetings as District Officer and representative of the Governor to the predominantly Fijian administered areas of Nausori, Rewa and Bau. And on appointment to the predominantly Indo-Fijian politically dominated Nadi, has to face up to fact that … an Indian Fijian delegation orchestrated by Swami Rudrananda and other prominent Indian Fijians and with the support of Mr. AD Patel had been sent to the Governor petitioning him to withdraw Raman Nair’s appointment as he was not acceptable to the Indian Fijian community.’ (214). Robin Nair concludes on his father, ‘Raman Nair devoted his life to walking the bridge of acceptance. Is that bridge still there? We saw Fiji as our home, our oasis, but was it only a mirage?’ (217)
Nair’s exemplifies the many worlds to be found in one memory and to exemplify in parts the concept and functions of the scapes outlined by Appadurai, as we trace the life of the author and his father to account for a diaspora. Robin Nair is subject to, produces in, and by virtue of his privileged positions of global diplomat/decision maker engages at various levels with the scapes. He moves easily between various facets of ethnoscapes, technoscapes and finanscapes, uses mediascapes on a professional and personal level, as sited diasporic individual to interrogate the ideoscapes of his father, to pass commentary and move on. He is a functionary who as Appadurai works within the scapes that are ‘subject to its own constraints and incentives (some political, some informational and some techno-environmental), at the same time as each acts as a constraint and parameter for movements in the other.’ (223)

These movements between Appaduria’s scapes underpin the construct of memory and recollection in the various memoirs subject to inquiry in this section of the thesis. Scapes that extend in the final chapter in the analysis of fieldwork and of parts of Liverpool as texts of lived space for the Indo-Fijian diaspora and is related to readings of the Indo-Fijian diasporic worlds of popular culture and the everyday and of the individual actor. The interweaving of Appadurai’s construct of scapes exemplifies the contention that the ‘suffix scape also allows us to point to the fluid, irregular shapes of these landscapes, shapes which characterize international capital as deeply as they do international clothing styles.’ (222)

A fluidity of scapes where among other tracings is life from an Indo-Fijian female perspective by Shafiyat Nisha in ‘Loss-Seema’s Story. A fictionalized attempt at memoir, it presents resistance to and lack of opportunities for education and freedom for the Indo-Fijian female body, and recounts through Seema’s story moments when such resistance is broken or removed by a sympathetic male in power. Yet the structures remain in place and as Seema fearfully waits, ‘Until the day she left for the university, she treaded extra carefully in case her father changed his mind.’ And joy comes into her life with the realization by her father that ‘…Seema was going to be a ‘teacher’ not a ‘wife’. The only piece of advice abba gave Seema was; a girl needs an education not a husband to live a worthy life.’ (Nisha 247) Some of the
identities and representations of the Indo-Fijian diaspora based on gender that come out of such admissions and celebrations are examined in the next chapter in the section on women and children.

Chintamani Naresh in ‘Homesteads-Along the Rewa’ picks up on the role of grandparents, in this case a paternal grandfather in extending education, ‘life education’ in much more secular terms than is usually talked about in the Indo-Fijian diaspora. The diaspora in Rewa begins where, “They lived in scattered homesteads on small parcels of land leased from ethnic Fijians along the mindlessly meandering Rewa, its tributaries and the sprawling deltas.’(Naresh 249) And within this scope on a river arrives the need to make distinctions between ‘girmityas’, their Indo-Fijian offsprings, ‘ethnic Fijians, the white colonialists, Asian Immigrants and those in between.’ (249) Or of the influences of Catholic and Methodist schooling as another feature of life and growing up in Rewa that finds currency among various writers across the two collections.

Grandfather in Naresh’s narrative is an ‘incurable romantic’ with a ‘sharp eye for succulent females, and shamelessly went after younger woman well into his seventies.’ (259) Yet, one with the patience to teach languages and to indulge in his passion for singing suggestive folk songs celebrating women, wine and night, and passing on stories from his generation. Orality and its place in transmission of lives lived and memories performed become an important part of the memoirs in both collections. Naresh attests to this in recollections of his grandparents and of their friends like ‘Amiran dadi’ who fills in the act of remembering and memories. Naresh’s maternal grandfather, nana, adds to the heterogenous constructs of past, people and lived spaces, through his remove from the usual squares of cane or civil service offices or wooden classroom into the seafarer. ‘He had an amazing knowledge of the world of the ocean: the amazing reefs, the multitudinous inhabitants of the blue and heaving Pacific, the ocean currents, and art of reading the mood of the seas by listening to the changing domo ni ua (sound of changing tides).’ (262)
Kavita Nandan’s ‘Islands –in My Mind’ searches the schoolyard for memories of growing up in Suva Grammar School, and establishes between past and present. Continuities with her particular lived spaces between India (where she was born), Fiji (where she grew up) and Canberra where she migrated to after 1987 and completed her tertiary studies. Between childhood and this recollection stands an intense engagement with the coups of 1987, where her father Satendra Nandan is among those incarcerated. And brings into the identity and representation of the Indo-Fijian diaspora this among other memories lived and lived spaces inhabited, moved from, location and translocations of mind, body, space and time. The result is another jarring of the extension of homogenous constructs on identity and representation by the bringing in of generational and intellectual questioning of suggested or accepted precepts of the Indo-Fijian diaspora.

Govind Prasad in Stolen Worlds recounts his locations and translocations, temporary, semi-permanent, migrant or global employee of United Nations attests to this plurality of the lived space/life of the individual. Prasad contributed to the previously mentioned publishing industry of memoir writing among Indo-Fijians with his 2003 book, From Cane Fields to Battlefields. A title that helps explain his life that began in Veisaru, Ba and extended to a period with the United Nations in various capacities in the war zones of the Middle East. His story ‘Veisaru-My Global Village’, stays in the Fiji of his childhood, of the forties and fifties, and begins with his ‘…earliest memories are of the day we moved to our new grass thatched house in Veisaru.’ (Prasad 303) This memory is an internal dislocation as was common as land leases expired or families migrated to better tracts or lands or more secure leaseholds, is another common feature among a number of the contributors to the two collections.

Part of the landscape of this movement/migration/eviction was the securing of land for the important community activity of building a school and depending on sectarian predominance a temple, a mosque, a gurudwara or a church. For Prasad it is a school, built by volunteers and each piece of construction is as fascinating to the young onlooker as it is to the rest of the village, excited at the prospect of their children able to read and write. The school-teacher/s of Indo-Fijian literature especially in the writings of Satendra Nandan is a central figure in the
village. In Nandan’s case, the schoolteacher is a buffoon, satirised as Pundit ‘Bhondu’ (Stupid-Priest) as a recurring character in his work. For Prasad it takes shape as Mr. Vivek Prakash, who had ‘an impressive personality, and while he was kind and understanding, nonetheless, his overpowering demeanour radiated fear among us new students.’ (Prasad 306) And then the journey begins, escape/fate/incentive, education to break the complete world of the villages now in awe of their freshly painted school with a donated school bell. In recounting the generational shifts we also get a whiff of the larger community, the ever-present Chinese hawker in much Indo-Fijian diasporic writing who ‘carried his huge bamboo baskets laden with merchandise for sale on a pole balanced on his shoulders.’ (311)

Ankim Swamy, has his own personal diaspora to write about, and does so to trace beginnings in Wavu Wavu in Vanua Levu, Fiji’s second largest island for his ‘Journeys-Labasa to London’. Swamy’s genealogical tracing seams together in a sustained piece a girmitya legacy, family, feuds, education, and the itinerant life of those who sought education and more of it, to embark to Auckland and later to London, where this part of the story ends. Ankim’s story closes off the contributors, all Indo-Fijian, to Stolen Worlds, yet the last word is left to Anthony Mason, an Australian, in the final piece, ‘Worlds Within-Inside, Outside’. His recollection is that of short visit to Fiji based on a long-standing academic and personal interest in Fiji. This shows up in his encounter with the package tour Australian tourist, who visited Fiji and leave, with most of their illusions intact.

As Mason points out, ‘For most Australians, there is only one world in Fiji. It is the world which is encapsulated in the tourist brochures resort.’ (Mason 344) Mason sees in the cleaning of Ratu Sukuna’s statue by an Indo-Fijian/Fijiiindian and Fijian, ‘…the future of Fiji-two men, strangers perhaps mindful of the past but striving together, positive and happy. The worlds within Fiji were working as one.’ (348) This is a sentiment universally shared by the contributors in the different memoirs in the two collections, and indeed in Indo-Fijian literature. The vision of Mason is debatable, arguable, even to the point of placing his view along that of the package tourist, as an empty assessment based on what is seen, the lagoon, as a mirror image of the brochure in the Melbourne travel agents, or a vision read in a poem or a
conclusion arrived at after assessing Fiji’s politics of race. Regardless, this is a view that is held, embraced and placed before the reader in the memoirs, as an alternative to the politics of racial divides and exclusion.

### 3.2: Bittersweet: Memory and Prose, Memoir, Poetry and Essay.

*Bittersweet* expands the multiplicities of identity and representations missing from the Indo-Fijian literary canon or in other epistemologies such as history, sociology or anthropology. *Bittersweet* contains an eclectic collection of essays, poems and memoirs and vastly expands Indo-Fijian diasporic experiences into its heterogeneous multiplicities of identities and representation present in various narratives. Brij Lal in his opening contribution ‘Girmit, History and Memory’ places in perspective the site/s and origins of Indo-Fijians in a succinct essay. Lal and an assorted galley of writers, academics, poets, and memoir writers come to terms with personal histories and memories. The usually overlooked Indo-Fijian diasporic experience of the free immigrant Gujarati’s in existing narratives, is filled in ‘Dada: Bhaga to Dillon’ by Kanti Jinna. Kanti Jinna pursued a different career path to that of most other free immigrant Gujarati’s usually in business. Jinna instead gives a fascinating account of the inter/intra caste divisions of the Gujarati Indo-Fijian diaspora.

The memory, remembering and re-membering by Jinna on the Gujarati Indo-Fijian, concentrates in this case, to the traditional barber caste from Gujerat in India. The divisions along caste and sectarian lines present a strong case their addition for the hyphenated shifts/splits/scapes of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Thus I insert the Gujarati-Indo-Fijian diaspora as another example of the multiplicities of identity and representation that needs to be taken stock of before arriving at any theoretical or practical constructs that seeks to explain all in one and one in all, definitions of a diaspora and its people. Jinna presents a vibrant multi-hued recollection of childhood growing up in the Suva suburb of Samabula, a historically important first settlement for urban Indians in Suva.
Jinna remembers Samabula as ‘a microcosm of a truly multicultural community, each proud of its heritage and tradition, but not letting that stand in the way of amicable interaction.’ (Jinna 100). This and other pieces can being accused of being nostalgic or romanticizing the past among other charges of a end driven process of remembering in contributing to a collection that ‘marks the 125th anniversary of the arrival of the Indian people in Fiji.’ Those charges are can remain yet the act of remembering by Jinna and others in the collection stands up to such scrutiny in its provision of a heterogeneous reading of the Indo-Fijian diaspora and its identities and representation. The urban and suburban cosmopolitan memory of Suva is one that completes many gaps and asks questions of other shifts in planes and ways of living in a wannabe multicultural past in the piece by Jinna. A librarian by trade, Jinna’s piece works as a metynomic sliding in of people, pasts, place, and sense of time as if each remembered moment is a tome being placed in a library shelf. Catalogued, numbered and carefully dusted. The act of remembering here becomes a political act, a subversion of the idea that the diaspora seeks a moment in the past or its reincarnations in the future. There is that too, but Jinna’s piece serves as an ur-text for memory and remembering for memoir writing in both Bittersweet and Stolen Worlds.

The act of remembering this complete world is broken, but not completely by education, but by the passage, or ravages of history for Jinna joins the exodus not on a scholarship, but on the rationalisation:

Localisation had introduced competition, not always merit-based, for senior positions and reduced opportunities for upward mobility or lateral movement for many public servants. Salaries and the taxation system prohibited single-income families from sending their children to tertiary institutions, forcing many Fiji citizens to migrate. (109).

And his assessment of past and present of the journey echoes migratory Indo-Fijian sentiment are recurrent motifs in both Bittersweet and Stolen Worlds. For as Jinna sums up, “Yes, I do
miss Fiji, but I am also very fond of Canberra, where I live, and Australia my adopted country. I feel quite at ease being Australian and Fijian.” (110)

This is a sentiment that comes across strongly in the two collections, even in pieces by academics and specialists in their field, not usually prone to celebrate nostalgia or simply romanticize, the past, a place or a people. Vijay Mishra in his recollections in ‘Dilkusha’ admits upon return from his first foray overseas, ‘Dilkusha, for me, had become empty; people who had made it had left and I felt cheated… My spirit had already left Dilkusha and years later my body did, too—for Australia.’ (Dilkusha 130) Mishra, of course, is talking about ‘Dilkusha’ as place and as an institution, a Methodist mission schools (Dilkusha Boys and Dilkusha Girls) and orphanage on the banks of the Rewa River, on the main island of Viti Levu in Fiji. The name ‘Dilkusha’ an amalgam of the Hindi words ‘Dil’ (Heart) and ‘K(h)ush(a)’ (Happy).

And Dilkusha on the banks of the Rewa River was an amalgam of schools, mission, and orphanage. Mishra’s complete world here is of his place of birth, Nakelo, and Dilkusha, where he spends most of his formative childhood. Mishra presents another hyphenated Indo-Fijian diasporic identity in his discussions of Indo-Fijians with Christian first names in Dilkusha, the converted Christian Indo-Fijian among whom ‘alliterative Christian names were not uncommon’ (118). Mishra like others links part of the reason for conversion being education, and alludes to this when his father on discovering an elder son doing well in studies does not ‘…do the other fashionable thing, converting to Christianity, although he liked to be called ‘Harry’ against the godly ‘Hari’. And it is for Harry, Harri K, that the world that Mishra recounts is the complete world, ‘He had left Nakelo to come to Dilkusha. He moved nowhere else; he was never inquisitive about the rest of Fiji, let alone the world outside. For him, Dilkusha was the world.’ (119).

And it is a world that also engages Vijay Mishra. Mishra acknowledges the private world of the lived space that makes up the Indo-Fijian diaspora bit by little bit in his Dilkusha narrative.
In the middle of the party in Sydney from where the narration stretches out in memory and history that Mishra recounts:

The other Indians looked fidgety, some sulked as this had been a private narrative shared by only four of us. It was meaningless to them even if they picked up snippets here and there. We felt like a select group; no, not select, more like an elect apart, who just happened to know Dilkusha. For to know Dilkusha was to know a certain kind of transgression unavailable to Indian boys and girls elsewhere in Fiji; it was to know what bodies smelt like, it was to crush frangipani in coconut oil and smell wild jasmine in the glorious moonlit sky on one’s way to Endeavour meetings or Reverent Deoki’s sermon. \(\textit{Dilkusha}\ 131\)

Mishra instills a solid sense of place, time and a complete world in Dilkusha even as he abstracts on the place. It is a lived space that tells one of many stories and does not pretend to stand for the whole or other stories. A shared location that remains located in memory long after the days have gone by to be picked up in a mirror, a splash of summer rain or a chance meeting as in this case at a social gathering among the Indo-Fijian diaspora in Sydney. This idea of a heterogeneous multiplicity of existence, space, past, memory constitutes identity and Mishra engages in one of many representations. For as Mishra muses for a summary, ‘In the end, believe, don’t believe; Dilkusha can be rendered only as fiction and, thankfully, because it can be rendered only in this manner, it has a permanence that only art can give.’ (131-2)

\textit{Bittersweet} recounts, reflects on or gives empirical/oral history stolidity to a lived space of the multiple worlds that suture together with the seams showing to make up Indo-Fijian diasporic identities and representations. The movement if one is to follow the chapters for convenience from the search for the archived past/pass begins after the introduction by Brij Lal in ‘Voices From the Past’ by Praveen Chandra and Saras Chandra. A murder mystery thriller en-route to emigration passes and a world left to its closed/closet past that no amount of paper chasing
was to solve. A futile visit to India, relatives and genealogical links now lost like the ink on papers frayed and yellowing that had attempted to tell stories.

The scapes of movements and migrations and the paper trail around it tells/hides/provides red herrings that bring into question the methods and process of history and fiction. The result being the creation of spaces where identities and representations are placed for consumption in multiple orderings that constitute the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Each account is different yet echoes sameness often of place, time and people, and the differences are as varied as the village, river or sea that occupies a central role in the narrative and in the heart of the narrator. Thus each story is an imprint, a fingerprint, a touchstone among other touchstones. Analogous to this is the argument that identity and representation can be placed as coming from or talking to a similar/common place but it does not replicate/duplicate itself apart from the general sense of place, history, geography, politics, identity and representation.

And it is with the lived world, the performed space of identity and representation that comes out most strong in the rest of the stories. The first indicator of the performative is of course in the template given to the contributors for pieces that celebrate/interrogate/place/commemorate a specific aspect of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. That of the Indenture past and the lived spaces or connections to the mythic girmit and its pantheon of numbers, passes, emigration files, files and most importantly of memory of/from the Girmityas to the lived spaces of the Indo-Fijian diaspora in its various shifts and movements. This thesis finds this a valid exercise as memoir writing or writing informed by the connections to the acts of remembering, recollecting and re-organising of text as memories, to create multiple identities and representations. The aim is to place these remembered moments as part of the larger lived space and performed identity of the Indo-Fijian diaspora.

This is exemplified by presenting the wide variety of lived spaces and performed identities. As is evident in the examination of the lived space of ‘Jaikumari’ in a filling in the gap of history of women of indenture and their active political roles and association or disassociation of their children in an essay by John Kelly. Ahmed Ali, extends the hyphenated Indo-Fijian diaspora,
by a personal and empirical survey of the Muslim-Indo-Fijian Diasporic identity and its representations and omissions. In ‘Remembering’ Ali, a pioneering Pacific historian examines the commonalities, differences and continuities of this particular Indo-Fijian diasporic identity with its base in religion and politics, in Fiji. This is linked to international movements in India, the formation of Pakistan/Bangladesh and the path of Islam in the post-WWII world. Ali’s essay presents the religious divides of the Indo-Fijian diaspora against the reality of an ever-widening schism where history had brought a people together and as silently and seamlessly drove them apart in distinct directions. Yet, there remains a sense of a shared past that makes the Muslim-Hindu relations in Fiji unique and better able to sustain itself in a multicultural hotbed that Fiji can sometimes be, without resorting to fundamentalist positions.

An engagement with squatter and itinerant communities on Fiji by Susanna Trnka in ‘Upahar Gaon’, (‘Gift Village’), is the name of a settlement, and the intricate webs of the lived space in Fiji in the immediate post coup Fiji becomes important for this thesis. Trnka extends the idea of ‘locality’ from Arjun Appadurai from ‘a structure of feeling that is produced by particular forms of intentional activity’ to that of:

…continuing, everyday acts that invest sites with meaning. So there are two sides to constructing a community, its history as well as everyday relations. Looking at this neighbourhood, we can ask what historical bases as well as the continuing activities that turn these rows of individual, fenced properties into a place associated with a sense of community. (141)

Trnka’s site for history and the everyday are concepts integral to the study of identity and representation of the Indo-Fijian diaspora in this thesis. Thus living in ‘Upahar Gaon’ engages with the prescribed/learned/experienced history and the performative and meaning producing acts of the everyday towards the construct of a world of complexity and contradictions, of hope and despair and many binaries and spaces in between. The Trnka narrative is central also to the Bittersweet creation of history and a sense of community by examining the various lived
spaces and performances of identity and tropes/metaphors of representation. Among these many shared bonds in the immediate post coup 2000 months is that of ‘fear’, brought out powerfully by Trnka in her descriptions of ‘residents as they exchanged information and advice for protection. Many Indian and Fijian neighbours found themselves exchanging news of the latest violence over the fences between their homes.’ (143) A much more complex view is presented here of the post coup worlds in Fiji after 1987 and 2000 than in the media and among the writings and discussions among Indo-Fijians in a tendency to have a racially polarized viewpoint on fear and violence.

As events unfolded in 2000, the violence in various areas was mainly directed at Indo-Fijians, according to Trnka. Caught in this violence were Fijian communities in the backwash to the political, provincial and military intrigues with lasting horrors of death, torture and intimidation that haunts a nation years after with on-going trials, incarcerations and investigations. An anecdotal account, that may be apocryphal, by a respondent in Fiji recalls seeing a line of Fijian villagers returning from fishing in Navua after the 1987 coup, and falling down flat on a rough river bed at the sound of an approaching army truck with cries of fear of being shot. Trnka’s essay moves beyond ideologue/s and ideologies towards presenting the totality of the real, even the accounts of the apocryphal bring in a viewpoint.

The important point of recognition is that in moments of crisis, the metaphor of the Girmit past and assertion of heritage and right to claim Fiji among the Indo-Fijian diaspora, is played out from politicians to scholars to everyday performative in discussions in ‘Upahar Gaon.’ This is not to be denied. Nor the other point of exposition that the everyday goes beyond, in a sense to be abstract, transcends, this mythic extrapolation so that there is also the assertion of the everyday lived space and a lived life as a community. As Sangita, one of the producers/performers/protagonist of ‘Upahar Gaon’ declares, ‘Let the Government do what it wants with a curfew, here we can go wherever we want!’ (149) This is an assertion of a lived space in a particular period of national crisis in Fiji after 2000 dominated with images and realities of violence that leads Trnka to conclude that Indo-Fijian diasporic identity exist as part
of an inclusive community. And this community existed in ‘…the everyday work of women and men, who act to transform scattered houses into the meaningful sites of everyday life. (150)

Trnka, quoting Appadurai, brings out the deployment of strategies in the act of community coming together and affirming basic principles of continuity without the associative images of a guerrilla campaign linked to ‘ideoscapes’. Sangita and ‘Uphar Gaon’ form a counter ideology to the forces that place them on the margins, not with the means of intention of ‘capturing state power or even a piece of it’ but to simply continue with the daily exertions of existence. There is no grand scheme of capturing state power in the community as Trnka points out. A sense of the community dwellers in a particular period of politicized racial polarization under threats of violence and death in post-coup Fiji in 2000 is presented that engage with some of the keywords that Appadurai puts forwards as part of the master narrative of democracy. As Appadurai puts it of ‘elements of the Enlightenment world-view underlined by the master term ‘democracy’.’ (224)

The idea of the ‘Enlightenment world-view’ is central to the ideology, means and processes of the Christianizing of the Pacific. Ideas found in ‘Sa I Levuka Ga’ by Annie Sutton on another decade usually left out of popular narratives on Fiji, the 1980’s, and her account of life in Levuka. Her memoir, like that of the writings of Prem Banfal discussed in the next chapter, engages with gender relationships in family, relationships, separation, divorce and life, ever after. There is in such narratives an interrogation of the gendered lived space amidst the vagaries and generalities of larger, exterior realities inherent in applying homogeneous patriarchal constructs to Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representations. That among other things subsumes women and children. Sutton adds to heterogenous Indo-Fijian diaspora to examine particular religions and their effects on identity and representations, in this instance of being Catholic, being Indo-Fijian and living studying in a predominantly non-Indo-Fijian Catholic boarding school. Sutton replicates the pluralities of sectarianism and religious difference in the same vein that Raymond Pillai does at various points in his short stories.
Mass hysteria and the central place of superstitions, processes and practices of witchcraft and the healthy Indo-Fijian appetite for the occult flit in and out of the specific instances of mental health investigation in ‘The Qawa Epidemic’ by Jacqueline Leckie. The nexus between the occult, mental health and Western biomedicine and its impact on the girls caught in the hysteria among other insights looks at the various patriarchal structures and processes that dictate and suppress Indo-Fijian women. Brij Lal’s ‘Marriage’, ‘Masterji’ and ‘Primary Text’ complete his contribution to the collection provide further pieces to fit into the jigsaw gaps of memory and remembering that he engages substantially with in his more recent writings, both fiction and history. ‘Maarit’ the final piece in the is a Fiji-Hindi version of “Marriage” and brings forward powerfully the case for more such writing, in this case in the more accessible Roman script. The two texts sees the former bring out the nuances of language the pithy tang of Fiji-Hindi that Lal wrestles with when attempting to bring out the same in its English version. To use a filmic analogy, the effect is that of the multiple removes on reading, listening, seeing and comprehension that comes to the viewer of a dubbed foreign language film, or worse in following subtitles.

Christine Weir in a short and telling account of the nexus between education and Christianity and the place of Indo-Fijian in this important aspect of Fiji’s history, past and present. Using “All Saints’ Primary, Labasa” as the ur-text of the archetypal education institute with large numbers of Indo-Fijian students in a multiracial school environment from the 1950’s. Of ‘Christianity, Sunday Schools, school picnics, health and sanitation, Agriculture, trade, Brownie Pack, Young Farmers Club, Soccer and reminders of ‘empire and their loyalties to it.’ (226) Weir’s images form the eclectic mix of influences on the school roll in Christian schools in Fiji. And under views as extreme as that of forcing conversion to allowing education as an end in itself all taking place with the prevailing position taken by Indo-Fijians of an interest in the education being offered but not in conversion.

Weir points out, ‘Although the girmityas recognized early that education was their best means of economic advancement, indeed, even of survival, the Colonial Government was not much interested in providing such education.’ (228) This situation explains Indo-Fijian emphasis on
education as their path to ‘advancement’ of all sorts, including economic and social, but perhaps more importantly as a means of migration in more recent times. Education, its importance and vagaries are brought out in ‘Masterji’ as fiction that concentrates on the logistics of learning, teaching and living for the village school master and their influence over or neglect of children, brought out in this instance by the childhood recollections of Brij Lal. ‘Primary Text’ is a much more straightforward look at school texts and their varied influences on the Indo-Fijian psyche as tools of empire but also as means that ultimately in the right hands ends up subverting and overcoming it.

‘Aisha’, as title, of a contribution by Padma Lal, is allusion to the main protagonist, who exemplifies the important role that Indo-Fijian women play in the ailing sugar industry in Fiji. A combination of world market forces, local growing and milling practices and the spectre of uncertain land tenure make life hell for women like Aisha and their families. Aisha’s stoicism adds to the case put forward by Padma Lal for economics and development theory and practice to restructure the sugar industry to account for the women and men as individuals rather than relegating them to numbers. ‘Call numbers’ of a recent past, statistics and numbers are interfaced with the human story beneath official documents and dictates of bureaucracy. Padma Lal bring into context Appadurai’s qualifier of the fluidity of processes and relationship of reading to hearing and seeing, of making the individual count. The stories of Aisha and of “Shanta’ in John Tester’s piece on diabetes induced blindness are central to Appadurai’s ‘readings’ of a diasporic people in this thesis in order to ‘…determine the morphology of these different ‘ideoscapes’ as they shape themselves in different national and transnational contexts.’ (224)

Appadurai’s outlines of this determinants of the morphology of ‘ideoscapes’ is extended to that of the ethnoscapes, mediascapes, finanscapes, and technoscapes present in John Connell’s and Sushma Raj’s account of the other end of the diasporic shift by examining Indo-Fijian migration to Sydney. ‘A Passage to Sydney’ makes the point that ‘The story of the original Indian migration to Fiji is curiously better known and documented than the recent emergence of an Indo-Fijian diaspora, the phenomenon of ‘twice migrants.’ (304) For this thesis this
‘twice migrant’ diaspora is of central importance and it is examined in length in the final chapter on fieldwork and readings of the lived space and the everyday in Liverpool.

The Connell and Raj overview reinforces one of the guiding tenets of this thesis on the importance of the lived space and instances of the production, expression, and consumption of popular culture. And of the forces of heterogeneity and hybridity egendered by a variety of forces in the second shift diaspora as outlined in a summary paragraph in ‘A Passage to Sydney’:

> Among Indo-Fijians in Sydney, as among migrants anywhere else in the world, there is conservation and dissolution. Hybridity and change are tempered by family loyalties and locations, generational shifts, employment and education, class structure, housing and ultimately, the diversity of personal preferences. Communities are always in a constant state of flux as migrants come and go and the wider society itself changes. (316)

Connell and Raj take into account Appadurai’s concept of ‘Deterritorialization’. Connell and Raj, and other more academic acts of ‘remembering’ in *Bittersweet* are the exceptions to the general rule of the performative memory in memoir writing and acts of remembering that exemplifies Appadurai’s concept of ‘Deterritorialization’. There is a sense of this ‘exaggerated and intensified senses’ across many of the recollections and its empirical basis in the more academic essays.

Vijendra Kumar presents a personalized account of migration and the particular pull and push factors leading to his movement from Fiji to Australia. And provides a harrowing account of the 1987 coups and its particular politics of intimidation, violence and racist tendencies. Kumar, of course, writes his recollection from the vantagepoint of being up close and personal with the period and its politics and people as the first local editor of the Fiji Times, the major newspaper in Fiji that dates back to 1869. Kumar rejects the assertion that 1987 was a bloodless coup or a
coup without victims, with reminders of some of the horrors of rape, robbery and humiliation that followed racial assertion of rights in Fiji.

As various accounts in the collections of memoirs attest to on Fiji, whatever the spiel and rationality, the fact remains that ethnic cleansing need not only be in a body count. In this thesis the violence of the coups in Fiji in 1987 and 2000 is an important factor shaping Indo-Fijian identity and representation and recollections of a past ‘lived’ space. Kumar asserts that this memory of violence or fears of future violence exists as a determining factor in Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representation in the construct of the condition of exile as a valid lived spaces that determine individual lives and force/influence individual preference. He refers to the oft quoted myth on Fiji in his contribution to *Bittersweet* relating to ‘The merciful Krishna’ granting sanctuary to the ‘vanquished Kaala Naag’ a huge serpent on a remote island paradise believed by some to be Fiji. And concludes’…myths are just myths, just as the much vaunted myth of Fiji being a paradise has proved to be a tragic illusion.’ (336) The validity or otherwise of such assertions can be questioned, and indeed at various points in this thesis is, but the individual voice being presented here has its place as one among many of inscribing a particular identity and its representation in the Indo-Fijian diaspora.

Shristi Sharma, as a new voice in Indo-Fijian women writing balances humour and wistful accounts of the twice-removed Indo-Fijian diaspora in the inscription of identities and representations for their diaspora and people in her contribution, ‘Immeasurable Distances’. The narrative moves from the laconic, ‘Our home in paradise had become a resort for us. Fiji, next stop.’(Sharma 352) To the twice-migrant diaspora balancing Fiji between tourist brochures, Air Pacific in-flight videos and pictures and images of lived spaces and experiences of a new life space. Interspersed in these comments is an exploration of the everyday spaces and individual preferences through the mostly dialogic constructions of relationships, love, marriage and movements. Sharma’s account is almost filmic in its creations of moments such as those art house directors like Mira Nair or Gurinder Chadha or from the more mainstream Bollywood dreaming that manages the odd-subplot to cater for the important Non-Resident Indian sector of their consumers.
In ‘Immesuarable Distances’, amidst all the diasporic posturing and superficialities, filmic, print or in person, are moments when the individual assesses the situation and makes suitably human gestures to sustain links of friendship, relationships, and marriage. As the narrator, Raksha tells Beena, ‘Nothing should keep us apart though. I think it’s important, if not wise, to be there for each other over the years.’ (353) A gesture sustained in the next piece ‘Final Day’ by Asish Janardhan, with a familial recollection foregrounding father-son relation amidst the acts of remembering Fiji and the steps in living a life away from it. Mosmi Bhim’s polemically challenging poem, ‘Colour My Country’ is examined in the detail in the next chapter in the section of Indo-Fijian women writers.

Noted Indo-Fijian academic and historian Vijay Naidu makes a final statement in Bittersweet that echoes a sustaining voice in this thesis on the need for processes and actions towards non-dualist modalities. Or as Naidu concludes:

> It is time we realized that in the global village ethnic exclusiveness and separatism, the hallmark of our history of which a majority of us are victims will not lead us to the peace and prosperity that all of Fiji’s people desire. We need to be inclusive, not only of those in the islands, but those who have settled abroad and taken a part of Fiji with them. Those who still call Fiji home. (385-386)

And it is to a further important inclusion that we turn to in the next chapter by engaging Indo-Fijian women writing, some instances of juvenilia and the place of children in narratives from the Indo-Fijian diaspora. The violence of their exclusion and separatism is examined as a means of empowering their voice as narratives or silences towards belonging to the Indo-Fijian diaspora and ‘who still call Fiji home’.
Chapter Four


As soon as Oilei and Makarita appeared at the gate, Sumitra rushed up to them looking very agitated. At barely a metre and half, she was fifteen centimetres shorter than her husband. She had greying hair and a frail appearance that belied her inner resilience that she needed to cope with an unpredictable Bulbul and a brood of three sons and two daughters.

Epeli Hau’ofa: Kisses in the Nederends (1987)

This chapter makes some final notes on identity and representation as definitions and contexts of the Indo-Fijian diaspora exemplified in Bollywood cinema as a popular culture consumable to sustain arguments against reductionist binaries of the diaspora-homeland/motherland. Existing studies on Indo-Fijian literature is expanded with an extended section on Indo-Fijian womens’ writing, some instances of juvenilia and representations of children in Indo-Fijian narratives. This chapter begins by looking at some arguments on identity and representation in theoretical frameworks of Stuart Hall, Brij Lal and Arjun Appadurai. These perspectives are related to Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representations in the context of Bollywood cinema and constructs of a mythic/filmic India in the second section.

The final section of this thesis makes an important expansion of existing studies on Indo-Fijian women writers, some instances of juvenilia and their representations of children. The inquiry into Indo-Fijian women writers engages theories of feminism-diaspora/colonial postcolonial discourse of Gayatri Spivak and T.Minh-Ha Trin with issues of identity and representation. Or as is the case in most instances in Indo-Fijian literature that of non-representation and non-identity for Indo-Fijian women and children. In this section references are made to Appadurai’s scapes but concentrates on Spivak and T.Minh-Ha Trin as theoretical modalities for these texts. This final section reflects on Indo-Fijian literature, memoir writing, Indo-Fijian women writing,
juvenilia and representations of children to make links to the readings that follow of representations in texts/narratives about the Indo-Fijians diaspora in the next chapter.

1: Further Issues of Identity and Representation: Stuart Hall, Brij Lal and Arjun Appadurai

Before moving to an examination of the main concerns of this chapter it is important to further discuss the issue of identity/s/representation/s vis-à-vis earlier references to the works of Stuart Hall and additions by Brij Lal and Arjun Appadurai. Stuart Hall and Brij Lal, referring to the ‘doubleness’ of both the Caribbean and Fiji diasporic experiences, both attempt to inscribe a trinity of sources as the presence that defines identities. Brij Lal in ‘Three Worlds: Inheritance and Experience’ points out that, ‘Although the Fijian constitution defines us as ‘Indian,” we are, in fact, marked by the confluence of three distinct ‘civilisational’ influences: South Asian, Western and Oceanic.” (1) This is a valid beginning definition of ‘influences’ to which Lal adds the division of influences according to tastes in ‘food and our religious and spiritual traditions, our dietary habits and general aesthetic sense (in music and cinema, for instance) is unmistakably South Asian.’ (1) To this can be added the inherent heterogeneous division further possible in these ‘habits’ or the fact these ‘habits’ also inhabit McDonald’s, Rap Music, Reggae, Hollywood, increasingly popular forms of American Protestant Churches, and so on.

Lal sites his definition on the basis that ‘…our language of work and business and general public discourse, our educational system, and legal and judicial traditions, our sense of individual and human rights is derived from our Western heritage.”(1) To each of these places of influence can be added the doubling of difference, for within this ‘Western heritage’, are subversions of language at work and play. For example, an educational system that works within bounds of caste, religion and social classes implicit in the running of religious, sectarian or community run primary and high schools in Fiji. Part of the ‘sense of individual and human rights’ engages Indo-Fijian displacements and fissures after the 1987 and 2000 coups with earlier mentioned keywords of Appadurai’s master narrative of ‘democracy’.

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One of the traits associated with being Indo-Fijian is borne out in various narratives and fieldwork in Liverpool, Sydney is the construct that Brij Lal refers to as ‘she’ll be alright,’ tomorrow is another day,’ attitude’ that ‘comes from our Oceanic background.’ (1) For the Indo-Fijian diaspora, place is not only on a farm in leased Tabia/Labasa/Vanua Levu/Fiji but the garment factory worker in Suva tasked with targets or the shift worker in Liverpool, Sydney Australia charging through turnstiles at the train station. Lal makes the important marker to stop this construct being the overwhelming homogenous monolith that it threatens to be by insisting that there will be ‘variation and diversity’ on these three basic influences based on a range of factors. Yet, there remains the insistence that ‘Nonetheless, every Indian person from Fiji will carry within them traces of the three primary influences which have shaped them.’ (1) This is a valid point and one that this thesis prioritizes in reading and accounting for individual variances of the lived space and preferences.

Stuart Hall provides literary and theoretical premises for his assertion that:

It is possible, with this conception of ‘difference’, to rethink the positioning and re-positioning of Caribbean cultural identities in relation to at least three ‘presences’, to borrow Aime Cesaire’s and Leopold Senghor’s metaphor: Presence Africaine, Presence Europeene, and the third, most ambiguous presence of all-the sliding term Presence Americaine. (398)

Hall makes the point that Africa is ‘the site of the repressed.’ (398) And it was present everywhere. Thus ‘Africa, the signified which could not be represented directly in slavery, remained and remains the unspoken unspeakable ‘presence’ in Caribbean culture.’ (398) In this regard the Indo-Fijian diaspora makes a significant departure, for India the signified, becomes the speaking presence in the doubled/trebled voice, present in the past, as well as in popular culture instances such as Bollywood cinema or satellite television or as songs/music. The first as stamped, inked, numbered, registered, named, etched in various transit papers, passports, passes,
of the coloniser, ‘Presence Britain’. The second voice a process of finding presence in Fiji controlled by oms, swastikas, red flags, crescents, moons, temple, mosques, spires, spies, lawyers, teachers, swamis, gurus, and various other Avataars of India. And the third, a trebling of voice and other presences, including India, but just as importantly the Western Worlds of consumerism and materialism in the Indo-Fijian diaspora in America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

At various points this thesis asks if such a multiple enforcement/inscription of India has also forced out the question of ‘Indo-Fijianess’ as a source of identity and pride or finding a India ‘necessarily ‘deferred’-as a spiritual, cultural and political metaphor. I argue that such a position exists in instances of Indo-Fijian literature as the presence/absence of India not necessarily as the ‘privileged signifier of new conceptions’ of Indian/Indo-Fijian identity. Instead it as an assertion of identities and representations where there is an implicit recognition of doubled presence of past, present, future, self, and Other of ‘three worlds’ of Brij Lal and those implied in Halls trio of ‘presences’. Among other voices are the official papers and the constitution weighted down by heady indigenous affirmations of sovereignty and the principles of the Indo-Fijians as transient visitors in Fiji since 1987, but as historians like Brij Lal note, in earlier colonial documents as well. The construct of the Indo-Fijian as a visitor/guest as the ‘vulagi’ dependent on the generosity and goodwill of the indigenous host, but not to call a house a home. This is an important marker of Indo-Fijian diasporic identity since 1987 evident in the Indo-Fijian literature and in the study of memoirs in the previous chapter.

Alterity practices as a critical and theoretical framework of this study are not excluded from this present exercise. Indeed, the idea of an inherent doubleness in power and oppositional stances makes it all the more relevant for this section of the thesis. Appadurai sustains this argument in his insistence that ‘landscapes thus, are the building blocks of what, extending Benedict Anderson, I would call ‘imagined world’, that is, the multiple worlds which are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe’. (222) Alterity practice in this expanse of the ‘imagined world’ takes on its particular representations as becomes evident in later chapters on analysis of fieldwork and textual reading of Liverpool,
Sydney. Here the markers of a second shift diaspora comes into play and a whole new world of alterity practice is effected, usually as continuities of alterity practices from being diasporic Indo-Fijians. Appadurai’s work here, finds currency and relevance to the particular concerns of this thesis with the world/worlds lived in and imagined in and about by the Indo-Fijian diaspora in their expressions in popular culture and literature as well the lived everyday life.

The Lal and Hall nexus on the trilogy of influences that shape identity and representation realize and make appropriate gestures and postures in recognition by the latter of the ‘…complexities entailed in the process of trying to represent a diverse people with a diverse history through a single, hegemonic ‘identity’. (401) A point lost to Vijay Mishra as is made clear by his conclusion to ‘The Diasporic Imaginary’:

Recent diasporic theory has come to read diasporas as exemplary social, cultural, and even political conditions of late modernity. It is an attractive argument if only because it moves diaspora theory away from the earlier semantics of fossilization and the 'fragment society' to one where we begin to see diasporas as derritorialized peoples for whom belonging is not linked to the control of the nation's social, political and cultural myths. Lest we accept this as the normative diasporic condition (after Boyarin and Boyarin, Clifford and even Gilroy), the study of our two Indian archives reminds us that diasporas never really lose the essentialized narratives of exile, homeland and return. (442).

Mishra’s defence of essentialized narratives of exile, homeland and return writes back to the title of the book which he edited as part of the one hundred year celebrations of the Indian diaspora in Fiji: "Rama's Banishment; A Centenary Tribute to the Fiji Indians 1879-1979.’ The title has the unique role of being in (un)holy trinity with context/text/paratext of Mishra's theoretical and critical formulations and "revisions" of the Girmit Ideology and Consciousness as "essentialized narratives” on Indo-Fijian literature and diaspora. The re-engagement with Mishra’s theoretical and critical formulations here is to provide points of departure and
expansion for the thesis towards more inclusive heterogeneous theoretical and critical constructs on Indo-Fijian Diasporic identity and representation. For instance Appadurai’s clarification that the ‘imagined world’ does not mean ‘that there are not anywhere relatively stable communities and networks of, of kinship, of friendship, of work and leisure, as well as of birth, residence and other filiative forms.’(222) The various texts critically engaged with this far in the thesis there is this world exemplify this sense of community. It stretches from various aspects of literary expressions, recollections in memoirs and exists in among everyday lived spaces various instances of popular culture and technoscapes, in the digital space in the proliferation of websites and forums online. The next section moves away from these final comments on influences on identity and representation towards two further texts/narratives to sustain arguments against any monolithic construct of the Indo-Fijian diaspora.

2: Bollywood Cinema and Indo-Fijian Identity.

Bollywood cinema, in the instance of its consumption by the Indo-Fijian diaspora brings with it a continuum of an ever-changing India. For most Indo-Fijians, India is filmic, as it remains mythic, as place of origin, as site for the pantheon. The cultural and religious movements and practices are traces of particular moments from Hinduism or Islam. Each linked to India, and in the case of Islam increasingly associated with a global movement of aligning diasporic Muslims to Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia among other countries. In this thesis religious practices are not interrogated in great detail, but is acknowledged as among the most important determinants of identity among Indo-Fijian diaspora. Religion and identity is examined in greater details in chapter seven as part of the textual readings and case studies of Liverpool. Bollywood is taken as a starting point of engagement to deploy as mythic India on film. Added to the visual feast are the added volumes of India on satellite television, especially the universal appeal of the soap opera forms.
Vijay Mishra, in his influential filmography, *Bollywood Cinema-Temples of Desire* engages less with theory and traces movements and influences on Indian cinema. John Sinclair, in a review remarks:

Vijay Mishra brings together both his personal involvement with Indian cinema, having grown up with it as his cultural patrimony in Fiji, and his scholarly training as a literary critic. He is thus not only well-placed to explore and explain Indian film as a form of cultural expression, for example in his analysis of filmic manifestations of the tenets of Hinduism, but also to utilize the conceptual apparatus of European film criticism to do so. (*Screening*)

Mishra makes the point about a ‘pan-Indian popular culture’ evident in Indian cinema. This is consistent with his archival work on ideas of ‘transcendent myths of national unity and belongingness’ that he ascribes to Indian cinema and to the Indo-Fijian diaspora. As Sinclair points out Mishra ‘sees it as a genre which conveys aesthetically the aspirations of the nation-state, and which has invoked pan-Indian religious epics and folk narratives to affirm, however ambivalently, the ideological polarities of both modernity and tradition.’ This is in line with the accepted notion of the persistence of mythological story lines in the celluloid epics. This thesis does not engage in an extended study of Bollywood cinema in this chapter but engages selectively in this section with Mishra’s tendency towards homogeneous and essentialising practises in textual studies that relate to the Indo-Fijian diaspora.

To counter Mishra’s definitions of Indian cinema and to sustain the argument towards the place of India as in a constant state of flux and flow as a filmic connection to the Indo-Fijian diaspora I turn to Appadurai’s construct of ‘technoscape’ and apply it as an interrogative construct. This construct draws on ideas of the spatial and temporal divides to make the point that Bollywood cinema for Indo-Fijian diasporic identities and representations exists as continuity, not as a centre-fixed in some mythic past. Subramani makes the point that cinema, was, ‘A guilty pleasure.’ And to the, ‘To the older generations they (younger cinemagoers) looked less like
villagers: the cut of their clothes had changed, they crooned Awara Hun I’m a Vagabond instead of bhajans; even their gestures carried the quaint resemblance to the styles of the popular heroes.’ (Altering 112)

Subramani points out that for the older generation mythologicals were preferred to these ‘brash’ romances/romancers. He adds, ‘In the 1960’s the stream of moviegoers, both men and women, in front of the cinema hall (the theatre lobby was where the families fraternised and women showed of their fine clothes and jewellery) gave one the distinct impression of movies as tribal art.’ (112-3) His impression of Indian cinema is given various representations in the memoirs examined in the previous chapter and by Satendra Nandan, Raymond Pillai and Sudesh Mishra. Each of their representations exemplifies a particular moment and incorporate a personal lived experience or space with Hindi cinema. Not as a meta-narrative. This is evident even in the general/generic changes from mythologicals to social films of pre-1947 India to that of the Nehru-Gandhi era incorporating socialism and industrialisation in farming practices, cottage industries and the slew of films in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s promoting family planning. Mishra adds to this continuum to point out the films of the past few decades incorporate story lines aimed at the 11 million or so Indian diaspora. Indo-Fijians make up a small part of this diaspora, and the lack of their inclusion in such story lines or locales, as opposed to America, England, Canada, even Australia and New Zealand, is reflective of this demographic reality.

Cinema like literature, like the individual lived spaces, archives particular forms as generic/generational/political/the popular encased as narratives constantly changing with each viewing and reading. A point missed in Mishra’s easy definitions of a ‘Pan-Indian’ meta-narrative for Bollywood Cinema, or ‘Pan-Indenture/Girmit’ narrative of a static moment. Instead Appadurai provides a much more heterogeneous alternative even though this is not the stated aim of his clarification of the global relationships between ethnoscapes, technoscapes and finanscapes. His clarification of such relationships being ‘subject to its own constraints and incentives (some political, some informational and some techno-environmental), at the same time as each acts as a constraint and parameter for movements in the other.’ (223) is applied to the relationship between the Indo-Fijian diaspora and India through Bollywood cinema. This on
the basis that such self-regulation in the scapes provides the basis for a nexus between a people and their popular culture and their literatures as instances that inscribe their identity and better explain their diasporic state.

There is inherent in Vijay Mishra's theoretical and critical formulations, the reduction of India to an essentialised "homeland". And in his description of Indian cinema this reductionism again distorts the relationship between identity and representation both from the instance of production of this popular culture as well as its consumption by the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Cinema is thus ascribed the same mythic/centric position as that of girmit. The creation of this essentialised filmic/mythic India by Mishra continues in ‘The Diasporic Imaginary’ as the "old Indian diaspora replicated the space of India and sacralized the stones and rivers in the new lands." (442) And is reaffirmed by "the fantasy structure of the homeland (which) appears as the imaginary haven, as the sublime sign, an absence, to which diasporas return for refuge" (442).

Cinema and girmit, both exist as mythic/filmic/textual forms finding meaning among some combination but not of all from words/images/soundtracks/photographs/y/actors/emigration passes/tours for the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Such a view is reductionist in the same way that Michener looks at Indo-Fijians as a totalized homogeneity, or innate stereotypical images posited by the title of John Wesley Coulters Fiji, Little India of the Pacific on Indo-Fijians, Fiji, Indians and India.

There remains the problematic of the schematized introspection that is to be found in some of the texts of the four Indo-Fijian writers. Shortis sees this is an attempt to ‘…heal the wounds of Indo-Fijian descendants of culturally dispossessed and politically voiceless indentured labourers from nineteenth century India.’ (58). John Thieme in a monograph article ‘Rama in Exile: The Indian Writer Overseas’ makes some cogently argued remarks on Indo-Fijian literature in light of the Girmit Ideology and within the context of other diasporic writing. Thieme takes his title from Satendra Nandan's poem ‘The Ghost’, ‘i have lived this exile / more gloriously than rama’.

(Indo-Fijian Experience 151) Thieme makes the connection to the allusions from the Ramayana and concludes that "India has been internalised; it is still an available matrix of values as a mythopoeic construct of the Fiji Indian mind" (1). This conclusion is linked by Thieme to Vijay
Mishra's "example of the girmit ideology which documents the acculturation of the overseas Indian and, in so doing, evinces an elegaic sense of the loss of ancestral homeland and attempts to recreate it on a mythic level" (2).

Thieme gives examples of the works of V.S Naipaul and Samuel Selvon as being essentially working within the ideological and critical framework of India as the centre to which their text writes back. Thieme contrasts their narrative forms and text and gives the more polyphonic narrative of Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* as ‘…another response to the condition of being Rama in exile, one which strives for multicultural fusion and neither repudiates or sentimentalises India.’ (13). Salman Rushdie’s novel *Fury* is engaged with in this thesis for much the same reason as that outlined by Thieme as an ‘Outside/r’ narrative in the next chapter. This prioritisation of multiple positions of identity and representation is expanded upon in the next section by some of the women, children and instances of juvenilia as text/narratives that informs and engages with issues of the heterogeneity of earlier discussions of memoir and associated writing.

4: Indo-Fijian Womens Writing, Juvenilia and Children.

After the engagement of India as cinema, as Bollywood fantasy, in the previous section this final section examines Indo-Fijian women writing/artistic expression, juvenilia and place of children in Indo-Fijian literature for alterity practices on Indo-Fijian identity and representation. These texts and narratives are examined for modalities of identity in textual tropes and narrative devices to show how women and children can exist as non-identity in patriarchal diasporic preoccupations with historical moments as "fossilised ruptures" for identity and representation. The Indo-Fijian female body has been under scrutiny from various narratives.

The Indo-Fijian female body has seen its fair share of incarnations and mythologies created on it mostly as patriarchal constructs. The body has had more sari changes than a Bollywood actor in a ten song musical. Tied to the patriarchal touchstone typecasting as mother, daughter, sister, or vamp or prostitute with a golden heart of Bollywood celluloid in the intervening years. It is
against this historical background that we turn to the main critical premises to examine Indo-Fijian women writers. As in the rest of this thesis there is no claim to an exhaustive reading of literary texts by writers of either gender. Works by the various writers are chosen for an examination in its constructs of identity and representation with appropriate references to writing backgrounds and an indication of their range of works.

4.1: Contextual Considerations for Indo-Fijian Women/Women Writers.

In history Indo-Fijian women occupy a favored spot as breakers of various cultural, moral, social, religious and patriarchal codes. The women of indenture, globally, had to perform more girmits at home, in bed(s), and in return are remembered for being salacious, immoral opportunists in various accounts of the time. Brij Lal in his extensive writings on women in indenture provides explanations and context to their diasporic bodies in the indenture period as one of hardship and pain but also one where they played ‘...a critical role in the reconstitution of overseas Indian society.’ (Chalo Jahaji 54) This process of ‘reconstitution’ and the empowering role of women in creating identities not only for themselves but also for the larger diaspora become crucial to the study of Indo-Fijian women writers.

Brij Lal in the chapter, ‘Kunti’s Cry’, in Chalo Jahaji uses the celebrated case of Kunti, an indentured labourer, whose story of sexual molestation by an overseer made her a cause celebre for the anti-indenture movement in India. It prefaces an account of the conditions for the female body under girmit. The chapter ‘probes the widely shared derogatory stereotype of the Indian female workers as the ‘mercenary’ character who was responsible for all the major social and moral ills of the plantation society such as suicide, murder, infant mortality and the general moral degradation of the Fiji Indian community.’ (197) This is indeed a long line of accusation against the female Indian/Indo-Fijian girmitya and one that Lal argues against in his conclusion to the ‘Kunti’s Cry’.
But all too often it is forgotten that the benefits and hardship of indenture was not distributed equitably across the indentured population. Women, it has been shown here, generally suffered greater hardship than men. They shouldered the dual burden of plantation work, the double standards of morality, and carried the blame for many of the ills of indenture. To be sure, they were not the chaste heroines of Indian mythology that the Indian nationalists made them out to be, but neither on the other hand, were the immoral ‘doc’ rabbits of the overseers’ accounts. (211)

To expand on existing interrogations of alterity practices in the Indo-Fijian literary narratives this section of the thesis seeks inquiry in the works of Indo-Fijian women writers. There is no specific term for the gendered site for the women of indenture, who traveled on the high seas and found an island or three hundred, and of the women who form the Indo-Fijian diaspora since. As background to women of the Indo-Fijian diaspora from the various mythologies that exist in history the term jahajin (ship-sister) would be an apt coinage to reflect on their gendered state in the Girmit experience and as part of the Indo-Fijian diaspora since. Theoretical works questioning the siting of gender in Indo-Fijian literature notably by Arlene Griffen and Shaista Shameem are acknowledged. Shameem’s work is placed in perspective with an engagement by current feminist theory on the diaspora. The main focus of this section remains the literary/artistic narratives of the Indo-Fijian diasporic women.

Prem Banfal and Sulochna Chand, were two major women writers who emerged in the early period concurrently with Subramani, Satendra Nandan and Raymond Pillay. Banfal and Chand provide a beginning through their literary constructs and concerns. Their particular concerns and insights provide another alterity binary conspicuous by its absence in existing theoretical constructs and inquiry by the main male players in Indo-Fijian literature and literary criticism. To these early writers I extend an examination of more recent works by writers like Sangeeta Singh, Frances Koya-Vaka’uta, Bhavna Vithal, and Mosmi Bhim with their questioning of gender and cultural assignations for women in the Indo-Fijian diaspora.
Acknowledgement is made of the stand up comedy of Shalini Akhil, based in Melbourne, but not included in this thesis, due to an inability to access her material. Akhil’s forthcoming book, *Bollywood Queen*, to be published by Penguin Australia, is not included, but attests to the growing engagement of Indo-Fijian women from the diaspora in literature and art. Appadurai’s scapes are engaged in an examination of the installation works of Mohini Chandra as an example of an artistic/multi-media representation of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Chandra particular attention to dispersals in the diaspora and a study of her installation ‘Album Pacific’ is included. Their inclusion interrogates current narratives/texts on Indo-Fijian identities and representations and is an important expansion of gendered identities and representations for the diaspora.

Since the mid-1980’s critics such as Gayatri Spivak have inquired into the postcolonial female bodies and have come up various constructs that have re-defined both feminist and diasporic studies. Spivak insists on a re-thinking of ‘positivist’ and ‘determinist’ notions of national and personal identity for all. In doing so is the refusal for identity to be neatly inscribed in a ‘language, location or biology.’ This position is used for the contention that women cannot be viewed just in the subject/object binary. Instead the individuality of women and their specific locations, politically and socially, has to be taken into account to subvert homogenous applicability of the subject/object position.

From her perspective as a ‘feminist-in-decolonization’ Spivak discusses the position of women as subject in relation to nation and religion and claims that identities for women become ‘commodities.’ For this reason women become the ‘medium of exchange’ in their enforced movement between national and religious identity. To this construct are added the diasporic movements and various movements and fissures under which the Indo-Fijian female body has strained. Indenture, girmit, colonialism, postcolonialism, second shift diasporic dispersals of the self/selves, coups, racism, reverse discrimination and all the while dealing with patriarchal structures imposed from a cultural religious order of Hinduism, Islam and Christianity.
A number of discursive strategies linked to the main areas of feminist postcolonial and diasporic theories are employed in this section. Apart from Spivak (1992), consideration is given to the important work of T.Minh-Ha Trin and her development of ideas of difference. Difference (influenced by postmodern, postcolonial, and feminist conceptions of subjectivity, identity, and the self) which embodies the ideas of endless deferral of meaning, no fixed identities, taking account of ethnic and racial difference, and sexual difference as opposed to androgyrn between men and women. This idea of difference and the important implications it has for identities and representations for all bodies of the Indo-Fijian diaspora is pursued towards achieving discourse that is all inclusive and interrogates multiple life spaces.

In the first instance given the preoccupation with writing (and reading) in this thesis postcolonial and feminist theories are deployed notably to interrogate relationship to language and writing and the relationship between language and identity in Indo-Fijian diasporic writers. Appadurai’s example of ‘imagined worlds’ invites strategies and deployment of practices to effect subversion by Indo-Fijian women writers of the ‘official mentality’ of patriarchal structures are of particular interest in this section. In this case that of the patriarchal eye, hands, arms and body of the Indo-Fijian male and ‘entrepreneurial’ (proprietary-found in characters in Pillai’s short stories, for example) mentality’ that surrounds them.

Appadurai’s ‘ideoscapes’ are deployed to engage with the strategies employed by Indo-Fijian women writers in their ‘concatenations of images’ as counter ideologies or movement aimed at capturing/subverting/overcoming the power of Indo-Fijian patriarchal instances and expressions of power. The particularities of the political past and present of the Indo-Fijian women writers in Fiji and various second shift diasporic communities outside it, are present in their writings and this is forms part of many subversive tactics to right gender wrongs. On the other hand many of the tactics employed by the doubly marginalised and ethnically discriminated against community such as the Indo-Fijian diaspora, finds women in double removals and internal victims of deployment of subversive strategies employed by the larger diaspora.
This included skilled migration, education as a means to power/movement, marriages of convenience for migration. In each instance women suffer from the double discrimination of internal and external power structures and processes in their bid to acquire an individual lived space created by their choice or preferences. A similar removal is effected in instances when power and control is assumed under the ‘master term’-‘democracy’ with its ‘Enlightenment world view.’ In this section this double removal and doubled marginalisation of the women of the Indo-Fijian diaspora is examined in the various texts on their identities and representation. The next section examines the some instances of juvenilia from the Indo-Fijian diaspora and the particular representations of children in Indo-Fijian literature.

4.2: Children and Juvenilia in the Indo-Fijian Literary Narrative.

A small but important explanation on children is included in this thesis as important markers of another absent body from much of history and literature from and about the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Brij Lal mentions this absence in Chalo Jahaji, ‘Contemporary histories of girmit give little insight into plantation life as experienced by children.’ (328) In this early period, their nursery was the ‘fly-ridden’ end cubicles of the line looked after by old women, and they ran wild with toddlers with no schooling until reaching a suitable age to be harnessed as field labour. Children since that early period have undergone various stages of period of transformation and change, particularly in health and education. Yet their stories or accounts are largely left out everyday as well as mainstream discursive practices. Their roles as narrators or key characters are gendered (males) in the short fiction of Subramani (‘Tell me Where the Train Goes’) Raymond Pillai (‘The Celebration’) and Satendra Nandan (‘The Guru’ and ‘A Pair of Black of Shoes’). There is a common element of a transformation through the generational shifts in each story. Subramani, for example, presents an excruciating view of violence and traumas in ‘Tell Me Where the Train Goes’, where Manu is caught up in the worlds of adults murdering, posturing, acting, mob violence, pimping, prostituting, and engaging in a temperamental world of tantalizing possibilities and closed ended rail tracks.
The precocious Manu engages in flights of fancy and flight as the possible in the child as opposed to what Sudesh Mishra sees as the adult world, as a harbor of ‘pernicious attitudes of fatalism, self-annihilation and an amorphous, festering, directionless rage.” (South Pacific Literature 166) Anand, another precocious child gags on fried goat testicles in Raymond Pillai’s ‘The Celebration’, as his bullying, domineering father force-feeds him to salve the patriarchal ego. Anand like his mother Shanti have no voice gagging on their own lack of articulation and an uneasy genealogical acceptance of their boorish father, husband and son by son, wife and grandmother. In both Satendra Nandan’s stories the protagonist as narrator take on the world of the child on a wild ride of various patriarchal and societal constructs that deny them identity and representation, through various means of coercion, bullying, bribes, and emotional blackmail among other means of such denial.

There is of course in these textual denials the ironic placement of difference for children as another instance of placing bodies of the Indo-Fijian diasporic narratives. There exists for example a vast body of unexplored juvenilia in literature through the school annual magazines. This is a long held tradition among schools with a wide variety of contributions. It is body of texts that is not examined in detail in this thesis. To exemplify juvenilia reference is made to the short story ‘Cripple No More’ by Manik Reddy, who was in high school when his story was included in an issue of Mana. An extract from a novella in progress, Doom Town, by Anurag Subramani aged 11 appeared in an issue of Mana and Ritesh Prasad’s imaginative science fiction piece ‘Zaby Zoo’ in Dreadlocks Indentured, more recently, among other instances of juvenilia published in literary journals.

Manik’s story is based on the narrator-protagonist, Rajesh who is an adolescent cripple and howls against familial and school constraints on his movement/space/life. Into this constrained world enters Niami, ‘This strange Fijian girl ran out into the rain to help me get up.’ (Reddy 41), and with whom friendship blossoms into love. The familiar racial divide schema echoes through in the constructs of the narrator-protagonist as he warms to his newfound friend, ‘I have never realised before that a Fijian could show so much friendship towards an Indian who in a sense an invader.’(42) The child as narrator comes into play in the story as he wrestles with himself to
get assurance from Niami and let ‘evil’ win the battle to hide his deformity. However, he comes away triumphantly when she declares her love for him, ‘Somehow in between my hysterical stuttering I managed to acknowledge her love and accept her invitation.’(42) Rajesh is invited to spend Christmas with Naimi at her village. As they make way on a horse he realizes, ‘I knew she wanted me to feel that I was a hero but I also knew that the horse was probably the laziest or slowest old nag she could get hold.’ (42) This is a particularly poignant moment and hard to imagine being written by anyone but a child with eyes firmly focused on the mischievous as well as the innocent in the one instance. Rajesh finds acceptance through his songs and music, but the romance is cut short by a brutal moment of violence when the types of racial divides attack him.

“Bloody cripple!”

“You want Niami! Ha! Ha!”

“Damn kai-india!”

“Niami’s mine buddy!” (44)

This undercutting of the juvenile romance and rise of racial divides and prejudices present in this dialogic construct brings in the larger exterior reality of Fiji to bear its weight upon the idealistic, utopian delusions of Rajesh. Manik’s story among other things shows that there is an exemplary archive of juvenilia waiting for study into the identities and representations that children want to inscribe for themselves. An archive that may be worthy of a larger study than is possible in this thesis. For now children, through juvenilia and as characters in Indo-Fijian literature are included with women in the study of the usually absent alterity of their bodies in the identities and representations in the Indo-Fijian diaspora. As a starting point the next section engages in an interrogation of both patriarchal and gendered binaries on feminist critiques of Indo-Fijian literature towards a balanced modality as site for Indo-Fijian women writing/art in the final section of this chapter.
4.3: Feminist Critiques of Indo-Fijian Literature: Reading Shaista Shameem.

As a beginning to the section on Indo-Fijian women writers this section engages with the ideoscapes of Fiji and of the Indo-Fijian patriarchal body. Some of the ‘keywords’ and their place in ‘master-narratives’ and ‘counter-narratives’ on Indo-Fijian female bodies and that of children in these narrations are searched for and placed in the context of Indo-Fijian identities and representations. Beginning with an engagement with one example of a feminist critique of Indo-Fijian literature. The works of Indo-Fijian women writers are read to provide a reflexive and accessible account of their relationship to writing and language. Such a reading challenges postcolonial diasporic patriarchal notions of literature that constructs universal paradigms of clarity and objectivity, as the basis of writing. In order to impose control over the theoretical constructs in play on the narratives of the female bodies of the Indo-Fijian diaspora the arguments move primarily between the two positions outlined. The justification for this is on its relevance to issues of identity and representations carried out in the rest of the thesis. The siting of identity, for instance, now moves beyond binary orders to the interrogation of national and personal identity in specific localities, locales, sites, locations, dislocation, displacements, siting, situations, and islands.

The existing feminist criticisms by Arlene Griffen and Shaista Shameen on Indo-Fijian literature are in some ways dated but are important starting points towards an examination of the diasporic Indo-Fijian female bodies. Reference to the work of Shaista Shameen is made as a starting point. Shaista Shameen critiques the short fiction of Subramani and Raymond Pillai using two principles of feminist literary criticism, of ‘truth criterion’, and ‘position delegated to female characters in the story’. (41) And as a comparative of female/feminist Indo-Fijian literature Shameem posits a short study of the short fiction of Prem Banfal. It is not very encouraging to read literary criticism when the choice of texts selected is made and the
omissions are dismissed as ‘entertaining if a little trite, (and) do not require the posing of important questions. (42) As discussed earlier in this thesis there is a lot that merits critical attention in the works of Raymond Pillai, Subramani, Satendra Nandan and Sudesh Mishra from feminist and other critical frameworks, than outlined by Shameem. Shameem concentrates on two of Raymond Pillais’ stories from his collection ‘The Celebration’, Muni Deo’s Devil and To Market, To Market…‘because these stories seem to require the most attention from the feminist perspective.’ (42)

Her ‘Truth Criterion’ concentrates on Pillai’s treatment of Ragini with sadistic relish’, and her positive qualities of self-pride and self-assertion are dismissed as being ‘portrayed in a negative tone’, and in semantics in the use of ‘stubborn’ for Ragini as opposed to ‘Headstrong’ for Moti. ‘Untruthful comments’ abound according to Shameem in Pillai’s depiction of women in their relationships with each other as hating each other and the ‘passivity’ of Ragini in the face of her husband’s violence. Shameem makes the point that Ragini is inconsistently characterized from being ‘spirited’ before marriage to ‘passive’ afterwards. Shameem ends her critique with the assertion that Pillai’s collection ‘serves to encourage male supremacist ideology which perpetuates untruths about Indo-Fijian women.’ (43) A caveat needs to be inserted at this point on Shameem’s critiquing as an agenda driven feminist reading that becomes as reductive as the gendered patriarchal positions being taken issue with. Muni Deo, as the suicidal-homicidal maniac at the end of the story serves to underline the excesses of a macho male patriarchal construct unable to come to terms with his reality. That he kills Ragini, their daughters and then hangs himself is indictment of the male body in this instance as being out of control and out of place. It is an indictment of the excesses and male patriarchal structures inherent in a culture where a misplaced sense of family honor goes hand in hand with equally misplaced sexual prowess.

Shameem’s critique instead of concentrating on the narrative and separating the author from the narrator insists on both Raymond Pillai and Subramani being taken to task as, ‘No writer who aids and abets the suppression of women through his or her art can possibly be absolved of social guilt.’(43) This is a rather harsh indictment of two writers whose fiction is probably
among the most socially responsible of works with firm control over alterity binaries of gender, race, culture, religion and ideologies in order to let the narrative speak for all these and other aspects of the lived space. It is not the intention or the theoretical thrust of this thesis to defend Indo-Fijian literature, particular on gender positions. The opposite is true. However, in the case of Shameem, her dated approach and propensity to concentrate on authorial intent and responsibility, ‘Subramani is the cleverer writer.’ (46), provides a misreading of the works of Subramani and Pillai that needs to be corrected. If allowed to exist and to be taken as representative of feminist critiques of Indo-Fijian literature it serves to only further distort Indo-Fijian diasporic identities and representations.

The ‘truth criterion’ when applied to Subramani’s “Tell Me Where the Train Goes” or “Marigolds” is found wanting in the creation of stereotypes of females and their bodies being exploited, bashed or hacked by misogynist male characters. Shameem concedes that ‘female stereotypes are presented only by implication.’ (46). It is the base hypocrisy of the patriarchal solidarity between men, and the projected ‘lack’ of it among women and ‘guilt’ associated with the actions of characters like Kunti and Dharma, that account for the events as they unfold in the stories of Subramani. The sexual politics of indenture and that between girmit women and the overseer obviously is one of power and domination by the latter over the former.

And in the case of Kunti this is the balance brought to bear by Subramani on her perceived dominance and use of Mr Pepper, the overseer, by the men. ‘Tell Me Where the Train Goes’ is a telling and often raw indictment of the violence, physical and emotional from all sides, gendered, racial, cultural and between coloniser and colonised. Kunti’s character draws out the excesses of the male patriarchal structures and processes both of the coloniser and that of the indentured labourer. Colonialisms makes little distinction of gender and whatever it inflicts on their bodies. Double standards and hypocrisy of patriarchy exist as red-hot branding irons in the hands of males either as instruments of power and control or in the name of honour and religion. They are used not only to name or label but maim and trample the body and spirit of the indentured women and of children.
Shameem is much more receptive to the narrator-narrative binary of Prem Banfal’s story ‘I Remember, I Remember.’ Shameem concentrates on love, security and bonds between mother and daughter in this story. And the various relationships between women and children in the story and the sense of warmth and belonging that come across in the narrative. Banfal, as is later discussed in this chapter, makes a major contribution through a comparatively small oeuvre of mainly short fiction towards Indo-Fijian identity and representation, particularly of the female body and of children. However, to insist on Banfal’s story as being the ‘first time in Indo-Fijian literature, (that) a writer dares to speak of the love between women rather than the imagined hatred’. (470.), misreads Indo-Fijian literature from the period that this criticism was written, and needs to re-evaluated against the newer works. And it is within this context and based on such a re-evaluation that the next section engages with the larger frame of Indo-Fijian women writing and one instance of art/multi-media installations.

4.4: The Body of Indo-Fijian Women Writing/Art.

Prem Banfal and Sulochna Chand began their writing careers during their student days, in New Zealand, and at the University of the South Pacific, respectively. Banfal had a relatively short but prolific period of writing mostly short fiction in mid-late 1970’s. Banful’s most significant publishing moment was the inclusion her short story, “Remember, I Remember’ ” in Albert Wendt’s influential collection of writing from the Pacific in Nuanua. It is probably just as significant that Banfal continues to be a banner for Indo-Fijian literature through her inclusion on the Lonely Planet travel guides and internet site, as a writer from Fiji. The site maintains that ‘Indo-Fijians, including Subramani, Satendra Nandan, Raymond Pillai and Prem Banfal write in both Hindi and English, and a central thread in their work is the unjust plight of indentured labourers.’ (*Lonely Planet*)

Banfal’s, ‘I Remember, I Remember’ and ‘A Moment of Passion’ are engaged with critically in this thesis as both exemplifies her ‘autobiographical’ style of personal writing that Shameem
refers to. Banfal creates an Austen like world of the immediate in the personal familial style. “I Remember…” is a synoptic biography of Banfal from her earliest memories of her mother ‘feel of her warm, soft body and the fear was gone.”(55), to leaving Fiji for New Zealand after high school to start a ‘new phase of my life in a strange country, among strange people.’ (62) In between Banfal interrogates Fiji and its lived spaces in terms of difference from male Indo-Fijian writers not only as feminist concerns but in its investigation of spaces other than sugar cane fields or a girmit past.

Banfal in ‘I Remember I Remember’ traces her childhood and memories of her dead mother with that of childhood games and recollections of her newly acquired family when her father remarries. After this early period Banfal provides a familial context to growing up in the rice belt of Fiji with its own seasons, farming practices and technology such as the use of the hand powered wooden rice milling instrument, the Dekhii. Banfal does not romanticize the technology nor does she engage in the creation of a mythic historical past through association with the object. Instead she concentrates on the technology and the deftness of her grandparents in using it, ‘Grandma had perfect timing for every time the dhekii came down she would take her hand away.” Banfal progresses to recounting her childhood ‘housebuilding’ process and games and introduces an ‘Other’ to the Indo-Fijian Christmas ‘Goat’ made iconic in Raymond Pilla’s “The Celebration” in the anecdote on making ‘steamed Christmas pudding’ and singing ‘Christmas carols while we kept the fire going for the pudding to cook.’ (60-1)

Spivak examines abstractions of the politics of religion and the identity politics of religion, that results in the creation of non-identity, where women exists only as an 'inscription' and are 'fractured.' (771) And becomes in relation to nation and religion; 'commodities.' Banfal’s stories exemplify this idea of a commodity or 'medium of exchange’ as the schoolgirl, stepdaughter, granddaughter, daughter of a father married to the stepmother swallowed in the particular Indo-Fijian patriarchal movement/migrations/translocations between national and religious identity. A process of removal of identity that makes the cry of Kunti or the front line work of the girmitya woman as body as labour, mother, ratio determined sexual numbers/multiplied for multiple men, strikers in 1921 disappear as the progressive patriarchal religious identity of the
Indo-Fijian diaspora. It was not patriarchy as national identity so much after all, but the various religious movements, Sanatan to Samaji, secular Islam to an exported global Muslim world religion, religious conversion, Catholic/Methodist/Anglican/Protestant/American Evangelist that determine gender relations, for the better or worse. In this instance Spivaks formulations, usually criticized as self-absorbed and overly abstract, finds continuity and relevance in the particular case of the Indo-Fijian diaspora where religious identity, stands apart, as strong, self-sustaining and all-pervasive, from other institutional identities, and especially that of a nation.

The Indo-Fijian female bodies in this section find this institutional identity and its politics as it bears down on their lives, death, birthing, or as Banfal finds out at the end of her school years in Fiji. Banfal describes the circuitous path of her educational background from Dudley High School, ‘…girls school for Indian girls run by the Methodist Mission’ to the co-educational Suva Grammar School. Here, ‘Only the sixth form was multi-racial, the rest of the school was for Europeans or children who had some European blood in them.’ (61) And continues her biographical musings in the frank, subtly humorous tone that is a feature of her writing, where a co-educational school makes her;

...wonder about things lie whether it would embarrass a boy if a girl talked to him about shaving his beard just as a girl would feel embarrassed if a boy talked to her about her shaving her armpits. That year was spent learning about boys and as a result I failed University Entrance and had to repeat the following year.

Banfal makes this poignant point about growing up and education in quiet distilled prose where her specific locations, are insisted upon not in terms of the subject/binary but in the heterogeneous spaces. Where locations shift and merge in images, ideas and senses of childhood, death, family, step-siblings/mother/re-generation of family, rice farms, eight hour steamed Christmas pudding/ Christmas carols/ Indian girls school/co-educational racially divided school and spiraling of language, reading and meaning towards Part I of Banfal fictionalized autobiography. In doing so Banfal is questioning notions of what Spivak sees as
‘positivist’ and ‘determinist’ notions of national and personal identity for all.’ (772) Banfal asserts her femininity and feminist self in her summary of at the end of ‘I Remember I Remember’:

My three years at Suva Grammar School led me to a new awareness of myself, a further estrangement from my father and a growing alienation from my own community. I remember how I tried to show my growing feelings of independence and the desire to assert myself as an individual in my own right. I got a dress made with slits on both sides and shaved all the hair on my legs. The day after I left school I wore the dress and painted my lips with bright, red lipstick. (62)

Banfal engages in a subversion of patriarchal institutions/structure (‘… a further estrangement from my father and growing alienation from my own community.’) (62) re-inscribing her-self as a person in her slit dress, shaved legs and ‘bright, red lipstick’ as well as of her individuality and sexuality. In doing so is the refusal for her identity to be ‘neatly inscribed in a ‘language, location or biology.’) In Raymond Pillai’s ‘Adhuraa Sapnaa/Shattered Dreams’, the red lipstick operates against Sambhu’s patriarchal and sexist construct of, ‘That’s all woman think about these days - live in town, wear fashionable clothes, cover your face with lipstick and powder. What do you get out of putting on this red lipstick? Like a bulbul’s arse!’ (261) For Banfal the ‘red lipstick’ is an in your face assertion of individuality and a stand against patriarchal constructs of behavior from father and community. Banfal exemplifies individuality and ‘specific locations’ in “I Remember…” working to subvert homogenous applicability of the subject/object position and re-presenting identities and representation of women in this instance.

In her childhood recollections in the story, Banfal pilots a similar siting for children that presents them as individuals with heterogeneous quirks and responses, to societal structures and processes, including those overlaid by patriarchy.

‘A Moment of Passion’ reads as the next installment of the Prem Banfal biography, but it is more than that. It is an eager and sensitive piece of writing on sexual awakening and seduction.
These awakenings and seduction enframed by her ‘grandmother’s advice on leaving home to study overseas: according to Hindu philosophy, women are the pillars of society and carry the burden of childbirth, child-rearing and of preserving the culture and traditions of society.’ (34) There is a deliberate and incisive removal of this burden through the unnamed female protagonist, who sits at a study table to recount an experience that ‘…would once more open up the wounds and relive the pain.’ (34), of meeting with a fellow student, ‘…who shared a big house with some Colombo Plan students’. (37)

The creation of the Commonwealth and its instances of knowledge dispersal in this lone reference to the ‘Colombo Plan’, is undercut by the oscillations between the female protagonist remembering various ‘rules’, on how women should behave and her excitement at meeting her would-be seducer. Banfal depicts as na_ve and assertive by turns the protagonist preparing for a date at the movies with her unnamed lover-seducer-deserter who hums a ‘Hindi song’ and is delighted when she sings the first few lines for him. The seduction sequence in the short story is exploratory of the awakening of sexual desire beginning with dinner of ‘rice and curry without spices with the lamb chops and vegetables’ listening to the ‘background of Acker Bilk playing tunes on the corner.’(38). After the hummed and sung Hindi song and a game of Scrabble over coffee, ‘time was flying’ and ‘He put some soft music on the record-player and asked her if she could dance.’ (38) The dance is a prelude to her seduction and loss of virginity where she ‘…offered no resistance as he guided her toward the bed and switched off the light.’ (38). In post-coital bliss, ‘She had never experienced anything like it.’(38), Banfal pulls of a master-stroke of narrative twist in her description of the patriarchal male’s narcissism in describing their final intimate moment together; “Hugging her to himself he said to her, “Get dressed, I’ll take you home.’ The lexicons employed in the one sentence states clearly the conquest is over and the seducer hugs the seduced to himself to mark a notch. The word order and word play makes the male in the order of events dominant and domineering and self-absorbed. He is hugging himself in self-congratulation.

The pain does not end with desertion but feelings of guilt, apprehension, depression and a mental breakdown that I linked to her realization that, ‘She had brought shame not only upon
herself, but on her parents and on the family name.’ (39) An identity in performance now talks back to the initial cultural and religious enframing by her grandmother. Amidst this depression and antipathy to the self she is unable to communicate with the University chaplain but ‘gained some comfort from listening to music and lay down on her bed to listen to Mahali Jackson’s gospel songs. , and even though, “The singing style was different from what she had grown up with yet she enjoyed listening to Streisand’s songs’ (39). Church, friends and prayers are not enough and ‘The psychiatrist recommended shock treatment…’ (40) after which she gives up studying and flies back home. In this familiar environment ‘…some of her zest for living came back. On the first morning, she awoke to the quarrels of mynah birds and the sunshine streaming in at the window, making sleep impossible.” (40)

The guilt does not end with homecoming as she gets ‘ a teaching position for the following year at a small country town on another island.” For she is ‘unable to see her parents, which she felt was a blessing in disguise as she could not face her father nor her stepmother.’(50) The patriarchal constructs at play here dis-member the protagonist and her Indo-Fijian female body in the narrative due to societal and cultural mores to the lover-seducer-deserter. The remembered body of her past is realised, re-membered and re-presented as the lonely teacher who ‘must hurry to the mangrove swamp to collect specimens for tomorrow’s biology class.’ For ‘How time flies, she thought to herself.’ (40) Even in this pause of re-collections, re-membering and re-presentation the Indo-Fijian female body is given a performative representation, that of normalcy and reconciliation with time, but not the dis-membered body. Instances that we find in the work of Banfal’s contemporary Sulochna Chand particularly in the dis-membered child as the central persona of her poem ‘The Bastard Child’.

Sulochana Chand’s poem ‘The Bastard Child’ is her most well known early work. It was included in The Indo-Fijian Experience, edited by Subramani. This work by Chand is engaged with as it exemplifies strong emotional bonds to place and her childhood growing up in Levuka and interactions with indigenous Fijians. Chand, now living in Canada recently revived her writings with inclusion in SPAN in 2004 in Stolen Worlds and indicated in an interview plans to publish her short stories as a collection. ‘The Bastard Child’ is analysed on the theoretical
premise of ‘difference’ as theorized by T.Minh-Ha Trin. Alterity construction in ‘difference’ operates on race, culture, religion, gender, class and constructs for children and their identities and representation. Trin’s definition of ‘difference’ is developed through analysis of the poem to exemplify how identity and representation in the postcolonial diasporic/indigenous escape easy homogenous attempts to fix identity for women and children. Trin talks of “Difference” (influenced by postmodern, postcolonial, and feminist conceptions of subjectivity, identity, and the self) which embodies the ideas of endless deferral of meaning, no fixed identities, taking account of ethnic and racial difference, and sexual difference as opposed to androgyny between men and women.’ (81) For Chand, her poem finds the ‘bastard child’ facing a literal remove/deferral of meaning as product of a mixed race union in Fiji.

In Chand’s ‘A Bastard Child’ is an embodiment of difference and deferrals of meaning/identity and representation in the subject body of the child. The bastard child is male, yet who remains in the helpless position of infants/children/females/transvestites/the insane, in this case un-gendered and fettered unable to assert the self or subvert the others of patriarchy, class, race, culture and religion. The deferral of meaning begins with the cultural tossing around of the bastard child product of the Kaindia (Indian) father whose ‘parents were against his marrying her-/Depsite his constant, ineffectual pleading./’ and the ‘Kaiviti’ mother ‘weeping behind closed doors/ lest the neighbours hear./They knew her story, knew how her love affair with a Kaindia*/had turned tragic/But they would have no sympathy for her. (165) Chand uses direct, emotional language to trace the inter-racial collisions and tragedies usual fodder for binary models of alterity and constructions of identity and representation. Yet, the construct, literal, figurative, ephemeral here of the child defies identity as identity is refused and there is no question of representation/re-presentation. Instead there is inscribing of difference and deferrals of identity and representation from the priggish/Overfattened, over dressed brother of my father/ and ‘they’ pretending that “I” wasn’t/I was a Kaiviti* in their eyes.’ (165) To neighbors without sympathy in the village to the adamant parents whose ‘culture and pride meant more than an obdurates/son’s happiness.’ and ‘boy’s relatives’ who spoke of ‘her age’ and ‘another man had already father her first child/ to another man. (165)
Ethnic, racial, and sexual difference are imposed on the body of the child where identity and representation is denied for …the unspoken truth as she was a Kaiviti/ And marrying a Kaiviti would have been a symbol of their/degradation and shame.’ And in the ‘cast-off’s other world, /Where the children taunt him “Kaindia Yavalila”/ (166) And unkindly push him out from all their games.’ The inscriptions of identity and representations are being pushed around through individual, familial, communal, societal, cultural and religious abdications of responsibility to a child, who is considered as a un-gendered non-entity. ‘Not-Kaiviti, not Kaindia, not from Viti/Seejee/Fiji,’ - not from India, and not in-between. Suicide, death, tears, blood and stones make no difference to this construct of cultural divides that still dwells on the colonial policies in the postcolonial world of new cries of indigeniety, cultural fundamentalism or diasporic yearnings. In the instance of Chand’s poem there is a constant undercutting of the fallacies of such constructs by an exposition of alterity positions between Fijians and Indo-Fijians in an exploration of the human condition that precedes yet begins inscription in language;

An hour ago I saw them lower my father into his grave
While I stood watching from a distance
I didn’t belong.
I knew he was my father
But they pretended he wasn’t:
I was a Kaiviti in their eyes
I was a bastard child
I had no right to be there,
Even to see my father for the last time. (165)

There is not just lamentation at being not-Kaiviti or not-Kaindia for there is also the flung ‘stone with all the fury of a bastard child’ (165) The stone and act of flinging question identity and representation as homogenous constructs assuming whole societies without place for difference or accommodation of individuals. Or the ‘blind spot’ as we move on to in Frances Koya and her poem like ‘Ethnocentrics Dream in Black and White’, To see the world/As only you can/Would mean climbing/Into your blind spot/I can’t do that. (131)
Frances Koya describes herself of mixed origins and counts among these an Indo-Fijian father. Her collection of poems *Of Schizophrenic Voices* (2003) is the first and only collected works of any genre by an Indo-Fijian women writer. Koya is appropriated as an Indo-Fijian female writer from her concerns as a writer and poet as much as for her genealogical links. Koya informs her poetry from a rich tapestry of influences, genealogical and otherwise as in the poem, ‘In these Small Islands’. Her world is pan-Pacific and moves from ‘whiteblack coral sand’ and “lushgreen forest floors” and into ‘Fales and Bures and Frond Shack Huts’ and the ‘corrugated edges’ of grey roofing that houses my brain’ of ‘The Spirit of the Tree’ (2-3). In Koya’s poems are worlds of a consumerist- materialist Pacific as corruption of the body and soul are found in “Nucleat-ed Pollution’. Etched in the ‘beggary’ worlds of the ‘indian man-lonely on the street corner sits amidst a handkerchief of brown coins and the ‘fijian man-girl…amidst a handkerchief of tarseal roads”. (15) ‘Hello Dad, Can we talk?’ addressed to her Indo-Fijian father is berating and nostalgic in turns about his absence since ‘my tenth birthday’ and ends with the observation on her children playing with their father, ‘They pull his face towards them/And demand undivided attention/I want to do the same/But you are not there/ (19)

Genealogy, as sites of difference between generations, and of the temporal and spatial shifts in identities and representations that are incurred in such shifts, occupy a central place in her poems. Koya’s poem ‘Voices’ in *Niu Waves-Contemporary Writing from Oceania* is a sustained look at her paternal genealogy. It begins with her ‘great-great grandfather Jacob whose eyes never saw past the Arabian shore…’, and moves to Grandpa Isaac who died ‘Bonemarrowshirvelldrying at 29’ and was a ‘bankrobbing staunchmuslimfourwivedmalvi’. (69) And her father ‘Imcheli/Sitting in his wooden C.I.D. officechair’ tells of loss of loot, love, mansion when the family leaves ‘Labasa’s golden sunshine foreever.’ (71). As Koya recounts the surname ‘Koya’ comes upon her as her grandfather had ‘gamble(d) away the birthright of his son to a mate’ and wonders ‘…but were we Sheiks, would that have made us different people? I don’t know.’ (70) And then traces her fathers matrilineal links through Koya maiden middle name of Zuleika, the name of her grandfathers fourth wife. The lineage is traced then to the genealogical turns of naming to the fact that ‘Zuleika was Mohammed’s youngest wife’ and
engages with their story of fidelity, trust and suspicion where ‘white petals turning a deep rich golden yellow…proving her trueness to him…and all was well for Mohammed.’ (72). Genealogy is tied to memory with a twist on Koya’s 10th birthday for its was also the day ‘The memory/Remains hazy in its purpleness of death. My/Father/The herogod in my eyes becoming a shadow fading with the rising sun.’ And it was on ‘That day my metamorphosis was completed./I went from butterfly childhood to a non Indian Indian. Know what I mean?’ (72) Koya engages in this metamorphosis to bring out another instance of a removal and absolution of identity of ‘non Indian Indian’ as a twist on Trinh’s intention on ‘difference’ as an ideology of separatism.

The separation is not like the theoretical constructs of some instances of academia/feminists who acknowledge ‘difference’ while subtly excluding Third World women, at the same time. Instead it is an application of ‘difference’ in a questioning of origins and of authenticity, not just of the female body, but what becomes of it in the prevailing identity politics of race, culture and religion, for the child of ‘difference’. The dominant culture imposes, in this case Indo-Fijian patriarchal constructs of religious/cultural identity as a reductive, totalizing practice. And the female body of the Indo-Fijian diaspora and their inscribers in the writers among them exemplify in their words/works/text/meaning strategies for interrogating totalising and universalising discursive manoeuvres of dominant cultures, religious/academic/patriarchal/political referred to in this thesis. Trinh names first world academics and feminists as part of this reductive institution/process but as is evident from this study of the Indo-Fijian female body and their inscriptions, just as easily academic and feminists from their own cultural space.

Divides and removals of identity are present in Koya’s poems as it engages the world of children in her poems through her own recollection, inclusions of her children and as point of reference for her range of polemical to love and erotic poems. In ‘A Dream of Conscious Insanity’ the bloody images of the opening stanza are undercut and spaced in turns for ‘It is all an endless journey that begins at death/ A vicious rhythm of bleeding and birthing and fucking/Then dying and life begins.’(65) Images of self-determination, ‘Christ was not a man to
over boil his cabbages/So why should I waste my time explaining conforming/Let me live! Be Free!’ are linked to societal and religious excesses. So the ‘…drunk priest/at the pulpit/makes an arse of himself.’ And as ‘I wash my hands/Before I can read the bible so that I am clean’ for the chance to talk with god ‘to hear his voice just once/To look in his eyes I would go blind with ecstasy,’ the mood swings with the ‘pupae’ dangling from a branch ‘…falls to crash/Breaking into a million pieces.’ towards a resurrection of sorts through the final stanza.

A little boy carefully collects each torn piece of skin and glues it together
With his saliva and tears
And the butterfly is stillborn
But it soars higher than all the others
Even if it’s colours are a bit wonky
Love conquers all You know
It is the sound of children’s laughter
Of wet
Kisses on my cheek
Of warm tiny hands
Tugging me along
Of hugs and cuddles
And tickles
That keep me
Sane
And I know how it feels to live {and be loved}
At last… (69-70)

Koya’s poems find voice and their feet for the Indo-Fijian female body and for the child. Each absent from most of existing debates on Indo-Fijian identity and representation to which Mosmi Bhim adds the next voice. Mosmi Bhim has been a journalist and youth activist and counts membership of the Niu-Waves Writers Collective as among her writing influences. Bhim’s works, mostly poems, has been published in various issues of Mana, in Niu Waves-
Contemporary Writing from Oceania and more recently in Bittersweet. Bhim’s polemical poems such as ‘Colour My Country’ in Bittersweet are directed at racial divides and often angrily at the coups in Fiji and its violence. Yet, in the midst of the anger and pain is an alterity deconstructing sensibility so that ‘Colour My Country’ is as much a diatribe by a man, as it is by a woman, or a child belonging to any racial/cultural/ethnic grouping in Fiji. For her country is:

‘Bleeding like soldiers shot in the mutiny…/ Shivering like the overtime garment worker, …/ Burning like the sugar cane field torched in the field…/ Mourning like the farmers evicted from their home of decades…/ Innocent as the lush trees, golden sands and smiling sun…/ Uncertain like the leaders of Fiji who cannot find unity…/ Mother, like the sisters who look after orphans at Saint Christopher’s Home…/ Scared like the parliamentarians held hostage from May 19, 2000…/ Hopeful likes its citizens migrating overseas…/ Envious like the parliamentarians, who lost the 1999 elections…/ Precious like each coin is, to the beggars on the streets of Suva…/ Trying like the Fiji Sevens Team in the Hong Kong Finals…(369-71)

Bhim in this poem provides significant illustrations of Appadurai’s idea of ‘multiple loops of fractured deterritorialization’. He provides examples of cabaret dancers, prostitutes, and pornographic films in India. Bhim engages in the various fractures through the divides of colours as metaphors of these fractures. In these fractures is a female Indo-Fijian body makes it own assessment and comments on Appadurai’s qualified statement on the ‘the tragedies of displacement’… and ‘…the economics of global trade and the brutal mobility fantasies that dominate gender politics in many parts of Asia and the world at large.’ (226)

There is in these instances of Indo-Fijian women’s writing a serious engagement with this idea of ‘brutal mobility fantasies’ and the experiences of the diasporic female body. A gap usually filled by writers from the second shift diaspora and present largely as absence in the memoirs in the previous chapter. Brij Lal’s ‘Marriage’, for example, is the exception in the presentation of
the various patriarchal constructs that prey on the gender politics of migrations, especially of the mail order bride, in this case Mumtaz, and her brutalizing experiences in marriage, friendship and migration/movements. Bhim’s poem grapples with the personal, cultural, social and political in intense, direct and seemingly autonomous stanzas bonded by the different colours when the country is a particular event, subject or object. In it is an overlaying of symbols, metaphors, icons and tropes on Fiji burdened by divides of race, history, culture and modernity. The predicament comes about in a voice that in one instant is self-absorbed in various abdications and overthrows of authority to one that is refractive on innocence and mother. There is no sense of ‘enclavistic existence’ or inability to articulate positions in the poem. The positions are definite and very much in the here and now. There is an attitude to the positioning and questioning of abdications and overthrows of responsibility, power and sanity derived in the various colours as multiplicities of identities and representations.

Part of the Bhim oeuvre in poetry is an engagement with the sexuality of the Indo-Fijian female body. A body inscribed by the prevalent pedagogy with the wraiths and whips of girmit overseers and the salt and mud of husbands and men, serviced sexually to right the wrong of a mixed up ratio of mars and venus. Continued with the erasures and non-inscription in official literature and minor starring role in Indo-Fijian literature. Bhim asserts her sexuality in erotic and love poems like ‘Rural Reveries’ and ‘Can’t Wait’, finally reaching the fever pitch of ‘unstoppable lovemaking/that’s what I want from you’ (98) in “Hot Wet” in the *Niu Waves-Contemporary Writing from Oceania* (2002) anthology. And the incantations and moans of “Kama Sutra”, ‘Move your hands down my body/Lick my body with your tongue/Enclose my hips under yous/And enter me deep/Enter me deep.’(102) There is no pretense at a high intellectual plane of metaphors of euphemism but a direct, controlling directive to ‘Bite me/Suck me/Fuck me/Love me’ (102) The refrains are chant like rhythmic and explicit in its urgings and assertions of the female body.

And the assertions are not just through the sexual, it is also in the refusal to play along with bodies that are rough, mean, violent entwined with the confusions of love, marriage, domesticity and family. So in ‘Love Bites’, the teenage romance title is undercut by “Trapping my
heart/under a knife” and “He asks me/ “What have I done wrong?” and the familiar lies and posturing of the misogynist “Squeezing”, “Stepping”, “Crushing”, “Kickinig”, “Squashing” on “Heart”, “Body”, “Hands”, “Face” are abruptly undercut and dismissed, ‘No, this isn’t love, it is pain./And I won’t have any more of it./So fuck off!.’ (107) Bhim has more than passing undertones of the works of Banfal in assertions of bodies, sexualities and narratives, awareness of the alterity constructions of Chand and Koya, and shares concerns with the individual spaces of the gendered/sexual Indo-Fijian female body of the next writer in this section, Sangeeta Singh.

Sangeeta Singh, a Niu Waves member, is a gay and lesbian activist and writer. Most of her works are anthologised in *Niu Waves-Contemporary Writing from Oceania* (2001). She asserts her sexuality through the thought-provoking imagery of a gendered and eroticised Fiji, but not without an inscription of many other bodies and selves to inform her text. “Lips of a Woman’ straddles the world of lesbian love and sexuality with an assertion of a civic society and of her own links to Fiji as land as home as life as ‘Vanua”. The poem begins with an exploratory feel to site fear and lips and women in relation to her ‘her heart and soul shot with M16s and stones/’ and of the women who ‘hushes her foetus into silence/in case the sound penetrates, screams/out of the damp forest/into (the ears of) rebels, radicals, revolutionaries, racist/rapists, realists./’ (111)

The site of political and social inequities and Fiji’s recent bloody and blood smeared history is brought into relief against the special vulnerabilities of women and children in coups, revolutions and assertions of indigeniety and creation of a ‘settler’ or Other of the Indo-Fijian/ and for the Indigenous. For Singh this assertion is through a proclamation of belonging to land, place, island, Fiji, ‘I will flood/to reclaim/without fear/in the vanua/which bore me.’ (111) Singh enters, interrogates and claims as birthright where blood, spilled, virginal, menstrual, birthing, or drips/slipped into soil, Vanua, place and sites her in Fiji. This sitting is claimed and asserted over in the same breath as that of questioning significance of a woman ‘when she kisses me quickly/wary of homophobia/breaking us down/into molecules that/liquidates lesbians into invisibility.’ (111)
Prevalent homophobia and cultural prejudices and barriers to gays and lesbians endemic to Fiji are among other things institutionalised and archived in law. It exists across racial and other divides, but especially in the Indo-Fijian diasporic bodies culturally and through religion, as taboo subjects. Singh works against a double bind of doubled cultural (Indo-Fijian/Fijian/Male/Female) bigotry and prejudice against gays and lesbians. These are the binds that Singh engages with in ‘Insides of the Water-lemon’ to explores the esoteric and aesthetics of life as a lesbian Indo-Fijian body. Singh uses the image of the snake to begin a fevered dance of exploration of the insides of bodies, female, pregnant, waterlemon, swimming in a pastiche of erotic food fetishes ‘of food on roti/I see labia pulled apart with two hands/…I close my eyes and swim into her mouth/with salt lemon water.’ (117). This swimming is escape, freedom from in ‘a sack of warm burnt out emptiness which/I scatter the seas with while a mantra is/repeated into my head by the pundit and the sea.’ (117)

The images of motherhood, maternity, sexuality, birth, death, and refusal to be punctuated by the pundit, the mantra or other avatars of patriarchy collide in the last stanza.

Residents of my mind refuse to drown
all slid through some oblivious point and
there’s a constant beat
simultaneously gushing milk and blood. (117)

Singh’s short story ‘The Web of the Full Moon’ in on the other hand engages with the cross-cultural experience in Fiji with an absent yet innate spiritual presence of the indigenous in a buddy story of a fishing and beer drinking expedition. In the darkness the five male Indo-Fijian youths make merry drinking beer and losing their bearings in the mangrove swamps and ‘eroded banks of the river, high above the mangroves and onto the eroded banks of this once handmade channel, an escape route inland for Ratu Seru Cakobau’. (‘The Web’ 48) Intimacy with land, sea and river seem to be a recurring motif in Singh’s works and reflects the heterogeneous affinities of the Indo-Fijian diaspora, especially with their places of birth or growing up in Fiji. This
location of locality in the short story is extended through an appreciation of indigenous customs and myths and legends. The drunk group of friends fall asleep after following a figure in white, part of local folklore told to the group by Ritu, ‘There she was, anticipating the man with the spear, for 68 endless years. She whose roots lay among the ancient pieces of pottery. Inside her kete, she carried the remains of her beloved.” (49). The group remains transfixed on the scene before them to cross over alterity constructions of Indo-Fijians and Fijian myths and folklore. The dialogic construction moves from the irreverence of youth to a somber reflection on place and belonging and acknowledgement of a past of that they are now part of. Reflections on issue of a more immediate nature are on hand for Bhavna Vithal, in her declaratory poems on the assertion of the female body in the middle of the Indo-Fijian diasporic identity. A world continually taken over by in the movements of modernity, globalism and assertions of the self, with an awareness of a community, but not an overwhelming sense of a past or attachment.

Bhavana Vithal is another writer with roots in the Niu-Waves group. She comes from a mixed Gujarati-South Indian background and we see elements of this in her writing, especially in her use of language, Gujarati, and her intra-cultural context for familial writing. A stage performer and actor, Vithal is a regular performance poet and reader in Fiji. For this thesis an unpublished manuscript of short pieces by Vithal is being engaged with. The strength of her narratives comes from an assured and often acerbic take on male and female relationships. Her female characters are empowered to take charge of their bodies, sexualities, and relationships at all levels. This comes across in the angry selfish female protagonist of “I can’t makeloveanymore” tired of her routine with her husband of five years and excited with the prospects of her affair with a married man. In one breath she dismisses her husband and demands attention/sexual fulfillment on her terms with her lover. Vithal ends her story abruptly

“What…I can’t talk to you…my wife…”

“I don’t care. I want you right now.”

“Your husband…where…?”
“I can’t wait…I need you…”

“Ok… I’ll just…give me ten minutes.”

The irony in this empowerment is that the protagonist by her selfish, sexually charged demands disempowers a relatively loving husband and the wife of her married lover in the one breath. However, in a style that is definitely an all or nothing approach in relationships, marriage, sex and familial bonds, there is no apology or introspection. Vithal provides a new dimension to the emerging wave of the decidedly feminist voice in Indo-Fijian writing by making no apologies for her female characters most of whom are as unfeeling and selfish as their male counterparts. And she does not let up in the next piece, “Dolly”, as the superficial, self-absorbed title character agrees with a swift touch up of her face for a divorce from a loveless marriage:

“ Do I get this house and the cars?” She finally asked quietly.

“Yes. And a generous allowance”.

Dolly stared at him, contemplating.

“Fine, then. Let your lawyers draw up the papers, and if me and my lawyers are happy with it, I think that really is the best course of action to take under these circumstances.” She said primly. She got up and walked over to the mirror in the corner of the room. “Oh my God, I look awful! I need to go touch up my make up.”

Dolly is equally mercenary about the baby whose impending birth she had just announced to Michael.

“Dolly” Michael called out to her. “What about the Baby?”

“Don’t worry about that, Michael, I’ll make a doctor’s appointment first thing tomorrow morning”, she said, without turning around.
In another disconcerting moment Dolly does not seem capable of thoughts beyond her self. Her independence and control over her body and where it goes in this life seem to be her only concern. The material body overarches everything else. And equally complicit in is the self-absorbed world of Michael who makes a similar decision to divorce declaring that the baby will not make the marriage work, only to ask later, as if on the presumption that Dolly will divorce and keep the child as a matter of obligation. No. Instead there is mutual abdication of responsibility.

In “Grandmother” Vithal visits the familial paternal Gujerati intra-cultural world that is sometimes seen as a stock site for Indo-Fijian literature by Subramani, Satendra Nandan and Raymond Pillai. In a highly personal account of death, Vithal inserts little markers of her own in terms of the Indo-Fijian female body, past, present and future, in a story that begins with the removal from the narrative of her father and uncle at beginning. In the all female narrative now left to explore a world of failed marriages, journeys and the diasporic dispersals of grandmother’s offspring. The narrative as ever is swift and the images move in and out of oscilliations between domesticity, bigotry, senility/the infantile and death. So Jaswanti foi (aunt) was ‘always complaining’ but can’t be blamed ‘as her whole life was dedicated to looking after her parents. After a failed marriage that lasted only a year, she had packed up, left her husband, and moved back home.’ And a whole history of a life is told plainly but to great effect as the protagonist reflects;

Grandmother was 90 years old. She had traveled on a cargo ship with her husband when she was only 16 to a country that she didn’t even know existed, and had borne 14 children. Her husband had died almost 10 years ago and most of her children and their off springs were scattered across the globe.

This is a sustained portrait of a past and present that comes to life with a female insistence of the frailty of life and of journeys undertaken and journeys taken away from her by her offspring. It does not meditate on the pathos of the moment of the first dispersal. It is because it was. In
between the guilt of not having visited Grandmother, the protagonist, I, sees no longer the eye, because there is Jaswanti foi ready to interrogate her absence and life.

“She’s been sick for quite a while now, poiri, why you never come and visit? You busy at school? - Or you go to parties all the time or what? Every time your mother say you never at home – tame kartu whu che, eh?”

This interplay of language between English and Gujerati helps site both the interfering aunt and her niece in the spatial and temporal negotiations now taking place around the dying. As it were. For both aunt and niece do not realize that grandmother is dying and actually dies in the process of being force fed Complan because, ‘She can’t eat solid food. Just like a baby now, she eat baby food.’ The path is complete in the orthodox Hindu view of life and death, in the infantile senile death, of the grandmother. In a clever underplaying of events around the dying, Vithal, presents the more mundane concerns of the Aunt, “She’s got a new trick now, she won’t swallow her food. She keeps it in her mouth and then spits it out, all over me. You keep on checking her mouth, ok?”

Jaswanti foi is simply carrying on with life as the world weary long suffering nursemaid to Grandmother. She carries on with her usual comments borne out of routine in between giving instructions on how to feed grandmother and sarcastically complaining about errant relatives not meeting their familial responsibilities. The protagonist takes control after the initial shock of discovering Grandmother has died and sets out purposefully to tell ‘my father and his brother that their mother was dead.’ “No Reaction”, is the other short story where Vithal explores her Fiji-Gujerati Indo-Fijian milieu but the story lacks the interplay of events and characters with the same subtlety of shifts on gender and generational roles as she does in “Grandmother.” The story begins promisingly enough as ‘When Harsha Bansda found out that her husband, Mohan, was having an affair, she did nothing. Her eyelids did not even flicker when she was told that this affair had started two years ago.’ However, under interrogation from Heena, a caricature of the fat nosy gossiping Gujerati housewife of fiction, films and television from India, Harsha
maintains her stoicism in order to keep face. And at the end of all that she would confront her husband privately, if at all, ‘It wouldn’t be easy, but whatever the outcome, this was their problem, and Heena could just die of curiosity, for all she cared.’

‘Her Marriage’ is a simple sketch of an unhappy marriage where the female is a victim as much of her own action/inaction and out of pride for having married against advice to a man who say’s all they need is to “…get used to each other.” Vithal underscores female frustration in a non-communicative relationship with the breaking of plates. The protagonist wishes ‘…she had broken the plates over his thick skull…’ for looking up at her ‘…as if she were insane and asked her if she was about to get her period.’ when she had asked for them to talk. Even in this rather subdued etching, the female protagonist assesses her situation and decides to ‘To make the coffee the way she liked it.’ This small action of domestic rebellion and self-assertion significant but is unlike the rebel-rousing protagonist of ‘The lost Lighter’ who smokes and dabbles in ‘pot’ to assert her individuality. ‘We had probably smoked eleven joints between the four of us, and we were all totally wasted, as high as Mount Everest, tripping with Lord Shiva.’ This is a stream of consciousness piece that picks up on male macho practices and domination of women by ‘anally-retentive’ sorts who have such a controlling influence. To the extent that, ‘My friend (who) used to be totally cool before she met him; now she probably asks his permission before going to the toilet.’ The loss of individual control over movement is portrayed as the literal, in this instance exemplified by the play of words on the anally retentive, a women’s bowel/gynaecological movements, underscores domination by the patriarchal structures around them.

And in ‘Blood Thirst’ the lone female protagonist in a moment of fear thinks about relative safety with a male but dismisses the thought as quickly as it comes for ‘Not that her ex-boyfriend would have done anything worthwhile – all that dope smoking had practically emaciated him.’ Another piece ‘Morals’, is set against the backdrop of a seemingly incestuous relationship between Rameeza and her uncle Zaed, her father’s half-brother. The Muslim communal and familial context surrounding the relationship while not fully developed commits to the story an edginess that ends with a slap for Rameeza from her mother, and insinuated
revenge beating of Zaed. Vithal works the narrative with self-assertion and individuality as Rameeza recognizes her relationship with Zaed as illicit and is concerned with the ramifications for her family, but nothing matters except her pleasure and feeling of control. Upon finding out about the affair Rameeza’s mother declares her a ‘slut’ and laments ‘How can we ever show our faces in public now? Everyone will be sniggering behind our backs. What did we do to deserve this? Ya Allah!’ And Rameeza asserts final control over her body, sexuality and individuality by slashing her wrists. Female assertion in these ways and even over relationship and love in Vithal’s works is not only through this method or more traditional ways such as marriage. In “Escape” a more soft even romantic tone, but not exactly to the Mills and Boon format yet, the lovers end their tryst by deciding:

They would not keep in contact with each other. They had agreed about this the day before at the coffee shop. They wanted this memory to be sacred. Their time together was an escape. A fantasy. It had to be left as it was. Further communication would bring reality into it.

After a couple of days of sexual and emotional fulfillment the female protagonist asserts control in measured unemotional terms. As if to echo a protest against the experiences of her earlier stories of its entanglements and pressure brought about by patriarchy, structures and forces on her female protagonists in marriage and/or illicit relationship, or affairs. The forces of movement and spaces underlie Vithal’s work as a dormant context but in the works of installation artist, Mohini Chandra, it is forcefully brought in installation art, using multi media forms.

Mohini Chandra, born in England, of Indo-Fijian parents spent her childhood moving between Fiji and Australia. Chandra is a multimedia artist based in London and justifies her choice of form as, ‘For artists such as myself, this choice of multimedia, in the broadest possible sense of the word is, I believe, highly indicative of the very fluid and amorphous cultural position in which we find ourselves.’ (DARE) Chandra uses photographic, video and film images of her
own family and of friends to explore histories of migration - voluntary and forced - and questions of shifting cultural identity in a post-colonial era. Chandra bases her art on an assertion as a child/woman of diaspora and her particular movements that negate any notion of a 'fixed' cultural identity. Her 'Album Pacifica' (left) made in 1997, is an installation of 100 family photographs, framed with the backs facing the viewer, the images to the wall. Handwritten captions on the back of each - some descriptive, some factual, some comical - are the only clues we have as to what the photographs might look like.

The overall impact of the pencil written notes is one disjointed, dislocated photograph that gasps for light and searches for identity and representation, yet denies itself and the viewer of the opportunity to do so by the visual. Instead we are left with lots of pencil lead abstraction on what the image may be. The result is a questioning of the spaces left out in trying to imprint the one identity or representation on the back of a photo paper, where both the photograph and its absent negative exist with their images facing a wall. So a framed back of a photograph speaks of the absent image of the diaspora in yet another landscape through the cipher, ‘After the thaw... I still felt cold... Trying to make a lawn & to conquer the land I lost myself to England!’

(DARE) Seen together the backs of the photographs build up an intriguing narrative of relationships, displacements and departures. These objects, scattered throughout the diasporic reaches of Chandra’s family, have been collected and united in this display. They force us to give an alternative reading to the traditional family photograph album and require an imaginative leap in translating the scant comments or dates into images and personal histories.

With so little information we must try and read into the textures and stains of each one, searching for signs. One frame contains a photograph in landscape format with a faint caption which speaks volumes. It simply reads:

nice
nice
ugly

(DARE)
Chandra uses multi-media in her work to create layers or levels of meaning and to suggest all the cultural influences which she draws upon. She also plays with the relationship between words, stories and pictures and this is of relevance to the ideas of identity and representation in this thesis on the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Chandra in her video installations, ‘Travels in a New World 1’, 1994 and ‘Travels in a New World 2’, 1997, illustrate her concerns as an artist of the diaspora. Chandra presents global positioning of this diaspora and its flux of identities and representations by experimenting with digital media to play with photographs and video images of her scattered diasporic family.

The result is a literal flowing mix of photographs against video streaming of the sea, beaches, islands to present the continuity of places/spaces/time with individuals/families/communities of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. This is not an admission to globalisation or a mythic indenture/girmit/India as centre, although the trinity are present as images/traces as a valid part of reaching across from isolation for care, memory and a people. So the dispersals and the familial in the images links as people/family/Indo-Fijian with added hyphens of places of birth/residence/work. Chandra’s work maintains continuity and relevance through its designs of mapping of moments through, images, movement, sound, music, layering to create a polyphony of images, ideas and sounds to create life of/for/by the diaspora.

Art questions latter day diasporic shifts (as indeed were the diasporic shifts of Indenture) as part of the prevailing machinations of globalisation and transnational capitalism/colonialism. The answer lies in the search through the installations of kin and family as instances of safety nets of ‘interest, care and memory’. Chandra writes, ‘As a child, I migrated to several countries, several times, between Australia, Britain and so on and it was always the act of packing crates and tea chests that unfolded meaning.’ (DARE) In the installation is an epistemological inquiry splicing together in words, pictures, videos, lighting and personal artifacts of dispersal such as the ubiquitous tea chest, a personal anthropology, excavating the threads of her family's disparate past to inform a wider view of the South Asian diaspora. Decidely autobiographical, her work refers to more broadly shifting identities, and attempts a representation that is inspired and
inspiring. 'Travels in a New World 1' is a walk-in installation consisting of tea chests acting as light boxes. The illuminated transparencies on their tops are family photographs, taken by Chandra as a child on a trip to Fiji in the 1970's. Images and stenciled text on the sides of each box represent issues such as trade, slavery, religion and resistance. The soundtrack repeatedly asks the question 'Where do you come from?' (DARE) To silence!

Chandra's next work in this series, 'Travels in a New World 2', is also a walk-in installation on the theme of diaspora, this time using video projections. On a large wall, a grid with one black & white and five colour images is projected. The colour images are 'talking heads', each with an ocean backdrop, facing the camera. These headshots are occasionally replaced by a shot of waves breaking on the beach. There is a jumbled soundtrack consisting of these five people each talking about an image of an Indian family, their family, in Fiji, which was their home a generation ago. The image they are talking about is the one in the black and white projection. Just as Chandra gathered the scattered photos for 'Album Pacifica', so she has 'reunited' her dispersed family to share memories of Fiji. But although each has the Pacific Ocean behind them, they are actually filmed in different countries: Malaysia Australia, America and Canada. (DARE) The water between them, here serves to link them. The island the unstated third construct when land and water meet.

Constructs that we meet in the next chapter on representation of a diaspora in fiction and other texts. This third unstated construct that comes into being in the various representations that provided an alluring idyllic paradise for some. Hell for others depending on which totalizing, reductive lexicon that you wish to follow. The next chapter examines some from each. In representations of Indo-Fijian bodies in fiction written from ‘Outside’ in various writers and texts, and the examination of one form of mass media image, the in-flight magazine of Air Pacific. The rationale for this chapter in this particular part of the thesis is to tease a link between the various strategies deployed to break free of the reductionist theories and examine the ways in which some texts of the world represents the Indo-Fijian diaspora. These form the continuities in this thesis to the next chapter on representations of identities in texts that look in on the Indo-Fijian diaspora, from ‘outside’.
Chapter Five

Representations and Identity of the Indo-Fijian Diaspora in Traveler Texts: Fiction, Media, Non-Fiction and Travelogue.

At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look that) I would put up my finger on it and say, When I grow up I will go there.


This chapter explores narratives in a travelogue, a play, newspaper feature articles/columns/performance pieces, a novel, and interplays of text and images in in-flight magazines to analyse the fabrications and relation of/to exterior reality of identity and representation of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. The introductory section analyses theoretical constructs, from Stuart Hall on identity and representation and Arjun Appadurai’s ‘Mediascapes’ towards theoretical perspectives to study the various modes of representation. Paul Theroux’s Happy Isles of Oceania is examined as the travelogue in the second section. The interrogative analysis of this text engages the politics of the pedantic nature of misrepresentation and factual errors.

The engagement is with Theroux as outsider/insider/in-between narrator, as a traveller/visitor/inhabitant (temporary), of the lived spaces of Indo-Fijian diasporic identities and representation. This third section engages /image/meaning in in-flight magazines of Fiji’s national airline Air Pacific for representations of Indo-Fijian identity as presence and absence. The fourth section interrogates identity and representations of the Indo-Fijian diaspora in the writing of Larry Thomas and Seona Smiles. Their narratives act as signpost texts into the magic-realist formulations on the same subject by Salman Rushdie in his novel Fury (2001) and his essay ‘Fiji’ from his collected non-fiction, Step Across This Line (2002.) The essay, which was first published in the New York Times in 2000, is analysed as genesis for his inclusion of Indo-Fijian diasporic identities and representations in Fury.
I: Texts, Theories and Travels: Stuart Hall and Arjun Appadurai

Critical studies by definition and design end up confronting issues by one-sided knowledge control and discourse dominance. This is due to the intrinsic nature of arguments and issues that force a viewpoint or viewpoints that privilege a particular philosophy, social, economic or cultural group. The trend towards interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary discussions on criticism engenders fluidity in the analytical tools of criticism such as language. The lack of a clear defining language of criticism and discourse leads to multiple starting points that promise heterogeneity yet degenerate into all-encompassing and essentialising strategies of interpretation, analysis and criticism. The resulting situation in terms of theories and approaches to literary and historical criticisms is so complex and conflicting that we require critiques and metacritiques of the critiques, critics, and criticism. In order to avoid this a number of positions and definitions are deployed as the literary tools to analyse the various texts in this chapter.

This distinction is made early, as this chapter brings in a wider variety of texts, written and image based to further the inquiry into Indo-Fijian diasporic identity. The choice of authors, texts and forms in this chapter is not arbitrary. It is based on alterity constructions of Indo-Fijians in narratives. Theoretical constructs derived from Stuart Hall’s definitions and explanations on identity and representation and Arjun Appadurai’s ‘Mediascapes’ form the primary scapes of inquiry into these narratives and images. Texts/narratives/images are analysed for persisting literary/pedagogical/epistemological/media creations of Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representations as stereotypes/types. Absence rather than presence, for example, in various tourism publications and media forms present the on-going nature of the ‘mediascapes’ that erase a whole diaspora.

Appadurai explanation of ‘Mediascapes’ as an aggregation of representations engaging at times with the insider/outside debate is used to analyse the role of constituent narratives, ‘possible lives, fantasies’ and its role in identity creation as well as creation of fissures in diaspora identities and its possible representations. The basis for discussions on identity and
representation are found in narratives, textual/image based/written/produced from “Outside” to engage with a variety of identities and representations. The terms ‘Outside/r’ are privileged as reference to narratives/authors who are not Indo-Fijian, not as a point of exclusion, but as a point of definition of viewpoints from outside the diasopora. The discussion of identity, plurality and representation begins through an analysis of the thoughts of Stuart Hall and its relevance to the central concerns of this chapter.

Stuart Hall (1990) makes the point:

> Practices of representation always implicate the positions from which we speak or write-the positions of *enunciation*… Identity is not transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an accomplished fact, which the new cultural practises than represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a ‘production’ which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation. This view problematises the very authority and authenticity to which the term ‘cultural identity’ lays claim. (222)

The idea of identity as ‘production’ is central to this thesis and the analysis of representations. Representations in texts and its analysis is not to merely to validate/invalidate the production of identity, or the producers of such representations, although this is usually a starting point, towards an analysis of cultural practices in representing peoples and identities to the self, the other and the world. Indo-Fijian identities as types, stereotypes and the problems of convenient ‘identity’ and representation are analysed in the various texts. Identity as performance and as process is analysed to bring out the polyphonous nature of narratives that define, identity and represent diasporas. Individuals perform their identities in various garbs and guises. Hall makes important distinctions on ‘representation’ and ‘positions’ in his contention that “We all write and speak from a particular place and time, from a history and a culture which is specific. What we say is always ‘in context’, “positioned.” (392) This idea of a ‘positioned’ context is used as the starting point for reading texts to inquire on validity of representation/s and identity/s.
Cultural identity is based on application of Hall’s definitions of his ‘two different ways of thinking about cultural identity’:

The first defines ‘cultural identity’ in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective ‘one true self’, hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’, which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common. Within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as ‘one people’, with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history. (393)

This thesis argues against ‘the truth, the essence,” of Caribbeanness or Indo-Fijianess or “Girmitness” and its associated ideologies or consciousness. The argument is maintained in the analysis of various textual representations with a call for the taking of responsibility consistent with the idea of identities as in production and performative sense rather than in identity politics as always being traced and traceable to a history. The first part of the Hall dialogue with identity is recognised for its formative role in creating identities and influencing representations. However, the contention that identity exists as continuum, as a central ideology that determines all future identities is interrogated and engaged with in the various texts. The examination of memoirs and writing from women and children and their particular constructions of a lived/living space are prioritised readings as opposed to mythical incantations of a Girmit past, for example, becomes a starting point of such interrogation of a homogeneous construct.

The second part Hall’s definition of cultural identity presents in summary and reiterates the position of this thesis from the beginning on identity and representation in the Indo-Fijian diasora. Hall in his representation of a “Second and related, but different view of cultural identity” asserts:
This second position recognises that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute ‘what we really are’; or rather—since history has intervened—‘what we have become’. ... Cultural identity in this second sense, is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’. ... Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past.

(394)

The analysis of representations of Indo-Fijian identities follows closely the idea of the various positions and positioning that leads to the creation of images and icons that come to stand in place of peoples and their lives. Indo-Fijian literature from the achieved corpus and the extended engagement with memoirs, Indo-Fijian women writers/artist and references to juvenilia indicate the presence of this transformation. Not only in the texts and its concerns but also in the transformations that exist in each of these sites.

Indo-Fijian diaspora, its identity and representations, takes many forms, some of the literary, historical, and the lived space are engaged with in this thesis in some detail. There are many other engagements that are left out or slip out of these attempts at expropriation. The religious/cultural modalities and its place in identity and representation have been earlier mentioned. The political assignations of identity and representation have always been important markers for the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Political, from the initial migration of girmit to the changes from colonial to independent Fiji and the psyche of identity politics since the 1987 and
2000 coups, and its engagement with colonialism/post-neo colonialism/modernity, globalisation, of the designated ‘third world independent Pacific island state.’

Identity and representation are consistent sticking points of this thesis and it is important to acknowledge the multiple other political acts and moments in between. It exists in the individual lived spaces and sometimes forms the political identity or lack of identity for a generation. Oppressors and dominant classes are transformed from both outside and within as determinants of identity and representation. For as Hall, quoting Foucault, reminds us “Every regime of representation is a regime of power formed’, by the fatal couplet ‘power/knowledge’. Such binaries, important as they are to any critical inquiry, is engaged as the starting point towards further strategies to stop the subjecting of the Indo-Fijian diaspora to one or other critical construct that is reductive and homogenising. In order to ensure that ‘Girmit Ideology and Consciousness’ as ‘knowledge’ as ‘power’ as a fatal couplet does not become part of an inner compulsion. Or as Hall states:

But this kind of knowledge is internal, not external. It is one thing to position a subject or set of peoples as the Other of a dominant discourse. It is quite another thing to subject them to that ‘knowledge’, not only as a matter of imposed will and domination, by the power of inner compulsion and subjective con-formation to the norm. (394)

Texts and images, as site of identity and representation, thus remains and persists, as we find in the tracing of ‘Outside/r’ narratives in the next section, in time / space, outside / inside the cycles of life / death / reincarnation / redemption / damnation / salvation.

II: Paul Theroux: *The Happy Isles of Oceania* and ‘Those surly Indians’

Travelogues are a popular form of writing based on journeys and interactions between travels and experiences that inform movement from place to place, from people to people. Most writers
of travelogues are aware of the larger history of this act of popular fiction and its linkages to a literary past/present and their various practitioners from Maugham to Hemmingway to Rushdie, among others. Unlike most tourist or travel publications that exist as ephemera, travelogues are a much more persistent narrative/text that carries signification of place/people-identity/representation, well beyond the cutting of tickets and itinerary from one port to another. Theroux in the first chapter on Fiji criticises James Michener’s Return to Paradise as a ‘superficial and dated and rather poorly written’...“rehash of his Tales of the South Pacific.” (300). Theroux singles Michener’s the much quoted remark in Return to Paradise, “It is possible for a traveller to spend a week in Fiji without ever seeing an Indian smile.”, as of definite “horror-interest”. (300)

It is against such protestation of superficiality and dated writing in Michener about the Indo-Fijian diaspora, as example, that Theroux’s own travelogue is analysed in this thesis in its representations of Indo-Fijians. Theroux’s travel writing approximates reportage, as in journalism with some of the liberties of the feature writer in descriptions and offerings of opinion. In each case the form requires a close mirroring of reality with room for individual experiences and specific lived spaces/interactions to the acknowledgement of points of exclusion/inclusion. Theroux’s adherence to such general principles of his craft is under scrutiny as much as his validity or otherwise in creating identity and representation of the places and peoples he comes across in his travels. This thesis concentrates on two chapters from Happy Isles of Oceania that are on Fiji: ‘Chapter 12-Fiji: The Divided Island of Viti Levu’ and ‘Chapter 13-Fiji: Vanua Levu and the Islets of Bligh Waters.’

Paul Theroux begins with a ‘peepstone’ look at the geo-politics of Fiji’s place in Oceania in relation to the migratory practices and transferences that occurred in the moving and mixing of people in the Melanesian and Polynesian circles. Added to this is his reprisal of the Book of Mormons version of Pacific settlement as ‘descendents of the Lost Tribes of Israel” to complete a journey from the Lau Group as ‘pretty little star-clusters’ to Melanesian Fiji which is “another story.” Theroux thus early on proceeds to present questionable “facts” about a place and people and being pass it off as ‘truth’, as ‘representative rather than representation of reality.’(301) This
section engages in housekeeping, of sweeping, dusting and cleaning the pedantics of representation in picking out misrepresentations and factual mistakes in Theroux’s text. The issue at hand is the re-presentation and propagation of stereotypes and past misrepresentations in print by a writer, unconcerned or unaware of the responsibilities of a travel writer.

Theroux’s first reference to Indo-Fijians is, ‘Fully half the population is ethnic Indian—Muslims, Parsees, Buddhists-wearing turbans and skull caps, and Hindus with big staring red dots on their foreheads. They run shops that sell over-priced “duty-free” merchandise and native curios, spears, napkin rings, the salad bowls and other nameless-looking bits of hacked wood.’ (290). Theroux misrepresents Indo-Fijian identity, naming them as non-existent, ‘Parsees and Buddhist-wearing turbans and skull caps’, engaging in the creation of a narrative that does not correspond to reality, truth or ‘what is out there’ instead inscribing people who are not there, as there. The Indo-Fijian population does not number ‘Parsees and Buddhists’ with a minority Muslims community. The general millinery fashion does not include a proliferation of ‘turbans and skull caps’, obvious, even to a cursory observer. Their use limited to the minority Sikh and Muslim populations, with the latter usually wearing skullcaps to mosque for prayers and not as part of their general dress code.

This engagement with housekeeping of ‘facts’ of representing ‘reality’ in Theroux’s text is not a matter of being pedantic or an engagement in hair splitting. Inaccuracies in factual representation of people, their dress codes, employment practices, and assorted instances of the everyday contribute in important ways to the ‘re/presentation’ of a people to the outside world and progressively contributes to their stereotyping and vilifying as a ‘type’. Errors of fact and expression are spread throughout the two chapters on Fiji. This includes place names, spelling of names, Akiwila (Aquila), Kamewela is wrongly expressed as Anglicised Fijian for Samuel (Samuela), spelling of Dr S. Naidoo (Naidu as commonplace on Telugu South Indians in Fiji). Or of a South Pacific Beer (Fiji Bitter), and on Rabuka’s ‘…starring role in a Fiji government video about the whole business (coup of 1987).’ (293) The ‘government video’ was in fact a privately funded New Zealand film production of his Rabuka’s No Other Way.
The Indian shopkeeper has been a stock figure of representation in the many travel books, articles and in fiction about Fiji. Theroux does a ‘Michener’ in picking up of intonations of the Indo-Fijian shopkeepers English:

“What is this wooden spindle?” I asked an Indian shopkeeper.

“Gannibal implement, sah.”

“Did you say ‘cannibal’?”

“And gannibal glub,” he went on… (290)

“Fahmerly this island was all ferocious gannibals, sah,” the Indian said, furtively glancing behind him. “Feezee pipple, sah.” (291)

A pure linguistic analysis of phonetics and grammar points at the exaggerations or complete misrepresentation of language towards creation of stock characters. Unless Theroux is referring to a speaker with a speech impediment the phonetics of ‘gannibals’ for ‘cannibals’ or ‘glub’ for ‘club’ are implausible, in the tranfer of [g] for [k]. Or the phonetics of ‘Fahmerly’ is even more unlikely as Fiji English does not have the final syllable r, even when we allow for the first language hearer and second language speaker differences in aspirations and use of short and long vowels.

Theroux, like Michener and other writers on Fiji, is fairly conversant with the history of Indenture and the coming of the first Indians to Fiji. Theroux chooses to gloss over this beginning of the Indo-Fijian diasopra in a bracketed aside (The first Indians arrived in Fiji as indentured labourers to work in the canefields a century ago.) (292) Theroux’s text abounds in generalisations and misrepresentations that begins with assertions of place, people and site for the travelogue as well as a demonstration of the awareness of one-sided diatribes of Michener. Theroux quotes Michener’s stereotypes in Return to Paradise of the Indians as ‘suspicious, vengeful, whining, unassimilated, provocative aliens” and the Fijians as “They are the happiest peoples on earth and laugh constantly.’(300) The early reference is to ostensibly place his text beyond such superficialities and gross generalisations.
Having set up the premise of writing responsibly, ironically as Michener does in his introduction to *Return to Paradise*, Theroux promises to not write such ‘utter crap’ in reference to the stereotypes of the former. Theroux begins with a summary of Indo-Fijian and Fijian relations.

The Indians were equal in numbers to the Fijians who had only recently begun to worry about their being overwhelmed. And even now the Fijians’ spirits were not dampened. They laughed and numbed themselves with kava (they called it yangonna here) six days of the week and spent the seventh in Methodist chapels—every village had one—singing deeply lugubrious hymns and generally condemning the behaviour of the heathenish Muslims, Hindus, Buddhist and Zoroastrians who had, they said, hijacked their country by outbreeding them and voting Melanesians out of office. (292-3)

Theroux misrepresents relationships with generalisations on Fijians and Indo-Fijians in reductive terms. There is for example, the idea of Fijians worrying about Indians and their numbers as a recent phenomenon when history documents such tensions and calls for their repatriation had begun even before Indenture began in 1879 by Fijian chiefs worried about this newcomer. There is also notable repetition of the term ‘outbreeding’ found in Oliver Day’s history tome *The Pacific Islands* as well as in Michener’s animalistic construct of Indo-Fijian demographics and population growth with the references to the ‘mynah bird’—‘The birds are as vicious as the Injians who brought them over. Between them they have ruined Fiji.’ (145) There is retrieval of the stereotypes of Fijians as ‘lazy’ and as kava-drinking once a week penance seeking Church-going types. And the continued reference to the non-existent groups of ‘Buddhists and Zoroastrians’ adds to the misrepresentations, as he fails to account for basic facts on an area of travel.

Constructs of religious and ethnic divides by Theroux extends further in the stereotype of the Fijian as ‘simple’ with connotations of being ‘stupid, lazy and hypocritical.’ Theroux adds as
much in assertions of ‘their simple minded fascination’ with the Gulf War where ‘News reports were like Rambo videos, and they seemed to give all Fijians pleasure.’ (294). Theroux adds to a construct of the militaristic nihilism of a whole people based on a fairly superficial observational experience of video viewing habits of a fairly inconsequential sample. This construct of a militaristic Fijian population impinges directly on the ‘Indians’ who are always casting furtive looks over their shoulders or Vishnu Prasad, the shopkeeper giggling in terror ‘I am knowing nothing about politics. Hee! Hee!’ (297). Again phonetics and expressions of Fiji English are bad imitations of the male ‘India’ voice of popular culture in Hollywood films, a la Peter Sellers et al, in advertisements, and television programs such as ‘Mind Your Language’.

Theroux’s construct of religious and ethnic divides and types extends to Nandi with ‘rows of Indian shops’ and ‘Singatoka a largely Indian town’ (296) and asks for ‘a vegetarian restaurant-one of the great attractions of any Hindu town’ (297). Theroux meets a ‘Church of Christ’ Indo-Fijian vegetarian shop operator who ‘practically exploding’ speaks in the ‘single minded conviction you hear in the monologues of bigots.’ (298). Subash, the church-going vegetarian snack shop owner, speaks in bigoted, hypocritical terms about Fijian women. This construct of the “Indian” shopkeeper is true to earlier types and becomes representative of a people and their thinking and actions, according to Theroux. As in earlier instances a single everyday experience is representative of a whole people. Theroux adds to generalizations and reductive constructs of people by asserting that Indian ‘…girls wore dresses and cut their hair, they had loud liberated-sounding laughter, and they stared at me. Staring at men was something that women in India never did.’ (298). Theroux links looks/gaze/stare inextricably to morals or lack of it and in a misogynistic twist, ‘liberated-sounding laughter’ of women who stare at men, are the sign or promiscuity or invitations of ‘brides in waiting’ wishing to migrate.

Theroux emphasises religious and cultural divides based on observations and conversations. On the issue of observance of Sunday as a holy day of worship and nothing else, as was the case in Fiji after the 1987 coup, he comes across a ‘sanctimonious insistence on de-secularizing Sundays’ expressed with great friendliness. The Fijians were calmly assertive, while the Indians either falsely claimed to be unworried or frankly expressed their hysteria. Both sides seemed to
be equally bigoted, and each dismally ignorant of the other’s culture.’(299-300). The assertion of bigotry and ignorance between the two major races is passed off as the ‘truth’ and ‘representative’ of reality in Fiji of that period. This insistence leads to the construction, consumption and expression of ideas of cultural bigotry and ignorance as another aspect of the Indo-Fijian (and Fijian) as types.

Theroux continuos, where Michener, et al, left off, in his proclamation of things as “Indian.” So “Suva was an Indian city, not only in its population but in its layout as well-‘it had compounds, and tenements, and back-alleys, and the hectic atmosphere of a bazaar.’ (306) In this particular scape the features of the “Indian” or “Indianness” to Suva comes from its population, compounds, tenements, and back-alleys, suggesting that every other city in the traditional definition of a third world country is “Indian”, as they would share such features. Such generalisations continues in his assertion “As in Nandi, nearly all the shops in Suva were Indian, displaying panicky-looking hand painted signs saying Close-Out Sale! and Prices Slashed! – and though the city had the look and feel of a provincial town in India, looking closer anyone could see that it was a polyglot place. It was a mishmash of Muslims and Hindus, representing most of the larger provinces of the subcontinent.” (307). After misrepresenting people Theroux turns to place with signifiers that link it to India by association with ethnicity/race/architecture and the whole archive of the merchandise/merchandising habits based on stereotypes.

In a summary paragraph on place Theroux contemplates:

If Fiji had been an Indian island it would have been charmless and frenzied, a hotbed of litigious warring sects, at each other’s throats. As a homogenous Fijian island it would have been something like the sleepy Solomons, hospitable but hardly functional. As a multiracial place (Indians in towns, Fijians in villages) it seemed to work. What surprised me was that the Indians wanted to live there at all, since they had no political future, were frankly hated, were forced to pay lip
service to a military government, and had to make do with minimal profits. (308)

Theroux engages in the divisive construct of assigning to a place and people, locations that are rooted in an Eurocentric/American definition of nations/peoples and does not engage with the transnational aspects of modernity beyond such centres. Each construct of monoculture, Indian Fiji/Fijian Fiji, is left as part of this colonial definition of centres in Europe and America through the productions of being a British colony to India. There is not effort to engage any of the excesses and failings of the larger colonials project or the invasive nature of Western consumerism-goods/culture/media/entertainment/international relations and global ideologies on war/terror/national security, for example.

The American monolith of consumerism and role as world policeman, (as part of the larger patriarchal excess of their military/industrial/technological nexus), remains just as problematic in Theroux’s travelogue as it is for failing to engage with any level of heterogeneity. There is a singular obsession like a travel itinerary of reducing places to dot points and people to lines connecting such dots. The result is a process of reducing and commodifying people and place to singular and easily consumable stereotypes who are unable to write back to or engage with its own commodification. There is the resulting suspension of identities and representations, in any real sense of either modality.

If each stereotype carries with it a trace of truth, then its process of turning such traces into the truth is very much integral to the narrative ideologue of Theroux as it was for earlier travel writers such as James Michener, among others. The production of identity and representations as a commodity in such writing comes up with an end product like ‘Spam’. Salt is substitute for taste but also for all its components, a homogeneous gelatinous mix of meat, fat, chemicals, that became food of choice across many Pacific islands, after its introduction during the second World War. Theroux makes simplistic and irrational connection between Spam and cannibalism as a further ‘theory’ of the travel writer that takes serious issues of a cultural past and engages in a self-indulgent fetish of ascribing taste to a people.
I had found circumstantial evidence for cannibalism – the liking in Vanuatu (and it had been the case in the Solomons too) for Spam. It was a theory of mine that former cannibals of Oceania now feasted on Spam because Spam came the nearest to approximating the porky taste of human flesh. “Long pig,” as they called a cooked human being in much of Melanesia. And in the absence of Spam they settled for corned beef, which also had a corpsy flavor. (245-6)

This reference removes any insistence that only an Indo-Fijian diasporic nativism is being approached as the main aim of this thesis. Any call for unexamined or an exclusivist nativism would be to engage the dangerous practices of placing in text, cultural fetishes and its commodification, as homogenous constructs. Theroux demonstrates this inability of narrative and narrator to engage with even basic levels of an exterior reality that they are in, or pass through, as travellers, as voyeurs. The lack of basic housekeeping of facts degenerates to even lower levels of the inability to use even the pedantic as a tool to present the Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representations by Theroux. The gross generalizations of attaching to people a food and cultural analysis fetish of Theroux is extended to the Indo-Fijian diaspora, ‘Indian family picnicking leave behind rubbish and sometimes chicken bones. It was a fact that some Hindus, especially in Fiji, hid themselves and secretly gobbled meat, the way teenagers in America sneaked illicit cigarettes.’ (320)

The final section of this chapter examines Rushdies narratives as traveller and novelist in his engagements with Fiji. Theroux makes reference to Rushdie in Happy Isles of Oceania:

Before I left London, I had been in touch with Salman Rushdie - I wrote to him, he phoned me- and I commiserated with him. I considered him a friend; and his confinement pained me-it was like house arrest. I had suggested that he remove himself to a town like this in Mexico or South America or Australia or the Pacific. I had
specially mentioned Fiji. He could be safe, he could be free, and he
could write in such a place. (321)

Theroux points the irony of this advise as the response of Muslims in Fiji is the same as that of
image of the bloodthirsty fundamentalists ready to carry out the ‘fatwa’. Perhaps, Rushdie, took
the advice of his friend as large tracts of Fury engage closely with Fiji in very differing ways to
the constructs of Theroux. The questioning tactics of Theroux once again demonstrates his
tendency to place leading questions to realize a pre-determined answer.

“You know Salman Rushdie?” I asked several Muslims in this distant place,
Vaileka.
“Yes,” one said. “He must die.”
And the other said, “Rushdie is a devil.” (322)

Theroux continues this line of questioning with Munshi who runs a shop in a remote outpost on
Vanua Levu. There is a definite sense of place and insecurity of the diasporic Indo-Fijian in
descriptions of Munshi’s shops and immediate surroundings. Yet, in invoking Rushdie and the
‘fatwa’, Theroux as the following dialogue show, fills in the gaps of memory and knowledge of
the respondent until an acceptable answer/gesture is provided. The construct is again of the ‘evil
Indian’, who in even in his dislocated, displaced, transitory surrounds is ready to condone
killing Rushdie.

“I am like a prisoner,” Munshi said.
This reminded me. “You know Salman Rushdie?”
“I have heard of him.”
“What did he do?”
“Bad things.”
“Is he a bad man?”
“I think so, yes,” Munshi said.
I said, “The Ayatollah want to have him killed.”
“Yes,” Munshi said, and smiled, and made a harsh noise as he scraped at his whiskers with his skinny fingers.

“You want to kill him?”

“Maybe not me. But it is better if he die.” (337-8)

Theroux arrives at various conclusions on Fiji’s political future. The result is a series of assertions and posturing of an awareness of politics, history and the lived space. The narrative begins to turn upon itself in place of any engagement with Fiji’s exterior reality or event keeping with basic tourist brochure facts on place, people numbers, religions, geography, maps, among other texts presented as data or in tables for easy tourist consumption. Theroux places his credibility on the line in engaging with Fiji’s recent demography as he asserts, ‘Fijian territoriality was at the heart of their animosity against the Indians. Fijians did not mind being outnumbered-in fact, Fijians had been outnumbered by Indians off and on from as far back as 1946-what they minded was losing their land to these pagan aliens.’ (331). Theroux exemplifies the confusions of assertions and posturing that comes from a less than honest engagement with a place and its people, and expresses false identities and representations that presents a simplified/simplistic viewpoint as ‘truth’.

Assertions and posturing as truths forms the mainstay of the Theroux narrative as he goes on to pontificate on the ‘shell and curio business’, as ‘terrible; ‘but it was interesting to see how the Indians, who never drank kava, more or less cornered the kava market. They did a brisk trade in yangonna, selling dusty roots or bags of high-quality powdered root to Fijian men who did little else but squat around a bowl and guzzle it.” (307) This is an abject misrepresentation of the facts around yangona consumption in Fiji and the undeniable contribution of Indo-Fijians towards in Fiji as well as in the second shift diasporas. In effect Theroux provides an extension of the profiteering “Indians” from their brisk trades as they do no seem to partake of anything of the country they live in apart from what money can be gleaned from doing business in Fiji. Not even ‘yagona’, a mainstay of Indo-Fijian social protocol, as evident in Indo-Fijian literature and the memoirs and their references to it.
Theroux retrieves Michener’s one more diatribe on Indo-Fijians, to finish his section on Fiji. “It is almost impossible to like the Indians of Fiji. They are suspicious, vengeful, whining, unassimilated, provocative aliens….” (300), Theroux quotes Michener here as only of ‘horror-interest.’ And makes a disclaimer for his narrative by the exclamation:

These judgements are much too silly to discuss. Michener is just another in the long parade of explorers and travellers and tourists who need to invent the Pacific and to make it a paradise. How misleading it all is. The very name of the Pacific is a misnomer. But I should say that the fact that so much written about the Pacific is inaccurate—indeed, most of it is utter crap—intensifies the pleasure of travelling there and gives it so much unexpectedness. (300)

Reading Theroux in this thesis makes the disclaimer ironic in that it engages in the same ‘utter crap’ that is ‘inaccurate’. The construct need not necessarily be that of ‘paradise’. Showing ‘paradise’ as it is, or even not to be paradise, is a commendable intention that Theroux may have had. His text instead creates another set of myths, misrepresentations and factual inaccuracies that makes is as misleading as those texts that he describes as ‘misleading.’ There is a direct continuity between writers like Michener and Theroux in their representations of the Pacific in general and of Indo-Fijian identity and representation, that is specifically engaged with in this section.

The continuity is in intentions as well as of the resultant narratives. The intentions are ostensibly good, as evident in the aims and methodology outlined by Theroux and Michener to preface their works. The resultant narratives show the problems in realizing identities and representations with a lack of engagement of the narrator with subject area. The next section further interrogates engagement, emphatic, or otherwise, that takes place, in another great narrative for the traveller, the in-flight magazine to begin and close a journey. Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representation in ‘Islands’ the in-flight magazine of Fiji’s national airline
brings its own scapes of absence and presence, and forms the texts/images for the next section on ‘Outside/r’ narratives.

3: Images and Narratives: Islands In-Flight and the Indo-Fijian Body.

This section refers mainly to the Volume 4, 2003 issue of the Air Pacific in-flight magazine ‘Islands’ with additional references to the four volumes from 2004 and the first two volumes of 2005. ‘Islands’ is published four times a year exclusively as the in-flight magazine for Air Pacific. ‘Islands’ is analysed as a master-text of the in-flight magazine, the ur-text of the air, about what is going down in the islands. The analysis of the text/images of the magazines ends with a textual reading of covers and the ‘centrepiece’ that remains the same for all the volumes in this study. Such a reading could just as easily be extended to the larger world of tourist posters, brochures, internet domains, billboards and magazines, mostly ephemera, subjects for easy consumption and quick disposal upon returns home. The in-flights magazine is chosen as it ties in literally, as well as a narrative, with the diasporic shifts, movements, travels, migrations and travelogues that feature in this chapter of the thesis. It is an important signifier for the second shift Indo-Fijian diaspora on both outwards flights and inwards flights from both directions of their translocation.

Non-presence/absence is taken as the logocentrism of tourist media representations of the Indo-Fijian body. It follows that just as cultural and political identity is arrived at through a process of alterity, non-presence/absence is arrived at in the same manner. Questions of cultural, political, ethnic, national, diasporic, transnational, sexual, gender identity are removed as the first act of this alterity of non-presence/absence. The lexicons of this quest now becomes a body that is identified, represented in a media construct then erased, as conscious a act, as say a graphic designer erasing, either cloning to blend unwanted images, dots, aberrations or simply cutting and cropping. This visual/virtual erasure ensures the final image produced places the subjects that approved as text, photographs or images. There are other ways of achieving this, a process of editorial selection of stories, images, to leave out or distance the unwanted subject matter, of
the Indo-Fijian, as the other, to the ‘Touristic’ Fiji, as it is to Indigenous assertions of ‘Fiji for Fijians.’

It is argued that Indo-Fijian identity and representations become an aberration in the eye of the tourist marketing drives and its advertising and promotional business plans. The Indo-Fijian body in most instances does not fit in with paradise. There are exceptions to such inclusion and these are noted and explained in relevant instances of the readings of the in-flight magazine. Paradise is not just in the eye of the tourist beholder. It is also the selling point, driving marketers of the Pacific islands as tourist destinations. The in-flight magazine removes this sign, the Indo-Fijian body, before it enters the domain of paradise as a discursive formation. It is removed or placed as pixilated dots or passing textual references before it can become part of a binary, as an interrogation of already formulated and in place fundamentalist epistemological positions on what paradise is, and what is not in it. Such a reading falls within the notions of a ‘catachrestic space’, although Spivak’s term is formulated and used for another purpose by Bhabha.(200) Instead of not wanting to inhabit a sentence, there is removal from text/image/words/sounds but not the ability to be able to criticize, such a removal or to want to make the criticism. In such a removal is the ‘coexistence, contingent boundaries of relocation and reinscription: the catachrestic gesture.’ (200) In this case the relocation and reinscription: the catachrestic gesture, is removal, erasure or a shift in text, lens, sound byte to effect non-presence.

‘Islands”, Volume 4, 2003 has as its cover, a snap of the Sigatoka sand hills, with five travellers walking towards a summit. The travellers are out of focus and placed on one corner of the horizon. It is possible to identify the first two walkers as a middle-aged white tourist couple, with their hands on their hips, or are they passing the water bottle? Behind them are the other three travellers, a man and two children. They could be guides. They are definitely not the generic ‘white’ tourist and could be an Indo-Fijian male body with two children. It is more likely they are Fijian guides for the travellers. It is not clear from the picture what their identity
is but following the general scheme of such tourist representations, the assumption seems fair, even acceptable.

The cover also features two thumbnail images, one of Fiji’s famous Iguana lizard and the other of a row of brightly coloured small wooden fishing vessels. The boats have no names and no human body or its shadow falls on it. The colours of the boats are that of a bazaar, bright reds, yellows, blues, greens and built from a common design. Colours referred to by other travellers, writers as that of the Indo-Fijian diasporic preference for the colourful/gaudy/kitsch in saris, house paints, clothes and other instances when colour becomes choice. The colours are there for visibility when the small crafts make their way out to fish. This thumbnail image is from a full-page image that goes with the article, ‘Fiji’s Magical Colours’ by Anita Ryan. The Lautoka wharf boats belong mostly to Indo-Fijian fisherman. They are absent from the image and the text.

The next page features boats on the Navua river they are plainer, blue and red, colours of the Navua soccer team, or just that the paint was cheap. The clock tower of the Government Buildings look down at a game of cricket in progress, national flags flutter in the background, the colours of the 2003 South Pacific Games, yellow and blue, newly painted the Kingsford Smith Pavilion. There are blurred people in the background, the nearest player has back to camera. A laughing Fijian girl in front of a half cut plastic buoy from which kava is served to the camera. The ‘Freehold Property’ advertisement is slick and features the non-inscribed Indo-Fijian diasporic bodies. The article ends, not an Indo-Fijian body is referred to. Instead a mysterious ‘Fiji-Indian roti bread and curry’ appears for Ryan at the turn point of river trip up the Navua.’ (14)

Pages 15-36 features mostly ads and two feature articles. No mention of Indo-Fijian bodies or images in ads for hotels, land, diving, Fiji Water, an island, Pure Fiji, McDonald’s, mobile phones, rental cars or accompanying text or in the feature articles. Page 37 begins the next feature on the Suva’s municipal market by Tom Cockrem. The Suva market is staple for travel writers, poets, playwrights, documentarist and other narratives on fruit, vegetables, spices, fish,
crabs, songs and gossip. The frontispiece is divided into a central main image underlain with three thumbnail images; big red, ‘Bongo’ chillies that carry the name of a popular Fiji cheese snack; the wheelbarrow boys who carry produce to and from the market in Suva; and colourful plastic plates of thin wild chillies. Indo-Fijians call them ‘jungli mircha’, deceptively small, but very hot chillies. The wild chillies are framed by sweet bananas, star apple, and guavas as a still life or hot or sweet snacks for buyers frozen on top of the picture that features Fijian women selling root crops and the market master with receipt book and money back collecting dues. Indo-Fijian bodies are found away from the centre of the image, in the margin as their women and children. A young Indo-Fijian girl in the centre is the only one in full focus and she looks away from the gaze of the camera. Looking away at another movement to a bus, a car, or a ticket out of paradise.

Four of the six images on the next photo spread features mainly smiling Fijian women, babies and children, the fifth a pair of hands making a pile of river shellfish, kai. The sixth image is that of a hand, fingers at the stretch, knuckles almost white with the strain of holding exactly a dozen plastic bags of fried peanuts, split peas and a mix of snacks. The Indo-Fijian sweet-seller at bus stations is a hand at full stretch. In his stretched fingers is a silent etching of identity and representation, that in the act of inscription as image, foregrounds the sweets, in this case salty, spicy snacks. There is a removal of identity in the selective act of cropping and cutting the full image. The representation is one of a dismembered body in a remove. Finally Cockrem explains the metonymy between fingers and the bodies to which they are attached at the bus station, ‘Every departure gets swarmed with mainly Indian hawkers, selling peanuts, potato chips and chick peas.’ (“Suva Market” 39-40)

Cockrem’s words carry the imprint of other ‘Outside/r’ writers like Michener and Theroux. They are unable to move beyond stereotypes of Fiji and in particular of the Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representation. As part of the travel writing genre the text and image interplay mirrors earlier descriptions by Michener and Theroux for example, in the particular lexicon reserved for narrating Indo-Fijian bodies in the texts on paradise. This thesis does not engage in the politics of the ‘Outside/r’ narrator divides on the basis of their suitability to represent Fiji or
the Indo-Fijian diasporic identity. Instead an argument is sustained that such divides works against identity and representations of all groups as exclusion of narrators/narrators on the basis of ethnicity, culture, gender or location, invariably leads to the assertion of the self and other binary, in its extreme form of creating borders and exclusions.

Correspondent travel writers like Tom Cockrem and Anita Ray are compared with that of ‘Islands’ senior writer Samisoni Pareti to make this point that all narratives/narrators have the right to write across all border. In the final analysis their text/choice of images, have to stand up and be counted, to ensure secular and valid narratives of people and place, of identity and representation. Pareti, an experienced local journalist specializing in tourism features, writes on the subject, ‘Seeing Vanua Levu by Bus’, and features as its narrative centre, a journey around Vanua Levu. Labasa and Vanua Levu are the Other to the idea of a Suva/Viti Levu-centric homogeneous construct of a Fiji. And this Other as place/people/destination is a staple of travel and other writers featured in ‘Achieved Corpus’ of Indo-Fijian literature, various memoirs, Teresia Teaiwa, and Chaman Nahal, among others, who remember and inscribe usually Labasa, and sometimes Vanua Levu.

Pareti’s piece stands out from the staple fare of description of travel as itinerary of Fiji that prioritises a Fiji with the popular images of sun, sea, sunsets, replicated hotel rooms, and the smiling Fijian face. This Fijian face is ethnic and is a carefully selected set of images of the smiling workers, of both genders, in some staple of an island dress or hotel workers uniform with the obligatory flower over the ear or wearing a salusalu, the traditional Fijian lei. Ian Gaskell and Larry Thomas engaged with this idea of the ‘correct’ ethnic Fijian face in a their paper, ‘Performing in Palau: The Politics of Intercultural Theater’ at the 2004 South Pacific Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language (SPACLALS) conference in Samoa. Working on a play to be presented at the South Pacific Arts Festival in Palau in 2004, Gaskell and Thomas discovered the identity politics of presenting a ‘Fijian’ contingent at the festival. There was an exclusion of those who did not look ‘Fijian’ enough by the Ministry of Arts and Culture in Fiji, based on their arbitrary facial/physiological/cultural construct of the ethnic ‘Fijian’.
The construct given as example by Gaskell and Thomas mirrors the image of the Fijian hotel worker (male) doing the Fijian line dance, the touristy *Tuiboto*, (lit; Line of Frogs), a Fijian version of the Conga, on the cover of Islands Volume1, 2005. And it is a construct that is repeated in posters and travel brochures and advertising by the Fiji Visitors Bureau, locally and internationally. Exclusion is intra-cultural and removes not only the Indo-Fijian diaporic identity and its representation from the tourist image of Fiji, but also other ethnic groups, including those Fijian’s who are deemed by this arbitrary construct of ‘Fijianess’ as a face/body/culture as not epitomising the ideal. ‘Islands’ Volume 4, 2004 covers South Pacific Arts Festival in Palau but does not carry among the various images of traditional groups, this image of ‘Fijianess’, as the Fiji contingent and their play do not feature in the photo spread.

Pareti’s narrative/images focuses on the cultural mix, a feature among travellers who patronize the local bus service with its open windows and eclectic timetable. The trip begins in Labasa and takes twelve hours in an open ‘Vishnu Prasad bus’ mostly on dirt roads and traverses most of Vanua Levu and includes a trip to the smaller, third largest island of the Fiji group, Taveuni. Pareti describes the journey to present Fiji in its inclusive whole, the Other, to the tourist image of Fiji. This is most effectively realized in the construct of Sushil, the bus driver. Pareti after a few minutes observation of the logistics of preparation for the journey realizes that ‘…it occurred to me that Sushil was more than a bus driver of this bright green painted Vishnu Prasad bus.’ Sushil is also ‘postman’, and ‘herald’ who ‘…shouts out a message either in Hindustani or Fijian, depending on who runs out, the runner waves to say thanks for the message, and Sushil and his bus drives on. (“Seeing Vanua Levu” 43-4) This engagement is singularly lacking in Tom Cockrem’s similar road trip travelogue where Indo-Fijians are absent from text and images, except a reference to the ‘Curries” in “Travelling Down the Queen’s Road.” (“Travelling” 50).

This is an important marker of identity and representation that moves away from the factually misrepresented accounts of Michener and Theroux, for example, on Indo-Fijians. Sushil is also provider of tea and lunch for ‘his guest’. The everyday lived space of a bus and its transitory sites, of movement and the creation of space of transient passengers, engages forcefully with the
heterogeneous nature of Fiji. The engagement is arrived at by a carefully considered narrative moving beyond the superficialities or abdication of narrative responsibilities in scape of travel writing earlier referred to in this study. Pareti’s narratives makes the transitions beyond the merely descriptive or pedantic to engage with the heterogeneity of people and places, and constructs a narrative that presents an interrogation of the lived space that is valid and informing.

The engagement with the heterogeneous lived space by Pareti ends with a section on the ‘Bus Comedian’, ‘Meet Rajesh, the de-facto bus entertainer and porter! (“Seeing Vanua Levu.” 45). A vegetable seller, who hops on and off buses to make sales, ‘Rajesh likes to liven up the journey by singing a popular Hindi number and dances, much to the delight and cheers of the passengers.’ (45). The photographs like the text foregrounds the heterogeneous lived spaces of Indo-Fijian identity and representation, of passengers in a bus/Sushil the bus driver/small shops, the bus/street scene/market and moves on images of a Tavenui hotel. The resulting effect is an engagement that places it as travel writing that engages with the Indo-Fijian identity and representation but does not provincialise a people and their places as the other, as is usually the case in this genre on Fiji.

Indicative of the shifting interests among tourists for information on the absent Fiji of the Indo-Fijian diaspora and increasingly the large market influence of travel by second shift Indo-Fijian diaspora to and from Fiji is travel writing/books/brochures engaging more with their identity and representations. The influential Lonely Planet Guide and its internet domain on Fiji since 2003 carries a special section on ‘Indo-Fijian Culture’. It presents a concise history of the Indo-Fijian diaspora and mentions cultural activities of significance or of tourist interest. Keeping with this trend, Volume 1, 2005 ‘Islands’ carries a special interest feature on ‘Wedding Hindu Style…’, by local journalist Arthur McCutchan. It is a step-by-step description of a typical North Indian Sanatan wedding in Fiji, with explanations of each rite and its religious and cultural significance. The Indo-Fijian female body is also usually removed from the advertisements and in most tourist text. As is usually the case of Melanesian Fijian female bodies replaced in a metonymic shift by Polynesian female bodies, who for the tourist marketing
purposes approximate the Caucasian female ideals of bodies and faces. ‘Islands’ volume 3, 2004 features in a travel piece on Suva, a small thumbnail picture, of two Indo-Fijian women focusing on their smiles and selected for the exotic image they convey. The image serves to accompany text on ‘shops mostly Indian run, selling gold jewellery, electronic goods, saris and many more.’ (“Suva” 37) Other stories include business interest pieces that sometimes serve as part of their advertising and marketing strategy feature Indo-Fijian businessmen. As the Other to these articles, the advertisements do not carry images of Indo-Fijians. Back-office and kitchen hotel staff, for example, in their literal/lived space stay removed from the tourist gaze and face another removal in advertisements.

The covers of the ‘Islands’ magazine features tourist themes such as a grass skirt clad ‘Ethnic’ Fijian with frangipani stuck behind ear; tourists enjoying champagne on a beach with the sea and a blue sailboat; two white tourist and three local children in the sea; a close up of a rare orchid; sky divers, among others. A feature among images of Fiji in the in-flight magazine is that of the strategies of erasure or removal from the foreground or focus of the photograph or print of the Indo-Fijian body. Invariably the Indo-Fijian body forms the background with the more ‘acceptable’ travel brochure images of Fijians in the foregrounds, not only in the specific tourist sited images, but also from the more public space of markets, bus stands, roads, buses, and from important public events that are covered.

Volume 2 2005 issue of ‘Islands’ covers visit to Fiji by Prince Charles and the accompanying set of images manage a complete removal of the Indo-Fijian body. This is indicative of the usual strategy of erasure from tourist images and questions government official function policy that indicate an exclusion of Indo-Fijian bodies from the ceremonial and the official. A point emphasized in the similar complete erasure in the Volume 3, 2004 issue in the article ‘Death of a Chief’ that covers the death of Fiji’s founding Prime Minister, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara. Or it could be a case of mutual removes indicative of the Indo-Fijian body removing their body from ancient/modern rituals in which they have no place.
As the Other to the covers referred to earlier, ‘Islands’, Volume 2, 2004 features a print from a painting of a Fijian woman, with flower behind ear, embracing another woman or girl with long black plaited hair wearing the traditional Indian costume of shalwar kameez. The cover is accompanied by a feature story, ‘Talented Fonu’, on the artist, Anga’aefonu Bain-Vete, from Fiji, and of mixed ‘Tongan, Tahitian, Samoan, I-Kiribati, Scottish, Danish and English ancestry.’ (70) The cover through a remove from the image as a painting that engages in the first instance of the now familiar ‘back’ of the Indo-Fijian body as a partial concession to inhabiting space in Fiji. The painting is now a photographic image with attendant changes in texture and form as a glossy cover for a travel magazine. As a technique of knowledge production the cover has to respond to the readership of the traveller, of the tourist. It records in the closed eyes and strength embodied in the sinewy lines of the arm of the Fijian woman, a reaching across the normal knowledge productions, of the in-flight magazine cover.

The embrace is warm and inclusive. The dominant images and emotions are of a mother embracing a child and the embrace is returned. The Indo-Fijian body, in this instance, female, is indicated through cultural markers of dress, hair and through a thin traditional Indian decorative edging on a sleeve that is indicative of ethnic identity. Yet, the Indo-Fijian body remains affixed in its removal of face and identity as with much of other tourist and travel narratives, images and media. The context of the painting on the cover is explained in the text of ‘Talented Fonu’ that accompanies the story on the artist:

Her painting depicting an Indian and Fijian woman, in their traditional garb, seemingly greeting each other with a hug, hinted a racial reconciliation theme; it feels like the current mood here after the political upheavals of 2000 when a group of civilians ousted a government her mother, Atu Bain, was a senator in. (71)

This text is revealing in another way. The use of official government information office-speak of ‘political upheavals of 2000’ or a ‘group’ of civilians’ points to the use of propaganda as part of the process of whitewashing images/narratives towards knowledge production in the tourist
media that covers up any reference to political instability. As the Other to the practice of erasure from text or image or media, the cover serves to subvert this prevalence but as this text indicates it was perhaps not an intention of the writing and editing process of this inscription.

Sudesh Mishra (1992) explores some of these tourist brochure views of Fiji in poems like ‘The Grand Pacific Hotel’ and ‘Letter from Fiji’. The latter poem prefaced by an excerpt from a letter written in 1913 by Rupert Brooke to Cathleen Nesbitt from the McDonald's Hotel, Suva, Fiji. The poem begins with an ironic repose of romantic/pastoral ideals of composing poetry, ‘as syrupy as Keats’/ About musky nymphs in emerald pools’ (78). This idyllic repose is undercut by the last line where the, ‘heart breaks to find what the mind fakes’ (78) as Mishra successfully undercuts the romanticism of inscribing what one sees from hotel balconies and verandahs. In the first poem Mishra subverts and undercuts the description that is placed as prologue from the Herald Handbook of 1921 of the Grand Pacific Hotel.

Mishra writes from the point of view of the ‘white-turbaned waiters’ who answer to ‘many sobriquets’ and of which ‘Coolie is the most familiar’ (71). Mishra occupies the space of omissions and ellipses in Michener and Theroux and the tourist text as the coolie declares, ‘I tire of the turban, / The looped cerements of my non-presence. /Some day I will name myself in their script’ (71). It is to this naming of the Indo-Fijian self, of identity and representation in various texts/narratives that engage with the insider/outside binary in inscribing identities and representations. The next section details the interrogation of narratives and knowledge processes/knowledge formations in ‘Outside’ texts beginning with popular Fiji writer/columnist and activist Seona Smiles.

4: Seona Smile: The Outsider Within- ‘Wan Tok Two Talk South.’

The title for Seona Smiles collection of “South Pacific Pieces” is explained by one of the central characters in Smiles writing, ‘Captain Blight’, is a recurring character in her writing, based on
her partner Kisor Chetty. Chetty is given a piece in the collection to recount in anecdotal style the story behind the title. Chetty’s piece deserves mention for bringing in, like Raymond Pillai, Brij Lal and many of the memoir writers, the ‘profusion of clans—Punjaabis, North Indian pundits and of course our very own groups, the Madrassis or South Indians’. These clans are a feature of most settlements, villages, or suburbs among the Indo-Fijian diaspora, in Fiji and recur in the second shift global dislocations. The title comes from the interplay between these clans and assertions of their identity, in this case by Master Madre exhortations ‘…how you are proud to be South Indian.’ (174). The response to this is the frustrated exclamation by Bela, the mechanic, ‘ …complete with his own inimitable English translation: “Baat baat pe jaat ke naam…wan tok two talk South.” (Each of your utterance brings in sectarian difference-One Talk Two Talk South) (174) Wan Tok Two Talk South, as title, is an expression of a sectarian peformative act/utterance/identity for the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Smile’s pieces hardly dwell on such affirmations, but her text brings in her own South Indian, background/experience/interactions through her partner, their children and relatives. Addressing of relatives and family, who provide most of the material for her pieces, reveals this particular South Indian siting, so sisters/in-law are prefixed as ‘atta’s and brothers/in-laws as ‘annas’, the traditional South Indian terms for ‘sister’ and ‘brother’.

Som Prakash describes her writing appealing to ‘hard-boiled urbanites’ to ‘less sophisticated readers from rural areas of Ba’ (ix) An insight into the unique insider/outside world of Smiles is given by Prakash in his observations on communication between her and “Aaji”. ‘Aaji, a staple of the Smiles pieces, is a generic term for paternal grandmother among Indo-Fijians, and in this instance her partners mother, grandmother/aaji to their children. Communication between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law is accomplished as ‘…one speaks in English and the other uses Fiji Hindi almost entirely, with no self-consciousness or patronising linguistic simplifications in between. One suspects it is something like this magic which enables Seona to communicate with, and enchant, her amazingly-wide readership.’ (ix) These qualities of ‘magic’ in the interactions that transcend linguistic/cultural differences provide for a more perceptive reading and writing of the Indo-Fijian identity and representations in the ‘Outside/r’ narratives by Smiles.
Smiles brings in the ordinary, the everyday lived spaces, that communicate the individual in the larger diasporic identities. So a seemingly innocent comment on culinary habits of a daughter ‘...who will only eat chicken giblets bought at Gulam Mohammed’s and cooked by her Aaji, her grandmother on her father’s side.’ (2), brings in place, people and taste that by metonymic associations reveals local identity, a preference for a particular shop, in this instance a shop associated with the Muslim, Halal or kosher practices. Or her ‘secret plans’ to groom her elder daughter ‘to become Fiji’s first female Prime Minister...’ face ‘...a few obstacles. For instance she is ethnically ineligible for the job. So roll on New Year, there are indeed changes to be made and futures to be built, for all of us in Fiji.’ (12) Smiles engage the polemic, usually prefacing it with some personal anecdotal account of an event that leads to making a ‘serious’ comment. In this instance the piece deals with the politics of Fiji under the 1990 constitution, which until its replacement by the 1997 constitution, made Indo-Fijians/Part-Europeans and others not included in the Fijian registry of births, the Vola ni Kawa Bula, ineligible to stand for the office of Prime Minister.

Smiles depiction of scenes of domesticity and its accompanying chaos in the extended Indo-Fijian family gatherings for festivals such Diwali is another staple of her writing. The ‘festival of lights’ Diwali, celebrates the return of Lord Rama from exile, forms part of the mythology for Vijay Mishra’s essay title “Rama’s Banishment…’, giving voice to the popular myths of exile, home and diaspora that this festival is sometimes read by / read to the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Smiles, just as in her writings on marriage, bollywood film evenings, and the social gatherings centred around food and drinks, instead concentrates on the chaos of identities at play. Beginning with the unpredictability of fireworks and ending with the assertion to indulge with the culinary delights of the festival, ‘...the more meaningful aspects of Diwali such as puri and curry, tomato chutney, gulab jamun and murku.’ (41). Or at weddings, the other major Indo-Fijian social gathering, to presents a glimpse of the preparations and priorities behind the event. ‘Marriages may be made in heaven, as the guest speaker at the wedding remarked, but the cast-iron wedding puri are usually made a couple of days before the main celebrations by a gang of ladies more interested in the latest family gossip than in producing the perfect puri.’ (64)
Death, in ‘Chicken Curry’, comes a distant second to funeral arrangements and the obligatory scenes of women weeping reminiscent of V. S Naipaul’s depiction of the professional female funeral goers among the Trinidad Indian diaspora in A House for Mr. Biswas. Smiles engages in a deft re-enactment of the Indo-Fijian diasporic funeral arrangements in Fiji for the Old Aunt now ‘…snap frozen in the mortuary, while waiting for the family diaspora to regroup from Canada, America, Australia, New Zealand and Nadi.’ (159) This inscription of death and funerals relates increasingly the realities of the final rites in the context of dislocation of families through migration and movement from Fiji. So that the second shift diaspora death/funerals occupies significant radio time in the death notices.

Or as Smiles notes, ‘We listen to the death notices on the radio, long lists of the recently deceased, with messages to their relatives throughout the world, calling them to come. “They probably won’t actually hear this in San Francisco,” I said to Aaji.” (161). The reversal of these radio notices is the waiting of arrivals from Fiji for rites to take place in the second shift diaspora. Or as is becoming increasingly convenient for the larger extended family to attend funeral gatherings in absentia on one side or the other. A photo of the deceased standing in at the temporary shed in Suva or in the pillared halls of a funeral parlour in San Francisco, for the translocation/transference of actual bodies of diasporic shifts from death to beyond, for the usual mourning periods among the different sectarian rites.

Smiles places the sectarian marker firmly into place as ‘Auntie’s funeral was to be South Indian style.” (161) Communal weeping and wailing is culturally reserved for females at the Indo-Fijian diasporic funerals in between Machiavellian assertions of kinship positions and control over the actual logistics of the rites. In ‘Chicken Curry’ the mundane of the everyday lived space is now elevated to a communal mourning (for some) is interspersed with these considerations among others:

Pinkie is still accusing her mother’s sister-in-law of trying to take over the ceremony and an argument about the colour of the sari the
deceased should wear rages hotly, the Muni from the other aunt’s family is complaining about her arthritis, and neighbours husband comes to tell her the baby has woken up. We manage to leave with a minimum of wailing and kissing. (162)

There is no simple description of power play, or re-inscription of stereotypes such as the ‘weeping and wailing funeral goers’, among women of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Smiles in much of her writing is aware of such fallacies, and engages in acts of empowerment by women such as Aaji, and the various ‘Akka’s’ and Atta’s like ‘Neighbour Atta’ in the story ‘No Sense’. The prefixes to ‘Akka’s’ and Atta’s as grammatical markers of difference according to age, relationship or in this case simply location. Neighbour Atta is ‘prettier, but much tougher. Something of a hooligan, in fact.’ (164)

There is no patriarchal dismissal of the feminine in Smiles writings but empowerment, not in the traditional narratives of equality of feminism, there is that too, but an interrogation of the female body asserting power through actions, as a right, not as a privilege. The fact is that Smiles women characters are not afraid to wield power or assert their individuality. Smiles sustains an assertion of individuality as she describes the traditional preference common among South Indian women for colourful clothes exemplified by Neighbour Atta. There is sensitivity in Smiles writing to women in general, and writes with great empathy of South Indian women of the Indo-Fijian diaspora through her close social and familial associations/interaction.

In a personal interview Smiles indicated this closeness with her subject:

As part of everyday interactions there is always mention of family and then they come home. Or there is a visit planned. And part of my interaction is observation and understanding where each individual comes from. Sometimes being a writer has its immediate reward, as you draw closer to family, and overcome cultural barriers, by
demonstrating empathy, not for the sake of it, but as part of understanding the individual.

Dress sense or lack of it, does not become a matter of easy satire, as it sometimes does in Raymond Pillai or Satendra Nandan’s works. Instead there is a celebration of this individuality and taste, or lack of it, as well as of strengths, physical and emotional. As in this empowering description of ‘Neighbour Atta’, ‘When she isn’t wanting to punch out your mother or smack the Nausori bus driver on the back of the head, Atta is quite a nice woman. But the sort given to wearing purple, orange and bottle green saris.’ (170). But as Kamlia, another recurring character for Smiles, states as a matter of fact a description of Neighbour Atta comes by to show off her new sari, ‘…bright peacock blue silk trimmed with knock-your-eye-out pink and gold sparkles.’ (170) Smiles undercuts such shows of grandeur through one of her stock characters sarcastic remark, “Pity they aren’t sending her some underwears,” said Kamlia. “I keep telling her that women these days are wearing panties.” (170)

The Other to death, funerals rites and weeping/wailing women, are men like Babu in ‘Chicken Curry’ who take a couple of days bereavement leave because ‘He wouldn’t want to miss a good funeral.” (159) The funeral for the Indo-Fijian diaspora also becomes a fringe social occasion, with the women usually doing/performing the mourning and men making sheds, driving funeral corteges, and drinking copious amounts of kava during the mourning period. Or as in the case of Babu and his mates, having an eye out for nearby friends or relatives who can provide liquor and meat, forbidden at the actual gatherings, particularly among the North and South Indian sects of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Indo-Fijian comic John Mohammed in his routines on stage and in recorded forms, expands on the social aspects of death, through recurring stories of the professional funeral gatherers, including the folk singers/bhajanias listening to death notices on radio to get their next gig, to provide musical accompaniment for the mourning period, but also as a source of free food and yagona. Smiles wry comment on this predilection is through Babu, ‘ “My cousin Bhindhu from Rakiraki will be there, he’s good at funerals,” said Babu, “hinting at good gossip, yagona and even gin.” (159)
Smiles prefaces the section, ‘Coup, Post Coup and Kutu’, as ‘Some memories from a period which wasn’t very funny, but had moments of hysterical hilarity.’ Fiji of this period (post 1987 coup) has been interrogated through various modes of writing so far in this thesis. Smiles engages with the inadvertent humour that comes with all forms of crisis, in this instance the coups, evident in her wordplay on ‘two coups/coup two/kutu- (Fijian for head lice), but phonetically ‘coup-two’. There is in all these word plays the horrors of guns, violence, roadblocks, discrimination, intimidation, torture, indiscriminate imprisonment, and control / censorship of words. Each image of the period carries with it images/instruments/means of death, like the bored soldier, ‘…rifle over his knee, pretending to strum it like a guitar. Cheered me up no end, that did.’ (125). The gallows humour of the image of mimed music is instantly undercut by the deadly seriousness of soldiers, guns and coups.

Smiles brings into perspective the common horror felt by individuals with the culture of militarism and violence perpetuated by the coups, and often brought into quick focus in the memoirs in Stolen Worlds and Bittersweet or the poems of Sudesh Mishra, for example. Or the imposition of internal security decrees that affected Indo-Fijian cultural practices such as fireworks during Diwali during the period or forced observation of the Sabbath under the Sunday Observance Decree after 1987. As Smiles writes that at a roadblock, ‘We showed our murku and gulab jamun and our barfi and it was clear a jolly good time had been had by all despite the fireworks ban.’ (126) The particular inscription of Indo-Fijian identity of the lived space, in this instance of celebrating a cultural event, through sweetmeats (murku, gulab jamun and barfi), a direct subversion of military and political decrees post of the post 1987 coups. Or the political stance taken by Captain Blight when stopped at a roadblock:

The problem arose when a police officer asked for Captain Blight’s father’s name. Because only Indians are required to give their father’s name (or in the case of married women, their husband’s name), it is taken to be a form of discrimination. In those ethnically sensitive
times, it was antagonising. Captain Blight refused absolutely to give a father’s name. Nobody’s father, especially not his.

“What are you going to do? Shoot me? Go one then, shoot me, shoot me,” he told the police.

‘Hey, no politics here,” said the harassed police officer. (126)

Smiles engages a particular period of Indo-Fijian identity and representation, one of racial oppression and intimidation of the everyday lived spaces, that gives rise to the stance taken by Captain Blight.

The immediate terror of the coups in Fiji, both 1987 and 2000, intended to be washed over by euphemism in government gazettes as ‘events of one year or another’, but memories linger. And finds inscription in Smiles writing, ‘In the excitement of 1987, some people took the opportunity for a bit of thuggery’. And it is left to Aaji to come up with a defense strategy, ‘…she mixed up a deadly mixture of chilli powder and sand.’ (128) The personal lived space of Smiles, ‘pregnant enough to be uncomfortable in any bed’ places her in the front line of the defense strategy of Aaji. Aaji’s resolve and her involvement in protest marches in 1987 bring to the fore the particular role of women. Smiles essays their role not as minor players in a slight piece of entertainment. The images of violence and underlying tensions in the lived spaces during the period are made sharper with its contrasts to images of domesticity. The following exchange exemplifies this interplay of fear and domesticity during 1987 in Smile’s writings:

“Thankyou (sic),” I hissed, as the milkman tipped his can of milk into our pot waiting on the doorstep, “don’t you know there is a coup and a curfew?”

“ I know,” he grinned, “but the cows don’t.” The man deserved a medal. Never mind running the gauntlet of roadblocks, he never knew how close he came to a faceful of chilli powder.” (129)
Smiles inscriptions of the household during a coup brings the domestic as an everyday lived space that brings in the deprivation of rights, movement, freedom of association, that affected all.

Yet, in her writing is the insistence that Indo-Fijian identities and representations from this period required a particular inscription. The enforced observance of Sabbath in particular was a sticking point in the Indo-Fijian identities of the period. Smiles engages in a mocking and satiric summation of this as is evident in the following excerpt:

Aaah, but now...now, when they say mum, when you are going to get breakfast, say no, no, its Sunday. Mum, mum can you take us swimmi...No, not it’s Sunday; mum, what’s for lunch, mum. No, no cooking its Sunday. The baby is crying mum, the baby is crying...No, none of that. We don’t work on Sunday anymore, the Government has decreed it. We have a Sunday Ban. (133)

Smiles *Wan Talk Two Talk South* is a collection based mainly on her writing from a weekly column for the Fiji Times. Her writing as such engages with current issues with a national readership adding weight to her influence as a writer and journalist with wide popular appeal. Smiles gets closure of sorts on her personal lived spaces from the immediate post-1987 period in the piece entitled, ‘Bring Back Democracy’.

Smiles makes a own strong assertion of individual and collective rights in the title, and her determination that ‘...I am planning to try again, in a Return to Democracy, under Fiji’s 1998 Constitution, and with a new voting system. Given the new developments, I may get a chance to vote for one of my own family at last.’ (136) Smiles in her enviable position of the insider rather than in any sense an outsider on representations of the Indo-Fijian diasporic identity expands on the various negotiations of ethnic, national, transnational, religious, sectarian, familial and individual spaces to come up with a heterogenous representation of a people. Her narratives ask questions on ethnic/diasporic/national identity in the Indo-Fijian diaspora in Fiji or a second
shift transnational identity and provide disclaimers of any centre/binary inscription of identity and representation. Questions that find currency in the next section in the analysis of Fiji playwright Larry Thomas as the next ‘Outside/r’ narrator.

5: Larry Thomas: Outcast(s), Overseas and the Other.

Narratives that engage with internal migrancy of people, relationships, gender and family within the phenomenon of movements to, from, and within rural, urban, and urban squatter or tenement areas as a given of the postcolonial scape, concerns Larry Thomas in his play ‘Outcasts’. Larry Thomas is a noted playwright, director and documentary filmmaker from Fiji. This section of the thesis concentrates primarily on Thomas’s play ‘Outcasts’ with an awareness of the connections to be made with his other plays and to his short stories “Floating” and ‘A Season for Everything’ and documentary film ‘A Race for Rights’, among other works. In the interests of brevity and to avoid redundancy the focus is solely on ‘Outcasts’, one of Thomas’s most widely read and performed plays. It has been performed twice in Fiji, 1989 and in 2002 and was translated and performed in French in New Caledonia in 2004. Subramani in his review of the 2002 staging of ‘Outcasts’ makes the point about Fiji’s heterogeneous communal as the present in the play. ‘They’re all there in the play: Fijians, Indo-Fijians, Chinese, part-Europeans (Thomas calls them outcasts.) They are our pariah.’ (Fiji Times: November 1, 2002) It is within this larger ‘community’ of outcasts that play engages identities and representations for the Indo-Fijian diaspora. These representations and identities are not just a matter of demographics in the squatter settlements (although that too matters, as it does in the second shift diasporic settlements in Liverpool, Sydney, for example) but on the larger discursive shifts making its own statements and negotiations on identity and representation.

The central Indo-Fijian characters in the play are Asha and Mrs. Kumar. Asha is a central figure in the main dramatic movement that begins with her arrival in an urban Suva squatter settlement, chased away from home by her brother for being pregnant out of wedlock. Thomas begins with this underlying communal and familial abdication of responsibility for girls
pregnant out of wedlock in the Indo-Fijian diaspora to insert an important marker on structures of patriarchy. He cites this as part of the traditional practice of rural Indo-Fijian girls leaving high school as Asha explains, “…mother have to teach me everything so when I get married my husband will be happy with me…” (13) The patriarchal construct of a sheltered/selfish patriarchy for young women in the Indo-Fijian diaspora is found in Indo-Fijian literature from both the ‘achieved corpus’ and from women writers as well as in the memoirs, essays and other contributions. Constructs of the patriarchal as a particular monolith of representation at are incapable of searching for secular solutions to social problems.

Monoliths that reappear so similar patriarchal structures in continual strife in the flows of identity and representation are found in the second shift diaspora in Liverpool. Yet, we find in Asha and Mrs. Kumar, like the ‘Atta’s” and ‘Akka’s” of Seona Smiles, a capacity to break free of such non-secular constructs on their own accord through individual determination, education or instances of a secular male figure forming company for the transition. Asha is a victim of her ‘boyfriend’ who benefits from the double standards that exist as part of this patriarchal construct. In this instance he fails his responsibilities and relationship as Asha point out, “He said his parents were arranging to marry a girl from Canada.” (13) Asha makes a choice to become a prostitute to fend for herself and her child and defends her decision, to do so as an individual but in the end falls victim to the larger problems of crime and violence. She remains ambivalent to her profession with an overtly moralistic than real engagement with sex as industry, forced or of choice. Asha’s contribution to diasporic identity comes through in her empowerment of her sexuality and right to determine her relationships, in this instance cross-cultural with Tim, one of the few seemingly stable forces in the play. In one of the main dramatic movements, Asha makes the philosophic declaration that ‘Culture is you and me and how we behave.’ (100) It is not enough to save her from her fate and from the actions/inaction of men in her life, her father/boyfriend/boyfriend’s father/Ajay/Tim/Rapists.

Asha is the idealist in the play, as the eternal na_ ve young woman, as her exchange on their relationship and cultural difference with Tim exemplifies:
Tim: Because we are different.

Asha: We are only different because you are Fijian and I’am an Indian, that’s all.

Tim: Our families will not like it.

Asha: I have no families Tim. And you said you don’t care about your family. You won’t care what they say about us.

Tim: But they will talk about us.

[Asha stares at him]

Mrs. Kumar, the second central Indo-Fijian character, on the other hand provides an important insight on individuals separated from family through second shift diasporic movements. She is waiting. For her son Bobby to arrange her migration to Australia as her body remains in limbo waiting for inscriptions with a visa, a passport, a social security number, a permanent address. Her guaranteed national identity, in terms of a Fiji passport, citizenship, protection under a constitution (assuming 1970), marriage-divorce-birth certificates also remains with her. Derrida’s concept of ‘Undecidability’, comes into play in the shifts between the ‘constative/performative’in identity and representation ‘…based on the principle that the people personally and effectively direct their own destinies.’ (10) It is the ‘Undecidability’ of Mrs. Kumar’s paradox, of intention to move, against the other determinants of not moving and the continuous removals of ‘paper-visa/forms/passport’ that will enable travel. Her ultimate decision depends on process/ess, of various choices decisions on visa/application forms or to await further removals of choice/’decidability’ based on Bobby’s action/intentions that remains outside the narrative.

In the interim/forever she is part of landscape of Thomas’s play as the resident gossip with a sense of communal obligation and kinship beneath a at times confrontational exterior. Like Sumitra in Epeli Hau’ofa’s novel Kisses in the Nederends. As Josephine, Asha’s benefactor and fellow prostitute, remarks in an aside aimed at Mrs Kumar, “You know the problem with this place, people can’t mind their own business. Everybody want to know my business, where I go, who I go out with, and who they see me in town with.” (25) A point emphasized by Jo, an
effete male prostitute, ‘Just think, Mrs Kumar might be peeping from her spy hole and watching you two and listening to everything. And tomorrow it will be broadcast over the coconut wireless.’ (28) Mrs Kumar in her account of empowerment/disengagement from an abusive relationship and bringing up of two children as a single mother brings into focus domestic abuse among the Indo-Fijian diaspora. From indenture to the present its instances of the horrors of violence, mutilation and death, are well documented by Subramani, Raymond Pillai and Satendra Nandan in their prose. Larry Thomas in a personal interview said, “ Living and growing up in Raiwaqa, with its mongrel population of everyone in Fiji, it struck me that domestic violence and the treatment of women was taken as a cultural matter. As culturally acceptable even mandatory that it was a right of men to lord over women, to beat them or treat them as property. And it always pained me.’ In ‘Outcasts’, Pushpa Wati is scarred and beaten after catching her husband having an affair while Mrs Kumar had walked out on husband for his affairs and domestic abuse and violence. Part of the edginess of ‘Outcasts’ is the underlying violence to the squatter community trying to get on with living. For Mrs. Kumar replying with violence is not an option, ‘Of course! But if I fight, what I’am gonna get out of ah? My husband will turn around give me a hiding.’ (41)

Instead Mrs. Kumar shows strength in leaving husband and working towards a future for her children. “…I take my two children and come. I find a job in the laundry and I make sure my two sons get good schooling. Now they married. One in Australia and one living in Suva. My son Bobby in Australia is now trying to fix my papers for me to go. So now I am only waiting.” (41) Mrs. Kumar is placed in the position of the diasporic in-between, those waiting to migrate, of which parents make up a large proportion. In Fiji without adequate provisions, especially for aged women, the promise of family and a sense of continuity with her children is appealing for Mrs. Kumar. There is intimate knowledge among the immediate community on Mrs. Kumar waiting and wanting to migrate. The act of waiting and the uncertainty surrounding it is part of the dramatic tension of the play.

Aisake: …You hear anything from Australia?
Mrs Kumar: I get letter two weeks ago, but my son still never try and fix the papers. I don’t know what is wrong with him.

Aisake: This kinda things take time you know, You have to be patient.

Mrs Kumar: Aisake, two years now I been waiting, very soon there be no more patience.”

…

Mrs Kumar: Young people nowadays too spoilt! All they want to do is to have a good time. They never think about their father and mother who work hard for them. If I know my two children turn out like this, I drown them when they small.

Aisake: You shouldn’t talk like that Mrs Kumar. Your son in Australia is very good to you, he send you money all the time. Man! You lucky woman, no worry at all for you.

The wait for movement is interminable for Mrs. Kumar. She is the in-between locuter of the Indo-Fijian diasporic body.

The movements of her children take parts of her with them. In the meantime she is ‘fed up!’

Aisake: What’s wrong, Mrs Kumar?

Mrs Kumar: My son in Australia. He tell me now I have to wait again because something is wrong.

Aisake: Don’t worry Mrs Kumar. It will all be fixed up and soon you will go.

Mrs Kumar: Oh don’t worry! Very soon I will be gone from this place.

[She turns to Josephine] How’s the baby

Josephine: He is well.

Mrs Kumar: If you need anything or any help just call me.

[She goes into her house]
Mrs Kumar exists in a migratory void but is not completely powerless and in keeping with her strength of character is determined to move on within the community of outcasts that comes together to take care of other outcasts, like Asha’s baby, after her death. Thomas leaves her in a void. A place from where she speaks words of compassion as representation for her national and ethnic identity that are not fetishized in an originatory moment. Derrida’s ideas of the ‘constantive utterance’ and ‘performative utterances’ relate well to the confusion amidst waiting for a second diasporic shift for Mrs. Kumar. Mrs. Kumar’s constantive utterances are that of the individual given the illusion of choice, free will or moksha/salvation in making that shift. Her peformative, literary as text as well as in performance, as the literal of the theatre-play-drama utterances in the narrative changes identity with each representation / ‘representor’ / representative (each performance) to move further away from the fettered fetish of originatory moments, past, present or future. This binary of the constantive/performative of Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representations becomes part of the postmodernist wordplay and textual graphs of Salman Rushdies Fury to which we now turn to.

6: Salman Rushdie and Fiji: Fury and Beauty

Rushdie’s ‘June 2000: Fiji’ as essay prefigures much of the topographical and cartographers notions of the island/s in his novel Fury but also informs the narrative of the history and politics of the island. The essay ‘Fiji’ is short, barely two and half printed pages and argues on land, the Speight takeover of parliament in 2000 and the turns of history of indenture that Rushdie sees as ‘…one of the bitter ironies of the Age of Migration.’ (341) It makes various connections with ideas of identity and representation that takes in the larger Indian diaspora as a result of this ‘Age of Migration’. Rushdie makes the connection between land and people, as ‘Land, home, belonging: to Indians these words have always felt more than ordinarily potent. India is a continent of deeply rooted peoples. Indians don’t just own the ground beneath their feet; it owns
Ironically this same argument for belonging to a place that ‘owns them, too’ is turned into bigotry when land is racialised as it has been in Fiji since first contact with the outside world. And turned into a larger issue relating to land use, tenure and ownership and used by fundamentalist nationalists in Fiji, but also by the larger political machinery (both Fijian and Indo-Fijian) over the years, for various reasons.

Salman Rushdie’s *Fury* engages through its postmodernist sense of self-reflexity and intertextuality, a complete/incomplete/often alluded/elided and sometimes realized illusionary world of the Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representation from a traveller/novelist/essayist/writers palimpsest views. Rushdies *Fury* incorporates a Swiftian twist to the tale of Lilliput-Blefuscu, where Neela Mahendra, ‘head-turner’ female protagonist was born in ‘Mildeno, the capital of Lilliput-Blefuscu’. (156) Lilliput-Blefuscu as Fiji and its islands from the novel are appropriated from the various linkages that the text of *Fury* provides to a place, its history and recent politics. Although Rushdie never makes the geographical act of naming Fiji, as he does of London or New York or Bombay in the novel. In this act of not naming place can be read non-identity or a fetish with presenting place as attachment of or originatory links to/from/with the character of Neela Mahendra and her relationship with the main protagonist of the novel, Malik Solanka, the academic/writer/doll-maker.

Yet, the geographical signs in the novel links itself to Fiji. Signs are a ruse to invite peeps into the politics/political world of Fiji in a ‘chutneyfied’ version of history to link narratives on Neela to place and people. *Fury* operates its construct of Fiji like a Lonely Planet guide section on history, geography, culture, currency, language, longitudes and latitudes and cultural fetishes of dress, greetings, road signs, traffic flows on right, but shies away from naming the place. Rushdie makes errors/omissions/additions in relating history to reality in the process of non-naming. For example, that Neela’s family who still lived on Lilliput- Blefuscus ‘were girmityas, descendents of one of the original migrants-her great-grandfather-who had signed an indenture agreement, a *girmit* back in 1834, the year after the abolition of slavery.’ (156)
Rushdie engages in creating chaos in chronology as part of the process of this non-naming of Fiji. Placing Girmit/Indenture on the cusp of the abolition of slavery, and earlier movements of the indentured to the West Indies, among others. Rushdie takes poetic/postmodernist licence in his fictionalising of dates. It stretches historical fact on girmityas but manages to name Fiji in allusions such as ‘Biju Mahendra, from the little Indian village of Titlipur, had travelled with his brothers all the way to this double speck in the remote South Pacific.’ (156) The double speck here is taken as the cartography the Fiji Islands, the two islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. As postmodernist self-reflexive word fencing characteristic of Rushdie’s works there is licentiousness in his appropriation of Fiji its history and politics where the misappropriation of reality and its use in fiction in the end does not matter. There is enough in Fury in the manner of identities and representations at play, with or without the masked dolls, of Solanka, to make period and dates important, but their order irrelevant.

Place and history is captured in Fury by Malik Solanka flying across the main island of Blefescu/Viti Levu:

As they flew over the sugar-cane farms of Blefuscu, he noted the high piles of black igneous boulders near the centre of each field. Once indentured Indian labourers, identified only by numbers, had broken their backs to clear this land, building these rock piles under the stony supervision of Australian Coulumbers and storing in their hearts the deep resentment born of their sweat and cancellation of their names. The rocks were icons of accumulated wrath, prophecies from the past of the eruption of Indo-Lilly fury, whose effects were everywhere to be seen. (238)

Neela and Solanka as the main protagonists show a clear engagement with Fiji/Lilliput-Blefuscu as the main narrative strand of Fury. Neela is an overpowering presence in the life of the middle-aged academic and puppet maker, Solanka, running away from life, wife, child, and responsibilities in London and a past/ family/memories in Bombay/Mumbai towards the
cosmopolitan metropolis of the world, New York. Indo-Fijian diasporic identities and representations are arrived through Neela, Solanka’s retrieval of her past and pastiche of person, place and location, and narrative movements to and from Fiji. In the middle of all larger movements and shifts in narrative, love or versions of it, between Solanka and Neela occupies a central place in the narrative.

Neela’s entry into the novel becomes an important marker of her identity:

“She’s one of yours,”…” Indian diaspora. One hundred years of servitude. In the eighteen nineties her ancestors went as indentured labourers to work in what’s-its-name, Lilliput- Blefuscuc. Now they run the sugarcane production and the economy would fall apart from without them, but you know how its wherever Indians go. People don’t like them. Dey works too hard and dey keeps to themselves and dey acts so dang uppity). Ask anyone. Ask Idi Amin. (61)

This summary begins a series of placing and counter-placing of India/India-Indians and Fiji/Indo-Fijians in Solanka and Neela’s construct of each other. Neela appraises Solanka after their first visit and places this binary of place and origin, of self and other in context among her other personal visitations of his past and scars. ‘And then I think, here is this Indian man, Indian from India, not Indo-Lilly like me, a son of the mother country, but apparently that also is a forbidden topic.’ (160) And as their relationship ends with Neela’s death Solanka muses that ‘Neela had wanted to go to India with him, was excited by the idea of discovering the land of her forefathers with the man of her choice.’ (236) Another failed performance of rediscovering/affirming identity, this time death intervenes, not lack of money or knowledge or the will or intention of going. India is linked to Fiji in images of towns, harrying shopkeepers that cut across texts from Michener through Theroux and Rushdie.

For in Fiji, in these narratives, is India, as in architecture, place, people and the performative modalities of shops and selling reinforced by aspects of popular culture like films, music and
now satellite television. Or as Chaman Nahal surmises, ‘He looked at Robin to place her in some part of India but failed. Jonathan had distinctly North Indian features.’ (89) Ethnography is at the heart of the various narratives linking Fiji as place to India. Or the architecture of the bazaar/shops as the Fiji marketplace/shops as Rushdie realises in *Fury*:

On the drive through Mildendo, Malik Solanka had a strong sense of *d_j_ vu*, and it took him a moment to work out that he was being reminded of India. Of, to be specific, Chandni Chowk, Old Delhi’s troubled heart, where the traders crowded together in the same hugger-mugger style, where the shop fronts were as brightly coloured and the interiors as crudely lit, where the roadway was even more densely thronged with walking, cycling, jostling, shouting life, where animals and human beings fought for space, and where massed car horns performed the daily unwavering symphony of the street. (240)

Similarly, Solanka finds in Neela’s lived space in New York, India. India as fetish is left unexplained, tantalizing, as misplaced fashion statement or a replication of the Indo-Fijian home or lived spaces with its preoccupation with posters of the binary of the pantheon of film stars and rosy-cheeked gods/goddesses and blue hued gods/goddess, and the obligatory set of doilies and covers over settees. In Neela’s space it is a pastiche of the lived spaces of the Indo-Fijian diaspora in Fiji and its second shift migrants communities, something old, something new, something borrowed, something given, so India, Fiji and the particular country of the diasporic shift are curried favours. A reading of lived spaces greatly expanded in the chapter on Liverpool.

For Neela’s lived space, Solanka makes his own wry and perceptive observations:

India was overemphasized upon everywhere in the Bedford Street apartment in the overemphasized manner of the diaspora: the *filmi*
music, the candles and incense, the Krishna-and-milkmaids calendar, the dhurries on the floor, the Company School painting, the hookah coiled atop a bookcase like a stuffed green snake. Neela’s Bombay alter ego, Solanka mused, pulling on his clothes, would probably have gone for a heavily Westernised, California-minimalist simplicity…but never mind about Bombay. (208)

The ‘Fury’, as one narrative plane among others in the novel, takes on the form of a coup and counter coup in Lilliput-Blefuscu and leads to the death of Neela in the novel. Rushdie engages in a fairly thinly disguised fictionalising of the 2000 coup in Fiji led by George Speight. In the essay it is ‘the failed businessman George Speight and his gang of hooligan supporters against Fiji’s Indian community in general and the deposed Mahendra Chaudhary government in particular. (341) In Fury Rusdhie fictionalizes the second sentence of his essay as part of the transformative argot of his narrative. The ‘…coup in Lilliput-Blefuscu, led by a certain Skyresh Bolgolam, an indigenous Elbee merchant whose argosies had all failed and who accordingly detested the prosperous Indo-Lilly traders with a passion that could have been called racist if it had not been so obviously rooted in professional envy and personal pique.” (215) He places the coup in the context of constitutional changes of 1997 and the pressure placed on it to be thrown out in favour of the reversion to the 1990 constitution that discriminated heavily against Indo-Fijians. “The coup seemed spectacularly unnecessary; under pressure from the Bolgamites, the country’s liberal President, Golbasto Gue, who had pushed through a program of constitutional reform designed to give Indian-Lilliputians equal electoral and property rights, had already been obliged to reverse course and throw out the new constitution only weeks after it had come into being.” (215)

Rushdie embellishes history to fit his narrative (and embellishes narratives to fit history/s) but makes it clear the same process of ‘script-doctoring’ is to be point to be found in political speeches, newspaper articles, news copy after 1987/2000 in Fiji. Fictionalising that is moved away from in various narratives such as memoirs and in Indo-Fijian literature. This
fictionalising extends Rushdie’s model of Fiji and its politics to serve the larger plot of the novel and the relationship between Solanka and Neela. All other characters, events, place and objects become caricatures, as a deliberate ploy to point out the innate destructiveness of all forms of assertions of ethnic nationalism.

“As Lilliput-Blefuscu resumed contact with the outside world, it emerged that both President Golbasto Gue and the leader of the original and now failed coup, Skyresh Bolgolam, had been taken alive” by the ‘revolutionary Indo-Lilly “Fremen” beginning with masked me making off ‘with the entire, just imported supply of Kronosian Cyborg masks and costumes into a ‘revolt of the living dolls.’ (226-7) The parodying and inherent playfulness of the Rushdie text here reaches new heights (and lows) as a pastiche of popular culture fitness t-shirt clad revolutionaries culminating in Captain Akasz clenched fist proclamation, “The fittest have survived.” (227), Rushdie sustains a parodying of Darwinian ideas on survival of the fittest and places the larger ethnic conflict and political divides neatly in the evolutionary mode until only one is left standing as a statement on all conflicts and where it leads.

Indo-Fijian diasporic shifts, of movements and migrations are present as Rushdie’s fictionalist rehashing of facts, years, time, place and stretches it beyond chronology. Neela is fourth generation “Indo-Lilly” born “in the mid-seventies” whose ‘childhood bogeyman was the Coolummer, who was big and white and spoke not in words but in numbers and would eat little girls at night if they didn’t do their homework and would eat little girls private parts.’ (156) Neela grows up and learns that ‘coolumbers’ were the sugarcane labourers’ overseers:

This particular one in my family’s history was a white man called Mr Huge-Hughes, really I suppose-who was ‘a devil from Tasmania’ and to whom my great-grandfather and great-uncles were no more than numbers on the list he read out every morning. My ancestors were numbers on the list he read out every morning. Only the indigenous Elbees were called by their true last names. It took us three
generations to retrieve our family names from this numerical tyranny.

(156-7)

Rushdie through his mush of history, newspapers, official documents, and airline tickets among other vagaries of text and inter-textuality, of bringing in the everyday spaces. As does Seona Smiles in Captain Blight’s refusal to answer to the official/police/legal call for the name of the father at a roadblock. Subversions that hark back to the calling of numbers instead of people or of prescribing name/fathers’ name as part of a political act of inscribing Indo-Fijian identities and representations. Rushdie’s Fury hacks and cleaves at the various definitions of the scapes of Appadurai to come to terms with the shifting landscapes of the Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representation. As part of the mediascape of diasporic locations and movements, local customs, rites and practices becomes part of this mythic, in the sense of an explanation of place and people, coming to terms with mortality as a modality.

The ultimate (e)scape in the novel. In the meantime there is a life to be lived and if there is time to drink kava, (na) (y) gona, the roots of mild depressant that has its own firm anchors in the lives of the people of the Pacific. In Lilliput-Blefuscu, it forms part of the lexicon for a way of life. ‘Words for drink played a distressingly big part in her back-story. In the matter of grog, yagona, kava, beer as in little else, the Indo-Lilliputians and Elbees were as one; both communities suffered from alcoholism and the problems associated with it. (157) In the novel this preoccupation with narcotics is linked as part of the narrative continuities as an alcoholic father provides the push factor for Neela’s aspirations for travel. What is relevant to this thesis is this idea of commonality in mind-altering narcotics or alcohol to that of a larger identity for Fiji. This is a guarded inclusion as Rushdie engages in the double removal trick of the trade of the wandering writer and accepts generalization as explanation from a character and from author. In Fury the connection between essay and fiction turns upon each other to creative a narrative on place, people, land and politics. There is a surfeit of responsibility as emotive issues are burned into ethnic narratives of identity working towards 2000 coup in Fiji. The emotive response leads to the execution of a coup and its later justification stems is as Rushdie in Fury summarises:
The Elbees feared a coup—a revolutionary land grab by the Indo-Lillys, to whom the Elbee constitution still denied the right to own real estate on either island; the Big Endians for their part, feared the same thing in reverse. They were afraid that when their hundred-year leases expired in the course of the coming decade, the Elbees would simply take back their valuable farmland for themselves, leaving the Indians, who had developed it, with nothing. (158)

This idea of the land owning individual as a marker of identity where the constantive turns performative in some instances of recall and memoir by the second shift diaspora evident in earlier examinations of *Bittersweet* and *Stolen Worlds*.

In Fiji, as construct of Lilliput-Blefuscu, this idea of calling land home is given a double remove by the act of migration, and further removals by land tenure systems and further second shift diasporic movements. For as Rushdie summarizes in *Fury*:

> It was a question, as so many things were, of land. Even though the Indo-Lilliputians on Blefuscu, now did all the farming, were responsible for most of the country’s exports, and therefore earned most of the foreign exchange, even though they had prospered and cared for their own, building their own schools and hospitals, still the land on which all this stood was owned by the “indigenous” Elbees. (157-8)

India for the Indo-Fijian diaspora is a place to travel and for a determined few to look in the dust for origins. As part of the shifting and performative cycle of identities this too will change as Indian becomes a trace of a trace into an absolute, for the coming generations of the second shift diaspora. Rushdie engages in a personal performative fetish of identity linked to place and land in the essay ‘A Dream of Glorious Return’, the title in this instance not a self-reflexive or
Ironic statement but an emotive homecoming that is also literal. Rushdie finally takes ownership of his property ‘Anis Villa’ after a protracted legal battle with the state of Himachal Pradesh. Rushdie’s homecoming is expressed as closure of a circle addressed to his father (abba) who had bequeathed the house to Rushdie. ‘You see, Abba, I have reclaimed our house. Four generations of our family, living and dead, can now foregather there. One day it will belong to Zafar and his little brother Milan. In a family as uprooted and far-flung as ours, this little acre of continuity stands for a very great deal.’ (216)

Indo-Fijians, unlike Rushdie, in most instances cannot go to India and reclaim land, simply because history has made a clean break between people and their original homeland. Removal from India by the historical/legal, and cultural resolves or even allusions to the originative moment of departure does not make possible a reclaiming of place. Yet, as the memoirs and much of Indo-Fijian literature indicates, it is Fiji that is ‘home’ in the sense of the emotive homecoming of Rushdie. Fiji then becomes a place to travel and given the recentness of time and smallness of place stand a good chance of pointing out the ‘Anis Villas’ of its diaspora, but not actually living in it. Or as land tenure systems finish and other industries like tourism takes over to stay in a hotel room and look at fading pictures of a farmer who once ploughed the land or a fisherman who fished the seas.

These emotive aspects of home for the Indo-Fijian diaspora are referred to both by John O’Carroll and Satendra Nandan. O’Carroll in his essay ‘Envisioning the Real: Two Mishra’s on a Girmit World (2002), ‘One young Fiji Indian man described how, each time he drove past the place where according to tradition his placenta was buried, he would stop his car, get out and sit for a few minutes.’ (123) In the practice of observance of silence or a minutes rest when passing a cemetery where members of a family are traditionally cremated, as birth and death captured in its own self-reflexive movements. Rushdie in his essay on Fiji links travel to breaking of caste barriers in crossing the ‘black waters-kaala paani’ and their movements to places like Fiji as the ‘most improbable of phenomenon. Yet the journeyings of Indians all over the planet is one of the great sagas of our time, an epic replete with misadventures.’ (341) This movement as epic journey finds manifestations in the creation of identity and representation for the Indo-Fijian
diaspora. Within theories of postcoloniality, diaspora studies and cultural studies there is an increasing movement towards an account of the heterogeneous nature of such journeys.

The movements now form part of the transnational scapes that Appadurai talks about and identity becomes performative against changing landscapes where the question of origin becomes one more arbiter of a performance, not as a constantive utterance, that both creates and manages identity and continually enframes it. Rushdie brings out these stances in examining the cliched stereotypes of the ‘lazy’ Fijian wastrel and ‘industrious’ Indian usurper through Neela and proceeds to satirize the issue. Neela explains the basic cultural differences through an expansion of the cliches as it approaches the absurd and is left as such;

The elbees say we are greedy and want everything and will chase them out of their own land. We say they are lazy and if it wasn’t for us they would sit around doing nothing and starve. They say the only end of a soft-boiled egg to break is the little one. Whereas we-or at least those of us who eat eggs-are the Big Endians, from Big Endia. (157)

Neela laughs at her own joke on ‘Big Endians (Big Indians ) from Big Endia (Big India) in describing the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Her explanation also helps place the narrative in the problematic of place and belonging. It places identity and representation in the centre of the increasingly torrid debate on indigenous/settler divides that finds a natural progression to the margins of extremism.

A debate on ethos that finds new modes of self-definition of indigenous identity from arts, intellectual capital to literature and all epistemological paths, a position of exclusion, and affirmation of a nationalist solidarity. As was the case with segments of the Maori nation who turned up at Fiji’s airports in support of George Speight in 2000 in Fiji. Or academics and writers like Albert Wendt making a declaration of sympathy with ‘The Fijian Cause’, as in the assertion of indigenous self-determination, even at the point of a gun, in 1987/2000. Such assertions and identification brings with it an innate rationality that also informed and became
the process towards ethnic cleansing and myriad other human acts of violence and genocide. In the specific case of Fiji such a stance is an instance of national or ethnic identity becoming a fetish. A fetish that leads the declaration by a victim of such rationality, Neela in *Fury*, ‘I hate the word, ‘indigenous’, Neela. “I’m fourth-generation Indo-Lilly. So I’m indigenous too.’ (158)

Neela, as fictional construct, is a larger than life Indo-Fijian woman, who among other descriptions is seen as, ‘With a light breeze blowing the dress against her body, she looked like the Winged Victory of Samothraki, only with the head on.’ (147). This among other constructs of her as a goddess whose effect on men and women is to create chaos through her beauty to so they fall, tumble, crash, loss hand to mouth coordination. Neela’s identity is a construct of the female ideal in beauty and form but one that does not exist as an object. Instead she is the empowered and empowering superwoman powerful enough to assert her individuality but also work in the interests of the Indo-Fijian diaspora and to assert its identity and control representations.

Rushdie does not embark on this as one-sided discourse of the inherent bigotry of indigenous ethos of exclusivist self determination in a multiracial and multi-religious Fiji. Instead there is a measured engagement with the various performative and constant actions/inactions of both Elbees (native/indigenous/Fijian) and Indo-Lillys (settler/Indo-Fijians) As Neela explains in intense angry tones there is an admission of the binary involved in every conflict:

The Elbee culture really is different, and I can see why they are afraid. They are collectivists. The land isn’t held by individual landowners but by the Elbee chiefs in trust for the whole Elbee people. And then we Big-Endia-wallahs come along with our good business practice, entrepreneurial acumen, free-market mercantilism, and profit mentality. And the world speaks our language now, not theirs. It is the age of numbers, isn’t it? So we
are numbers and the Elbees are words. We are mathematics and they are poetry. (158)

This monologue serves as the guarantor of a double discursive movement in Fury. Unlike the essay, ‘Fiji’, which makes clear the immediacy of the writing and its insistence that ‘The obvious truth is that after a hundred years, Fiji’s Indians have every right to be treated as Fijian, as the equals of ethnic Fijians.’ (342), the novel engages with the binary inherent in cultural conflict. Neela’s comments make the double discursive movement along the lines of a classical deconstruction of the binary of heart and mind, with a few about turns within. The affirmation is with ‘my people’ and excludes what the heart wants, ‘magic and song.’ Even when nationalism as expressed in the essay takes on a racist ideology it creates its own Other in the Neela’s of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. The discursive movements on both sides ends in the ethos of a declaration of triumph on both sides, one of self-determination, the other of subversion, and in this fictionalised account of answering one coup with another. All of which leaves Solanka “…troubled: the old problem of ends and means again.” (227).

Neela, finally finds a calling as a revolutionary to overturn the indigenous coup and finds she is part of another violent, dictatorial, rendering of the cool rationality of fascist principles and practices that must accompany one or the other manifestation/assertion of ethno-nationalist identity. As documentary maker she is excited about being in the right place at the right time. The power of media, film and television and of image doctoring and the media spiels of George Speight that characterized the 2000 coup in Fiji is brought out in Neela as well, ‘This coup makes my film really sexy.”(228) Neela’s assertions of the right to fight for ‘her people’ provides a contrast to Sudesh Mishra’s poem ‘Malgudi Days’ which narrates the perceived cowardice of Indo-Fijians in the face of two coups and ethnic violence perpetrated against them. One such perception is from, ‘From Narayan, is the tailor. “From Fiji?” /Beams, then proceeds to lambast me for the wheezy/Attitude of my lot to the coup-hamster/…” (Memoirs 25) In Fury comes a later assertion of the ‘tailors’ exposition in S, that ‘Power resides in the barrel of a gun; Believe that or go become a nun.’ (25) In Fury the assertion is militaristic and aims at complete control as the Indo-Lilly immigration officer tells Solanka, ‘Indian people of Lilliput-Blefuscu
have finally stood up for our right. Our culture is ancient and superior and will henceforth prevail. Let the fittest survive, isn’t it?’ (238) Neela in her elation reveals another twist to Indo-Fijian representation, “The incredible thing is that it’s so unlike Indo-Lillys to be like this: militarised, disciplined, taking action in their own defence instead of just weeping and wringing their hands. What a miracle he’s worked, don’t you think?” (228) It is not a ‘miracle’ and it does not work as various assertions of ethno-nationalism have shown from Bosnia to Kashmir to Palestine/Israel. This fictive assertion of Indo-Fijian identity and representation by Rushdie is an indictment of the futility of the coups in Fiji and the position taken by Sudesh Mishra’s tailor in India to engage the enemy in violent combat believing ethnic nationalism, ‘Is God’s Truth.’ (Memoirs 25)

To complete the postmodernist rush to love, death and another coup to counter the coup that countered the first coup Rushdie uses the stock doppelganger narrative device in the form of Professor Solanka. Identity is a mask for performance in much of Rushdie’s work. There is no constant identity, but a continual shifting of planes of positions and of masks. Each ascribes a particular role and each time the role is enacted the identity changes and so does the representation. The constant identity is undercut by being from Fiji, being Indian from India, Indian from Fiji, Indo-Lilly from Lilliput-Blefuscu, Indo-Lilly in New York, Remembered Indias, Fijis Englands, among other places and other shifts in between. The politico-economic-military context the rush of narrative at the moment of the of his arrival in Lilliput is marked as the ‘…Commanders lookalike had raced ahead of the helicopter shuttle.’(239)

The originatory moment or commonality of experience is a pretext in the world of masks and doppelganger or look-alike possibilities. For Rushdie, it is ‘same and not same’ as the dissolution of origin and cultural confusion of identity and representation that finds allegorical modality in the shifts of history, colonialism, migrancy, globalism, modernity and the diasporic condition. For Solanka it is a personal realisation “…The face looking down at him from the top of the fifty-foot cut-out-that face framed in long silver hair, with its wild eyes and dark-lipped Cupid’s bow mouth, was his very own.” (239) In this case the underlying thematic entanglement of Fury with masks and dolls is given another dimension as, “Here in the Theatre
of Masks the original, the man with no mask, was perceived as the mask’s imitator: the creation was real while the creator was the counterfeit!”(239) The idea of one identity or one truth or a single face behind the mask or the originatory moment wrests from history, memory, migrancy, globalism, modernity and diasporic shifts the meaning form Indo-Fijian identity and representations.

In a transnational study of culture Rushdie renders obsolete in Fury a homogeneous, originatory moment that stumbles a monolith stealing constructs to secure a separation towards heterogeneous constructs of Fiji/Lilliput-Blefuscu/Indo-Fijian/Indo-Lilly, through the masks and words of Neela, Solanka and the bit players around them. Seona Smiles, Larry Thomas and Salman Rushdie and their constructs of Indo-Fijian identity and representations de-colonise travelogues likes that of Theroux or the text and images of ‘Islands’ towards resolves of alterity. There is consistency in non-dualist representations in travel writing, the essay, short fiction, novels, and travel media that can be extended to other identities, ethnic, cultural, political and diaporic.

An engagement that this thesis works towards in the next chapter based on the fieldwork in the second shift Indo-Fijian diaspora in Liverpool Sydney and its own transnational shifts of place, people and location in the beautiful game of life. This is a diaspora that is continually removed and displaced. Even when placed within Appadurai’s caveat on the ‘…role of the nation state in the disjunctive global economy of culture today’ after expressing the possibilities on ‘the cultural politics of deterritorialization and the larger sociology of displacement that it expresses.’(227) Identity politics in Appadurai’s formulations of deterritorialization is found “Other/Outside” fiction and mass media representations of the Indo-Fijian diaspora as the focus of this present chapter. It sustains arguments on a heterogeneous readings and examination of Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representation in popular culture as well as in the textual readings of people, places, spaces, commodities, movements and ideologies of the Indo-Fijian diaspora in Liverpool, Sydney in the next chapter.
Chapter 6

Fields, Streets, Homes, Individual and Communal Spaces of the Second Shift Indo-Fijian Diaspora in Liverpool, Sydney, Australia.

His travels in India were dismissed with a short discussion of the food shortage there, the general prevalence of poverty and beggars, and one or two stories of how he had foiled pickpockets on the crowded trains. No public notice was taken of the man’s return, although it was the first for some time in the settlement. This, again, is in contrast to the welcome given at the Youth Association’s hall to young men returning after a few months in New Zealand; and talk of life there was a constant topic at Delanikoro gatherings.

Adrian Mayer: Indians in Fiji (1963)

The final chapter of the thesis examines the second shift Indo-Fijian diaspora in Liverpool, Sydney for further narratives, images, voices, forms, numerals and bodies to complete the task undertaken to provide a heterogeneous dialectic for a people and their spaces. These arguments for a heterogeneous reading of the Indo-Fijian diaspora has been sustained from the reading of Indo-Fijian literature, as referent narratives, and in memoir writing, essays, poems, women writers, juvenilia, tourist ephemera travelogue, newspaper columns and plays for alternative constructions of identity and representation. An interrogation that now moves from Fiji to Liverpool through interviews, questionnaires, statistics, graphs, soccer tournaments, streets, shops and ultimately everyday lived spaces of the home of the second shift diaspora in Liverpool. This chapter is an empirical demonstration of identity and representation of the Indo-Fijian diaspora in Australia and their place in the temporal and spatial shifts between Fiji and Liverpool, Sydney. The research methodologies for this demonstration included fieldwork participant/observer methods on soccer, fields, homes, streets, and garages and interview and questionnaire methods to obtain data on a wide range of issues as analysed in their specific
sections. Statistics that relate directly with Indo-Fijian migration into Liverpool and subsequent cultural/statistical formations are analysed as part of the research methods.

This chapter is divided into three sections that covers fieldwork in Liverpool, Sydney on Indo-Fijian diasporic identity, their responses to surveys, interviews and questionnaires, their place in maps, graphs and statistics, their everyday and lived spaces and in their expression, production and consumption of popular culture, especially soccer. Soccer is the term of choice for the sport, as it is in the use of the popular, as opposed to the 2004 official dictate from FIFA, the world governing body, for the use of ‘football’ as the ‘official’ term for the game. As the engagement of this thesis is with the ‘popular’, the universal and popular, ‘soccer’, is used. ‘Soccer’ is also term of choice for the Indo-Fijian diaspora, as Fiji-Hindi or even standard Hindi, does not carry a name for the game. The first section provides a textual reading of tournament soccer in Liverpool with comparatives in Fiji to provide a popular culture background for the engagement with more traditional areas of field work in the next section on the second shift Indo-Fijian diaspora. The second section engages with graphs and statistics on Liverpool as place, as both city, suburbs and as a Local Government Area on Indo-Fijian diasporic migration and demographics.

Individual and communal spaces are examined in this third through a study and interpretation of data and information collected from interviews and questionnaires. The third section reads ‘Cityscapes, Streetscapes, Suburbia and the Garage of the Indo-Fijian Diaspora in Liverpool’ and provides a textual reading of these spaces using various theoretical frames. The reading moves from the main commercial hub of Liverpool City to the suburbs to read individual lived spaces in houses. To a reading of Liverpool for house/home/architecture for lived spaces and the ‘intimacy gradient’ as second shift replication of Fiji and Indo-Fijian diasporic identity as well as of their new hyphenated Australian identity of their new location. Each section is prefaced with an arguments on the particular theoretical models deployed and its application towards determining Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and their expression, production and consumption of popular culture.
1: Replicating Football: Popular Culture as Narrative.

1.1: Strategy and Tactics: Theoretical Considerations

John Fiske’s ‘Popular Forces and the Culture of Everyday Life’, Henri Lefebvre’s ‘Everyday Life in the Modern World’ and Michel de Certeau’s ‘The Practice of Everyday Life’ are regarded as among seminal texts on the everyday as a site of production of meaning and often non-meaning. This section of the thesis places popular culture, in this instance soccer for the Indo-Fijian diaspora to change the word order and meaning of a central construct of Lefebvre on the ‘power of everyday life’. He sets this construct as:

Its continuity…the adaptation of the body, time, space, desire; environment and the home…creation from recurrent gestures of a world of sensory experience; the coincidence of need with satisfaction and, more rarely, with pleasure; work and works of art; the ability to create the terms of everyday life from its solids and spaces. (35)

In this section of the thesis the ‘everyday’ in narratives on soccer on the Indo-Fijian diaspora are deployed as the coincidence of need with satisfaction and pleasure in a celebration of specific locations marked by an association with a district in Fiji. The continuity comes from a replication of place, space, time in the creation of everyday life from a field of play into the fields of the everyday in determining Indo-Fijian identity and representation. There is in this location and retrieval of identity in popular culture a reversal of the Lefebvre construct so that it is pleasure derived, or the expectation of pleasure that leads to the construct of soccer as part of everyday life for the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Pleasure is district allegiance, loyalty, pride and a sense of belonging as well as the immediate vicarious bliss derived from the instance of soccer as sport, as a popular culture instance.
Soccer is appropriated as popular culture forms of the everyday lived space that is an expression, production and consumption site of Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representation. It is popular culture as a sport that sites identity with place through the evocation of memories/possibilities in the individual and communal consciousness. As a lived expression of popular culture, for player or fan, soccer aligns itself with expression and production of cultural forms that forms meaning beyond the original construct of the game played within certain rules to achieve a particular end. As a popular culture form it creates a sense of allegiance to club, place, district, region, province, or in some instances the idea of a country, or nation-state. In the Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representation soccer is usually identified with the idea of a district team. Within this district loyalties lie to clubs, and sectarian soccer but also translates into loyalties and support for other sports. Michel de Certeau’s modalities of ‘Strategy’ and ‘Tactics’ on the vagaries of identity and representation, as the everyday is negotiated through various modes of ‘adaptation’ in the act of engaging with the dominant social and economic hierarchies and coming away with small victories of the individual lived life.

The use of ‘Tactics’ ensures continuity and some measure of a ‘life more bearable’. This is a position often absent in discussions of the subaltern when engaged by theory in binary opposition of ‘voiceless’ against status quo. Fiske’s application of ‘Strategy’ and ‘Tactics” as theoretical constructs find literal associations with the objects of soccer engaging ‘tactics’ and ‘strategy’ to enable goals to be scored and to prevent goals being scored against. According to Fiske, ‘A Strategy is the manipulation of power that becomes possible when the possessor of power (an army, a business, a city, a scientific or educational institute) has both the will to exercise it and the place that can be owned and controlled within which to exercise it. A place is the terrain within which power is managed.’ (288) In the game strategy or manipulation is decided by skills, knowledge of own game plan, opposition strengths and weaknesses, vagaries of refereeing, luck of the bounce, deflection, and a myriad other factors that may or not be brought in as reason for victory/draw or excuse for loss/draw. There is also absence and presence for in football ‘off the ball’ qualities. Or as famed Indian coach of the 1960’s Rahim
Shahib, also an accomplished Urdu poet, wrote in a couplet to a player not known for his off the ball qualities, “Gaind se khelna nahi mushkil/gaind bin khlekar dekho.” (Playing with the ball is not difficult/try playing without the ball.) (Basu: 98)

While the objectives, strategies and tactics in its usual sense in soccer are covered under Fiske’s notion of ‘Strategy’, he expands, ‘A tactic, on the other hand, is a calculated action with no place of its own, occurring within the place of the other.’ (288) An instinctive moment of genius in directing a swerving free kick or illegal tactics away from the gaze of match officials. For as Fiske explains tactics ‘…does not operate according to an overall plan, but in isolated actions, seizing unpredictable opportunities. Tactics have no place but create a space of their own within the place of the enemy. Tactics exist only within time, the time of their existence, but the end of their time is not their end, for they occur again, creating a different space for a different time.’ (288) A misreading of direction, changes in direction by deflections, wind changes, rain, and perhaps the most unfailing tactic in an ironic modality emerges from the referee given the task of controlling a game based on human judgement with its generous room for error. Thus tactics as the game is in play can be the seizing of such opportunities to change the direction and result of a game. The appropriation of ‘place’ in Fiji as district as a place of belonging becomes a ‘tactic’ for the Indo-Fijian diaspora subverts official, legal or ethno-nationalist assertions over land or politics in Fiji. As ‘tactic’ the appropriation exists outside such considerations, and offer alternative sites in the replication of place/team/district, in the mind or a field in Liverpool.

Unlike soccer in Australia with a strong ethnic tradition in organization and players among clubs in between tournaments the Fiji sectarian groups participate in normal mixed competition for their clubs, schools or district sides. Inter-sectarian tournaments or matches have been rare and probably account for the lack of problems of violence and inter-ethnic tensions that sometimes characterizes the ethnicised nature of soccer in Australia. The disparaging term ‘wogball’ to describe this ethnic basis of soccer in Australia is found in the Maquarie Dictionary in Australia with its negative connotations by association with the various migrant groups, mostly of the Non-English Speaking (NES) variety. Writers on soccer in Australia like Wray
Vamplew, Roy Jones, Phillip Moore, Philip Mosley and Ray Hay make similar connections with the negative image and associated problems with ethnic conflict based crowd violence that characterized much of Australian soccer history. Philip A. Mosely (1997) expands on this to notes transitions among migrant communities in Australia in relation to cultural formations and preservation of ethnic nationalism:

Shifts of loyalty over generations are discernible in sport as are connections between ethnicity, national image and identity. A popular belief is that sport unites people but for some ethnic Australians sport has inhibited inclusion, especially where the media have critically highlighted expressions of ethnicity in the sporting arena. (12)

Mosley engages with soccer as basis for ethno-nationalism among migrant groups in Australia. A similar assertion can be made of some aspects of the relatively closed off world of the Indo-Fijian diasporic instance of soccer. In relative terms this assertion of ‘ethnic nationalism’ or ‘Indo-Fijianess’ in soccer is identification of place, of a specific location in Fiji, for which identity is created and individual and communal responses are guaranteed. The particular dislocation of the Indo-Fijian diaspora after the coups in 1987 and 2000 and its effects as context means this assertion is based more on nostalgia for place and district, rather than assertion of a nationalist identity, as Fiji/an. This nostalgia displays little in the way of a construct of ‘ethnic nationalism’ where the ‘nation’ is a nation-state, as in a Fiji or an India or an Australia. Instead the constructs in soccer as a popular culture practice is a place in Fiji and assertion of identity as Indo-Fijians, a trace that begins with earlier instances such as bazaar soccer.

1.2: Bazaar and Soccer: Indo-Fijian Narratives at Play

Bazaar soccer takes on its own unique modality in Fiji. Even in semantics of “Bazaar” as the marketplace and “Soccer” as sport there is a contradiction of terms. In this contradiction also lies the basis of soccer in rural Indo-Fijian settlements in Fiji and its evolution into the
tournament format unique to Fiji. Bazaar, an Oriental term describes a marketplace full of
colour and vibrancy where traders came to wheel and deal, described or visualized in exotic
terms with a quality of Eastern mysticism and mystery through literature, films and television.
Bazaar soccer is no less exotic and mystical than its descriptions and visualizations. Indentured
Indian labourers were by 1916 employed in large numbers in cultivating crops such as tea,
coffee, coconuts, tobacco and rubber.

In addition they were diversifying into other occupations such as domestic service, gardening
and even clerical and police work. By 1916 only two-thirds of Indians under indenture were
employed in the sugar industry. This percentage continued to decrease over the years as the
Indo-Fijians established as part of the more cosmopolitan society of Fiji. As "Khulas" or Free
Immigrants the first generations of Indo-Fijians moved out to the areas where there was work to
re-invent and re-place a new society as part of the larger racial and cultural landscape of Fiji. In
the rural areas with sugar as the dominant produce the Indo-Fijian community established itself
with their own modes of social and sporting activities with soccer the dominant sport. The
growth of urban areas and of Indo-Fijian populations within them replicated the cultural
formations of the rural area, as well as accommodating new forms of entertainment and
recreation, in other sports, music, radio, and films.

The Indo-Fijian rural settlements identified in most cases with the traditional Fijian delineation
of village boundaries or areas. Religious and cultural activities centered on the village temple or
mosque or other places of worship with prayer groups based on this idea of village boundary of
a scattering of farming households provided social cohesion and a sense of cultural identity.
Education, of prime importance for Indo-Fijians as free settlers after 1920, brought with it sport.
For the rural (and urban) committee run "Indian" schools soccer was the main sport. The soccer
pitch was an important part of the school infrastructure. Testimony to the Indo-Fijian fervor for
education is seen in the community spirit of this first generation Indo-Fijians in setting aside
precious land and money to get education for their children. The additional land for the
inevitable playing field designed for soccer was never questioned. The village school also
provided the village recreation grounds, devoted primarily to soccer, but used for an extensive range of cultural and religious activities requiring a communal space.

Previously in thesis soccer within literary, historical and the memoir form as narratives, that relate to the Indo-Fijian diaspora have been analysed. As additional narratives are references to soccer as part of folk songs, folk culture and the everyday, for example in everyday social discourse of gossip, or exemplified in radio talk back shows in Fiji. These markers of Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representations in the heteroglossia of soccer as popular culture narrative are analysed in at tournament soccer at Liverpool. It is a complete world that relates only marginally to a larger national or global instance of soccer, or even of identification with ideals of a global game. This is exemplified in the replication of Fiji, place, colours, names, tournaments, food, drinks, social gatherings, and team preparations of soccer in the Indo-Fijian diaspora and its shifts. “Bazaar Soccer” is placed as a particular instance of Indo-Fijian popular culture that served to site bodies in place, colours, and origins.

Bazaar soccer provided the opportunity for social interaction helped along no doubt by the ready presence of yagona. The mild narcotic is an integral part of the Indo-Fijian social fabric and assertions of identity. An identifier/signifier/identification evident in the following bidesia or folk song popularized in Navua and quickly adopted nationally among bhajan mandalis, the local Hindu prayer groups, a mainstay of local communities in Fiji and in their diasporic replications in the second shift translated by Kanwal:

Oh my beloved
I cannot leave yagona
I left my country
And left my caste
Left behind my parents
But I cannot leave yagona
The thrilling drug of these islands
Which I drink the whole night
The ‘grog’ or yagona stall to which the Indians had developed a partiality was usually to be found at the entrance to the bazaar as it is now to be found in the sprawls of the municipal markets in Fiji. And at shop back entrances of the streets of Liverpool City where the faithful gather around a *tanoa of yagona* at lunch times to engage in the dialectic of gossip and rumor, of soccer, of communities and of people, their limitations and excesses. Fiji is always on this agenda, engaged with, for its politics, and the various manifestations of a place for the people constructed as ‘deterritorialized’ by Appadurai.

The yagona stall with its narcotic powers was a literal beginning to the almost otherworldly atmosphere of the bazaar in Fiji from the late indenture period until its replacement by the municipal market in more recent times. On an open plot of land the bazaar sold everything from vegetables to jewelry to local tobacco and goats and poultry to religion and the wisdom of the mystics, the pundits, priests and fakirs. In time the word bazaar became synonymous with soccer. Used on its own “bazaar” stood for the organized knockout competition held over the weekend for trophy prizes to raise funds for any number of community projects with food and drinks stalls.

1.3: Place and Identity: Soccer and Belonging

The idea of geographical identity with a sense of belonging in Fiji, especially for Indo-Fijians was obviously not clearly defined during the Indenture. It was a period of contracts with clear delineation of work areas. Contracts of labour, land and capital aimed at ensuring economic viability saw any sense of identity or of belonging subsumed by the number crunching of human bodies and lives on sugar, copra and banana plantations. Soccer and identification with village or district became a more or less tangible sense of identity. District loyalty through soccer helped define a sense of belonging and pride to a geographical area. Success and failure on the soccer pitch helped plot the seismograph of emotions and morale within the district of Indo-
Fijians. To take part in the great ritual of belonging to a district is an instance of Rushdie’s declaration:

This is what it means to be a fan: to wait for a miracle, enduring decades of decades of disillusion, and yet to have no choice in the matter of allegiance. …If they have won, the weekend feels richer. If they have lost, a black cloud settles. It’s pathetic. It’s an addiction. It’s monogamous, till-death-us-do-part love. (Step Across 127)

For the Indo-Fijian diaspora the construct of identity through allegiance to a district in Fiji is ‘part of the death do us part’ addiction. Or as an Indo-Fijian taxi driver in Liverpool forcefully exclaims over a bowl of grog behind Tara’s Mart on Northumberland Street, ‘Suva in my blood!’ A feature in some of the memoirs examined earlier in this thesis are their narratives on soccer, played, felt, remembered and often re-organised as memory. Bhaichand Patel’s piece ‘Suva-Electric Shadows’ from Stolen Worlds manages a sustained engagement with various aspects of soccer. Patel engages in alterity constructs in his description of the two major sports in Fiji in the 1950’s:

The Fijian played rugby and were good at it. The national team beat Australia when it toured the country. The Indians played soccer. Passionately, but not very well. We were trounced 6-1 by a mediocre New Zealand side in Albert Park. The whites in the stands, all Fiji residents, cheered for the visitors. Rugby was played on Saturdays and soccer on Sundays. The same goal posts were used on both occasions; the goal bar lowered a foot on Sundays. (65)

Patel’s comments deserve analysis for bringing in various markers that affect discussions that follow identity and representation. Rugby and soccer are treated as distinct sports, the latter is ‘The’ (Fijian) while soccer is ‘We’ (Indo-Fijian) a prepositional creation of the Indo-Fijian self as against the Other of rugby. Just as revealing is the alterity construction of white Fiji
residents/colonial residents cheering for New Zealand. The absence/presence of ethnic/national identity created here is that of the Fiji team being a team of Indo-Fijians, exclusively, at that time. And begs the question of support for a multiracial team or even parochialism/patriotism if the team had been an all-white selection. The final alterity construct is again on the differences in ethnic and cultural identity, with rugby on Saturday, a marker for Fijian identity, as they observed the Sabbath. The Indo-Fijian/soccer nexus is again placed as a marker of a non-Sabbath, heathen, pagan ritual of kicking around a leather ball. The field remains same, the markings are changed, rules change, the ball changes shape and size, from oval to round (ish), and most importantly the crossbar is lowered. Game on.

Patel also presents in summary the sectarian divided in soccer.

I cheered for Sangam, since I studied in a school by that name. The Muslims, we used to call them Mohamedans in those days, had their own team, Western Star, which had its base in Brown Street behind the hospital. But their better players played for League. The Bambaiyas also had a team called Young Brothers which played in the second division and couldn’t beat anyone. The Indians were a pretty divided lot: Hindus, Muslim, Bambaiyas, Madrasis, Punjabis, Arya Samajis, Sanatanis, Sunnis and Ahmediyas. (66)

Patel through, self-deprecating remarks on sectarian soccer places an important marker on origins and nature of the Indo-Fijian diaspora and its intra-ethnic identities. It is an important modality that works against notions of a homogenous Indo-Fijian self. This thesis makes reference to these sectarian identities but continues to subsume the divides on insisting on the word Indo-Fijian to identity them, as labels rather than as an all-consuming monolith. As a convenient labeling it is also a statement on the legal and political positioning of people of Indian origin in Fiji, in the second shift diasporas and in relation to India itself. The sectarian divides are self-evident in the Indo-Fijian diaspora and exist as continuities of a past.
Soccer is and is not an exception. For soccer provides through the idea of a district the strongest opportunity for Indo-Fijians to assert a cultural hegemony, despite such divides, through support for district support among all, ‘Hindus, Muslim, Bambaiyas, Madrasis, Punjabis, Arya Samajis, Sanatanis, Sunnis and Ahmediyas’. Annual sectarian conventions and soccer tournaments reinforce the particular origins and sense of identity of the various groups that make up the Indo-Fijian diaspora. And yet these sectarian divides along with that of other ethnic identities are placed as a dissolve when districts play soccer in Fiji and when this is replicated in the second shift diaspora. No such dissolve exists in the replications found in the distinct gender roles assigned for men, women and children.

Men, women and children have distinct assignations in soccer in the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Men play soccer. Male children grow up wanting to play soccer. Now some women, mostly at the school level play soccer. And women and girls watch them or follow their district sides as mostly an invisible force. This movement is replicated faithfully in the second shift diaspora. Neela, the ‘Indo-Lilly’ in Fury, aligns herself with the Dutch team not with any great love of the game but for its illustration of beauty among the meteques, or those of mixed race, exemplified by the ‘Surinamese’ in the side, ‘Look at them. Edgar Davids, Kluivert, Rijkaard in the dugout, and, in the good old days, Ruud. The great Gullit. All of them meteques. Stir all the races together and you get the most beautiful people in the world.’ (63) Football in Fiji is one of the instances of a dissolve of ethnic/gender identities that is performative and restricted to the moment/s of the game. It does not however pretend to make any dissolves on the largely patriarchal nature of soccer and its expression and production in this temporary suspension of divides. The technology, strategy and tactics remain mainly male centered.

It is as consumption that soccer takes on its own form of empowerment for women of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. As part of the ‘tactics’ of the invisible aside they take and retain identification with a team based on origin. And this does not usually change through marriage. Soccer remains a modality where original identification based on a district or place as a sense of belonging cannot be denied or constructed as part of the larger patriarchal structures of marriage and family, for example. This is as indicated earlier, a performative identity, in most cases this does
not translate into a significant reversal of identity constructs and divides, both on gender relations, as well as in ethnic identities. And like Neela, they have their own tactics to ensure that the modality of gender relations is engaged with and various ruses deployed to ensure that their identification with a district and of place remains in place.

Or find a modality in making possible ethnic dissolves as the feature on a local radio station soccer talk-back show in Fiji made the point on Manoa Masi, a Fiji international with playing stints in New Zealand and Australia, changing districts from the all powerful Ba side to Nadroga. The announcer relates this move to Masi’s marriage to a Nadroga girl of Indo-Fijian/Tuvaluan descent. Among the talk back responses are invocations of the popular Fiji male construct to ridicule men who change allegiance to the land/district/place of the woman he gets married to. Masi’s decision to leave place of birth, and a beloved team to play for the place of birth and team of the beloved elicits cheers and jeers, dictated by the district you come from, Nadroga or Ba.

Brij Lal in appraising fellow students comments, ‘ The Indo-Fijian boys from Ba, that big, boisterous province with an unbeatable soccer team, were a confident lot, cocky even, who stuck together, in the early days, aloof from us. Being from Ba was their badge of pride.’ (Mr Tulsi’s 89-90) Lal’s own experience and feelings on local loyalty made evident in a personal interview in his declaration; “The local village (soccer) sides were a source of village pride and the stature and success of a area were sometimes closely aligned to the fortunes and misfortunes on the soccer field.” This continues in Fiji over the upheavals of coups and reinvigoration of extremist nationalism of the recent past. Soccer reinforces a sense of belonging through the invention of location and origin in the everyday of people through the idea of a district team. A sense of belonging that transports over seas into the organization of district-based soccer competitions and teams into the second shift Indo-Fijian diasporic communities in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and USA.

Websites in Fiji like Fijivillage or Fiji Live or Indo-Fijian sites such as IndoFiji.Com or Kaindia.Com among others feature extended coverage of the annual IDC’s in their relative areas
of the second shift Indo-Fiji diaspora. Along with their constructs of the Miss Indo-Fiji Contests, Fiji Day celebrations, various religious festivals and increasingly a yearly taking of stock of Girmit/Indenture. Sites like IndoFiji.Com feature a wide variety of news, community and sports coverage of the local area, as well as links to the other second shift indo-Fijian diasporic communities and to Fiji. This particular site has as its tagline ‘IndoFiji.com is a Fiji Indian community web portal which aims to bring together Indo-Fijians from all over the world.’ The site logo features an island with one coconut palm with the site name in a Sanskritised font in English. The online shop features phone cards and various merchandise with the site logo.

The website as a marker of visual images merges Fiji, India and the various diasporic shifts and their images, Hibiscus flowers, coconut palms, Fijian artefacts, Indian artefacts, flags and colours of Fiji, India and the diasporic shift country vie for space on banners and advertisements. The Indo-Fijian website thus becomes a visual replication of identities of the various strands, Fiji/Oceanic, India, and the second shift diaspora, where dissolves are hinted and sometimes performed, but the colours and icons remain separate, as separate as a simile, as they are metaphors of identity and representation. During the major soccer tournaments in Fiji, the sides become dedicated to the coverage of the sport and to retrieve images and scores for followers of their district sides in the second shift diaspora. Images and scores on identity and representation that is next looked at in ‘Bazaar’ or replications of soccer tournaments from Fiji in Liverpool, Sydney.

1.4: Replicating Fiji: Bazaar Soccer in Liverpool, Sydney.

The annual Inter-District Championship in Fiji is one of the longest running soccer tournaments anywhere in the world. Except in 1987 the IDC has been played among the district teams since 1938. The second shift diaspora in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and United States also have their versions of the IDC. It is not unusual for a number of IDC tournaments to be held in the various concentrations of the second shift diaspora within these countries. It is an annual event
in Sydney organized by the Australia Fiji Soccer Association (AFSA) and usually played at Memorial Park in Liverpool. At the same time similar IDC tournaments in Australia are held in Brisbane and Melbourne, but on a smaller scale than in Sydney. The IDC in Sydney usually attracts 23 teams each carrying the name of a district association from Fiji. Fiji soccer is unique in its organization of the tournament format in three tournaments, the Fiji FA Cup Tournament (Fiji FACT), the Battle of the Giants (BOG) and the IDC. Played over four days tournament formats feature continuous matches in a carnival of games in pool play, then elimination finals and the finals. This sustained carnival/bazaar style of soccer is not documented at the national level anywhere else.

The 2002 AFSA IDC was held in Memorial Park in a three-day tournament during the Labour Day weekend in October. AFSA is registered as an independent community sports group and holds non-voting rights affiliation with Fiji FA. It exists independent of other community and cultural groups, and resists inclusion in the umbrella bodies such as The Fiji Indian Social and Cultural Association of Sydney (FISCA), Council of Fiji Indians in Australia (COFIA), and International Congress of Fiji Indians (ICFI). The tournament is open to teams featuring players born in Fiji or having Fiji parentage and there are no exclusions based on race, except that only three non “Fiji” players are allowed on the field at the same time for any one team. There is also the replication of the dissolves of ethnic/sectarian divides referred to earlier in this thesis on the soccer field. A common soccer culture with its emphasis on district loyalty creates a deep sense of fellowship among players and fans that transcend these sectarian schisms. Violence or ethnic tensions, for example, between Indo-Fijians and Fijians who play together at all levels in Fiji are almost non-existent. One of the features of soccer in Fiji is the language code switching among players from the two major groups and one on one social and cultural interaction evident among players and fans. Indo-Fijian and Fijian social and cultural interactions, for example instances of code switching in language in soccer, is an area of potential sociolinguistics study beyond the scope of this thesis.

A Fiji diaspora in Liverpool come together for the annual AFSA IDC, as they do in moments of crisis such as during the 1987/2000 coups, providing aid during natural disasters in Fiji, to make
community representations to local, state or Federal governments and to celebrate Fiji’s Independence Day. Memorial Park is just outside Liverpool City, the heartland of the Indo-Fijian diaspora, in South Western Sydney. The games are played on two adjoining grounds with no seating or pavilion facilities except for a small official dais area beside the row of marquees for the food and drink stalls. District colours are flown as small triangular flags around the main dais and as the crowd filters in during the evening these colours are replicated through soccer jerseys, Australian rugby union or league jumpers and the colours of international club or national sides. A Fiji flag is raised for the official opening along with the Australian flag without much ceremony as the teams enter a straggly parade. The Suva side wins the parade in their sparse white and black colours mostly because the other sides have not put much effort into their uniforms. Someone remarks that ‘it’s allright! That’s what Suva only wins anyway!’ A snipe at the failure of the much hated capital district team in Fiji in recent times. Among other reasons Suva, as the capital side, is seen as the ‘mod boys’ of Fiji soccer for their awareness and devotion to the latest fads and fashion in style, and at the wrong end of crowd support for this perceived difference/assertion of superiority.

The politics of football, its nascent tribalism, in the form of hooliganism, especially in Britain and Europe, in the late eighties reached its peak in the mid-1990’s and became an issue of international importance and concern. It provided fodder for various theoretical/empirical/scientific studies, not least of all in cultural studies. And found itself into another popular culture form in films most recently, ‘The Football Factory’ (2004). The gratuitous violence of the film led to charges that it glorifies – and thus could incite – such violence at the championships. The construct of ‘squabbling soccer’ by Satendra Nandan exemplifies the associated idea of a ‘litigious’ people as a stereotype of the Indo-Fijian diaspora engaging in petty disputes, and soccer as a site for this ‘katch katch’, an onomatopoeic description of people engaging in noisy squabbles.

Football fans in Fiji inevitably get caught up in the emotions of being a fan and cross the boundaries of being a spectator. And a common sight is an unruly spectator or three being escorted out by some grim faced police. Tournaments in Fiji have a strong security presence
with a designated police post for the tournament and policemen deployed among the fans. Inevitably the heat, sun and dust and copious amounts of beer gets to one spectator at AFSA IDC who dashes across fields stripped to the waist, attempting to perform a war dance of sorts, and making challenge calls. His red jersey is his calling card, he waves it around, and holds it to his heart and stands drunk in a mock salute to cries of ‘Rewa! Rewa!’, the team from Fiji, in an all scarlet strip. The spectators have had their moment of the soccer hooligan, as he finally wanders off to cheers from a group of friends gathered around a car boot full of beer. The drunk kissing a dusty red jersey and proclaiming place, people and illusions of grandeur standing in the middle of another space, is performing the attendant rituals of being a fan, albeit not as a rule, but as the exception.

In either case exemplifying Rushdie’s statement, ‘The true football fan is the club fan, for whom continuity is everything, and so is loyalty in times of adversity, and small gratifications offer great emotional rewards.’ (Step Across 123) The semantics of ‘tribalism’ associated with soccer hooliganism retrieves a colonial construct of the exotic terms of a dead ancient Europe, still found in the Other of ‘deepest darkest Africa, or among the ‘noble savages of the America’s or the Pacific’, or the ‘cunning oriental or Asiatic’. There is an insistence that ‘tribalism’ in soccer with its attendant rites and rituals of pagan proportions, colours, preferred weapons of choice, drinking rites in allocated pubs or precincts, of a psychotic mass appeal of such ‘football heathenism’ is based on the horrible, primal pleasure they derived from violence. As the Other to such primal urges is the conditioned identification with team, colours, logos, and place that leads to the creation of a cultural identity that is deemed worthy of a site as a ‘nation’ or a ‘tribe’ or a district for Indo-Fijian diaspora.

Comparisons of ‘squabbling soccer’ from Fiji and ideas of ‘tribalism’ associated with district pride merge as eventually all 23 districts are represented at the ASFA IDC, more out of fear of a fine for not turning up for the parade than for the sartorial competition. The 23 district teams replicate the major district, city and township areas from the two main islands and also feature the Levuka (Ovalau) and Taveuni teams, from two smaller islands. All districts play in the same strips as their sides in Fiji but feature sponsors drawn from the various local Indo-Fijian
business houses around Sydney. The main teams have registered their district names as clubs, some with direct links to their Fiji district teams, through an exchange of players or sponsorship, like Nadroga and Suva. Other names are allocated to teams that have sought entry and they no choice in this arbitrary decision. In the registered teams most of the players have affiliations by birth or by the birth of their parents, to a particular district from Fiji. This linkage is usually patriarchal and can run through generations.

The opening parade is followed by the opening ceremony presided over by AFSA officials and a representative of the main sponsors, Mr. Mobile, a mobile phone Indo-Fijian company with offices in ‘Sydney, Auckland, Nadi and Suva’. Reference is made in the speech to the roots of the IDC in Fiji and its links to ‘where we are from’ and how ‘we should play with district pride’ and ‘keep our district name going’. Air Pacific, is one of the major sponsors for the tournament, a feature of marketing repeated in other locations in the various Indo-Fijian diasporic shifts. The public address system for the rest of the day intones reminders about fair play, of teams that were scheduled to play next and plugs for sponsors and the wide variety of food on sale. The tournament plays on towards the mid-afternoon heat.

The Nadroga side is sponsored by Mr. Mobile, who also sponsor the district team in Fiji. The president and patron of the ‘Nadroga’ Sydney club owns the Mr. Mobile company and they have familial links to the district and his father is referred to in the souvenir program as the ‘Father of Nadroga Soccer’. They are replicates of the ruling elite of soccer in Fiji, the compradors with power, status, and the need to lead, to control the fortunes of a district, of a place and the days and nights of the fans. They take charge, organize, sponsor, patronize, paternalize but remain a remove or so from the fraternity, or the firm of the fans. Yet, this divide become irrelevant as Rushdie makes the point that ‘You’d have to be made of stone not to be affected by the communal release of shared excitement, by the simple sense of standing together against the world, or the opposing team, anyhow. (Step Across 135-6). And for the Indo-Fijian diaspora this stand is as a district, a place on a map that evokes memories and places a location as modality for the expression, production and consumption of soccer.
Most of the main sides feature former Fiji national and district players and some make use of the ‘three non Fiji player’ rules to bring in Australian state and national league players. Teams are eliminated in the quick fire 40 minute-a-side matches. Tournament formats unique to Fiji. It takes the game back to the bazaar, a spectacle, for which the script does not allow more time, the action must be non-stop, like the music, the incessant cheering and calls made in the soccer speak of English, Fiji-Hindi and Fijian. Fijian terms of encouragement ‘daage’ (kick), ‘curu’ (to cut through), ‘toso’ (move), ‘didi’ (faster), ‘chulou’ (to dummy/pass balls between opposition players legs are interspersed with an equal mixture of expletives and much groans and grunts. The aural codes of football, or as Rushdie describes, ‘One kind of roar-uninhibited, chest beating triumphant-invariably followed a goal by the home team. Another groanier noise, indicated a near miss by the opposition, and dull grunt, a flayed pig’s head of a grunt, would follow a goal by the visitors’ (Step Across 130)

Aural codes translated by code switching into a Fiji mish mash of languages, a missing dissolve in a stratified and ethnically divided nation, is performed audibly, aurally for the duration of the game and in the afterglow, of success, or the camaraderie between the fallen. The replication of place, a dislocation, is completed by the aroma of food, the insistent Hindi music, and the carnivale of soccer, a continuous series of games on two fields, and the unique code switching between Fiji-Hindi and Fijian among players and in the cheers and derision from the fans. The code switching interspersed with the broad nasal twang of Australia competing for space. “C’mon mate”, “You Beauty”, “That’s not on, mate!” and so on. So the replication is not without challenges from the new location. The performance of identity travels to locations remembered but is also sited in Memorial Park in Liverpool, Sydney, and the hyphen Australia of the second shift diaspora.

Food stalls are an integral part of ‘Bazaar Soccer’ and of tournaments in Fiji, with the goat and chicken curries and pulaus, a spicy rice and meat dish, obligatory on the menu. Chicken and goat cut across sectarian divides on eating meat, and of course, all food sold at football tournaments, bazaar soccer, and any other Indo-Fijian social occasion is ‘halal’, kosher according to the Islamic traditions. For those with religious convictions on eating meat, there is
dhali, rice and the wedding fare of potato, eggplant and green pea curry. Soccer is also about food. About particular food that has earned a place on the menu alongside, the district colours. Served among team monikers—’stallions’, ‘blues’, ‘delta tigers’, ‘boys in black’, babasiga lions’, ‘jet-setters’, ‘goldminers’, ‘Naita’, and so on, each a derivative of place, colours, and some trace of a originatory moment when teams were formed to represent a district, to represent the identity of a place and its people.

And food is a marker of some of these places and of particular dishes that are not cooked as part of any arbitrary decision on the part of the cooks. The menu has been decided over the years. Food that is palatable across sectarian divides, easily eaten with hands, and features mostly meat dishes, not featured in any other of major cultural occasions for most Indo-Fijian, except for Indo-Fijian Muslims. Except of course, in those two other days, of a cross-sectarian celebration of Baada Din (Christmas) and Nawa Saal (New Year), where the culinary delight of choice is a goat, and to break the curry monopoly, a ‘lovo’, food cooked in the traditional Fijian way, in underground earth ovens.

The tournament in its retrieval of the carnivale of the bazaar as tournament soccer from Fiji runs its course until two teams are left standing in the final. The powerful Nadroga side is packed by representative players and have been the dominant side in all competitions run by AFSA in Sydney over the years. This is not a replication of the situation back in Fiji where the district languishes usually among the tail end of competitions in recent years. Nadi is the surprise other finalist, made up of mainly students, but having a few strategic ring-ins to strengthen the team. The food stalls are winding up. Spectators crowd around the main ground. Beer flows freely from the back of cars. Some stick by plastic buckets of yagona and watch the games with the meditative gaze of the quietly happy. The final match is a tense affair with crowd support divided between the ‘Nadrogans’ in Yellow and Blue and ‘Na(n)di ans’ in their equally colourful Green and Yellow strips. Nadroga wins, men, children and a few women walk around with pride, banners flying, for now they reign supreme, their replication of a place expressed in the pleasure of winning the tournament, in Liverpool.
This case study of the AFSA soccer tournament in Liverpool, Sydney exemplifies the game in its particular district based form as a base modality of one popular culture form as an integral part of Indo-Fijian identity/representation in Fiji and in their various diasporic shifts. It is an instance of identity formation that contradicts easy formulations of comprador and subaltern divides, or binaries of “the powerful” and “the poor”, or assertion of word play in these binaries by Certeau, of say the automobile workers, who claim, “They always fuck us over.” (16) There is this element, as earlier discussed in the politics of patronage, and the expectations of patrons of subservience and pandering of their egos from the players and fans. And this happens. Flagellation of egos goes cheek by jowl, with the feelings of pride and assertions of identity with a place, a specific locale, approximating the fervor and fatality of ethnic nationalism, but with no sense of a nation. The nation, instead shifts across playing fields, across seas and in a series of removals maintains colours, names, flavors, food, music, rules, the carnivale of soccer as assertion of identity for the Indo-Fijian diaspora in a district from Fiji. And the next section continues this engagement with shifts and replications in the reading of Liverpool from the results of fieldwork interviews and questionnaires, and research on statistical surveys, towards further instances of Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representation.

2: Reading Liverpool: Narratives in Numbers

This section analyses the Indo-Fijian “second-shift” diaspora in Liverpool, Sydney through an engagement with the statistics and on fieldwork in Liverpool, Sydney. As part of the research methodology this analysis experiments with a combination of empiricist responses to statistics and subjective responses using a variety of theoretical scaffolds in a textual reading of these ‘facts’. Statistics and other data such as maps state first of all the obvious in numerals, cartography, street names, dimensions and statistical disclaimers and notes. These indicators of trends in migration also provide through various modalities of interpretation a sense of movement, people, and place. Statistics on migration and Liverpool, validates at least in part choice of the case study area, which has a large concentration of people, whose birth place is Fiji, and as the case study reveals, mostly
Indo-Fijians. After the Australians born, migrants whose place of birth is recorded as Fiji make up the largest single community in Liverpool.

Statistics as narratives is of interest to this thesis. And there are narratives in these statistics as there are in streets and maps. For the most part they state the obvious. There is the insistence on the narrative roles of demography, statistics, interviews, questionnaire responses and cartography, as well as acknowledgement of their important roles in providing valuable data and information, that explains the past and seeks to provide the base for future projections. Statistics on migration figures become self-evident of numbers on movements of people and maps of Liverpool and surrounds as lines and distances to scale that place a location, within other locations. Yet, like all narrative statistics hides, duplicates, lies thus providing reason for larger narratives need to be engaged with these deceptions of numerals. For example, while the place of birth statistics make Indo-Fijians the largest migrant group in Liverpool, the non-recording of place of origin for their children who are Australian born, place them outside official counts of Indo-Fijians, or even as a hyphen, Australian-Indo-Fijians.

Several points need to be noted on these statistics. The large concentration of Indo-Fijians in Liverpool, as a ‘Local Government Area” (LGA), and their presence and inscriptions into the spatial and temporal scapes of Liverpool City, is due to a number of factors. The high number of family sponsored migration, 48.5 percent of total arrivals between 1996 and 2004, follows the general trend of migration under this category to settle around sponsors and contribute to the social and welfare networks among families.

The concentration of people from Fiji in Liverpool, mirrors in some ways the universal mode of family migration among diasporas and the concentration of people in “‘Little Italy’s, China’s, India’s ” among other hyphens of the originating country of the migrants in their new locations. Raja Jayaraman highlights the particular ‘Kangani System’ of family migration of Indian tea plantation workers to Ceylon between 1839 to 1950. Jayaraman makes the point that such migrations and concentrations of people invites study of their ‘religion, caste, kin-group and household.’ in the context of their role in the estate society, the Indian community and the
nation.’(6-7) Statistics and fieldwork in the sections that follow engages various modalities of these four related levels of the social structure in the Indo-Fijian diaspora in Liverpool.

2.1: Indo-Fijian Diaspora as Statistics, Graphs and Maps in Liverpool.

The Liverpool City Council website in its brief history states:

Liverpool was founded on November 7, 1810 by Governor Lachlan Macquarie and named in honour of the Earl of Liverpool, then Secretary of State for the Colonies. Liverpool is Australia’s fourth oldest town behind Sydney, Parramatta and Hobart. Unlike these cities, Liverpool was the first free planned settlement of Australia. The history of Local Government in Liverpool dates back to 1848 when a district Council was formed. Liverpool’s current population is over 155,000.


The tables that follow on Liverpool City and on the Liverpool LGA help site the location of the second shift Indo-Fijian diaspora at the heart of the study in this section of the thesis.

Table 1: Top 5 Countries by Migration Stream for Local Government Area: Liverpool (C)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Birth</th>
<th>Humanitarian</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Special/Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>1,075</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>914</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Yugoslavia</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>744</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 provides figures by migration stream from Fiji to Liverpool between 1996 and 2004 that number a neat one thousand. This figure cannot be used on its own to stand for migration by the Indo-Fijian diaspora as the statistics do not make this distinction, and the numbers indicate only country of origin and the migration category of migration. This validates the contention in this thesis of the use of statistics for context or to derive narratives from. In this instance the numbers do not stand for a diaspora but provide indicators, such as the closely interrelated nature of skilled and family sponsored migration, with the concentration of the migrants in one local government area in Liverpool. That no humanitarian visas were granted and the single visa given in the special consideration migration category provides its own narrative on the Australian government and their criterion on humanitarian/special consideration streams on Fiji. It does not acknowledge the coup of 2000 as creating a critical enough situation in Fiji that warrants consideration of applications on humanitarian/refugee grounds.

### Table 2: Liverpool's Culture: Birthplaces and Ancestry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2001 number</th>
<th>2001 %</th>
<th>1996 number</th>
<th>% change 96-01</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>85,484</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>73,525</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>4,509</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2,303</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam</td>
<td>4,195</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2,855</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>3,871</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4,331</td>
<td>-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>3,299</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3,355</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Australian born Indo-Fijians, the next hyphenated category of the diasporic shift, the Australian Indo-Fijian. Various estimates based on differences and actualities between Fiji Bureau of Statistics and Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data suggests that between 1970 and 2001 150,000 Indo-Fijians left Fiji. Fiji Bureau of Statistics figures shows a further 12,057 people migrated between 2002-3. It is estimated that in 2005 50,000 Indo-Fijians live in Australia, and that Liverpool has a some 20,000 or more, making it the largest single overseas community for the diaspora. As stated earlier statistics become arbitrary in this thesis and provides context rather than empirical basis to engage with Indo-Fijian identity and representation as performative modality placed in the everyday.

Table 3: Ancestry by birthplace of parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2001 number</th>
<th>2001 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>34,811</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>27,430</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>11,616</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>7,717</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>7,340</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanese</td>
<td>6,579</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>5,981</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>5,094</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 3 places the Indo-Fijian diaspora within ‘Indian’ ancestry. The statistics on ancestry becomes problematic as it either assumes Indian ancestry or does not recognize the Indo-Fijian diaspora as having its own identity. The problems with accuracy on migration statistics other than that of pure demographics, of birth and death figures, or countries of departure for migrants, is that figures on language, religion, ancestry and other social and cultural markers face problems of duplication and
overlaps. Such mapping has inherent inaccuracies that render such figures as useable only as guides and general indicators. Especially in the use of terms like ‘Indian’, ‘India’, ‘Hindi’, ‘Hindu’, ‘Urdu’ or ‘Islam’ as statistical markers that obscure, duplicate, overlap identities between Fiji and India, as well as other ‘Muslim’ nations. The two distinct migration figures on the Indo-Fijian diaspora are that of Country of Birth and the English Proficiency Country Groups.

### Table 4: Religious Affiliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2001 number</th>
<th>2001 %</th>
<th>1996 number</th>
<th>% change 96-01</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>55,186</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>45,340</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>23,420</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>23,031</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>11,554</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>6,236</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>11,090</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>6,480</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>5,256</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2,454</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 4 on religious affiliation includes Hinduism and Islam as a marker for the Indo-Fijian diaspora in Liverpool, but other Christian denominations also include significant pockets from their numbers. The use of general religious platforms to consider religious affiliations without accounting for country of birth and ethnicity leads to overlaps in these categories. In these statistics a numeral dissolve of identities and representation under the homogeneous categories of religion. Such reductive categorising does not prevent the retrieval of narratives of the important numerical figures on religion in the Liverpool LGA that account for the proliferation of temples, mosques, religious schools and community halls for religious purposes in the area.

### Table 5: Liverpool's Culture: Languages spoken and proficiency in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2001 number</th>
<th>2001 %</th>
<th>1996 number</th>
<th>% change 96-01</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaks English only</td>
<td>77,847</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>64,106</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks other language</td>
<td>67,072</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>41,446</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic (incl. Lebanese)</td>
<td>9,784</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>5,462</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>5,827</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5,633</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Proficiency</td>
<td>English Spoken</td>
<td>Non-English Spoken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>5,554</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3,267</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>4,952</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3,876</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>4,924</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2,319</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Language is a prime arbiter of identity among the Indo-Fijian diaspora in Liverpool. Table 5 shows Fiji-Hindi, which the statistics subsume under ‘Hindi’ in households, is in Indo-Fijian community gatherings and on the streets a distinct marker of the diaspora, but is not given official statistical consideration. This is problematic for Fiji-Hindi, as the Indo-Fijian diaspora’s distinct language, remains outside the realm of the official world of their new homes in Australia.

2.3: Interviewing the Second-shift Liverpool Indo-Fijian diaspora.

I. Interviews.

Interview Respondents: 27.

A total of 45 respondents were approached for recorded interviews that followed a set of questions from the greater Liverpool area in Sydney. Initially 36 respondents indicated their willingness to participate in the interviews. 27 respondents finally were interviewed with 6 respondents declining interviews later and 3 others were unavailable during the interviews times that had been pre-arranged. All respondents had been briefed on the interviews and their rights of response and were forwarded an interview sheet with questions and a synopsis of the main aims of the research. The interviews were recorded and responses were taken and analysed for this thesis from the transcripts.

*Interview Questions*

1. Age and year since you have been in Australia?
2. Under what category did you migrate to Australia?
3. What is your current employment?
4. What part of Fiji did you come from?
5. How do you maintain links with Fiji and how often, i.e., media, internet, telephone, visits and visitors?
6. In your own words what aspects of your life identify you as an Indo-Fijian?
7. What are some of the main forms of entertainment for you and why are they important to you?
8. What is your main link with India in terms of your entertainment and lifestyle?
9. If you have children or will have children how or what would you describe for them as their place of origin?
10. What community activities do you participate in which maintains your contacts and links to Fiji?
11. How does a sport like soccer in which Indo-Fijians overseas duplicate teams and competitions from Fiji figure in your life?
12. What makes you distinct as an Indo-Fijian from other people of Indian origin?
13. What aspects of your lifestyle do you see as being “typically Australian”? 
14. What are your main interactions with other migrant groups?
15. How important is it to you to maintain your identity and that of your children as Indo-Fijians with regard to marriage and family?
16. Any other comments you wish to make that you feel is relevant to my field of study?

Table 6: Interview Respondents: Age, Place of Birth/Origin, Year of Migration, Employment and Communication Links with Fiji.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>18-25</th>
<th>26-35</th>
<th>36-45</th>
<th>46-55</th>
<th>56-65</th>
<th>66 and over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Female/Male | 4 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Viti Levu</th>
<th>Vanua Levu</th>
<th>Other (Fiji)</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>New Zealand</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Self</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Trade</th>
<th>Unemployed*</th>
<th>Retired</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Visits</th>
<th>Internet</th>
<th>Mail</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes students.
Table 1 shows figures that match statistics on place of birth and years of migration for the Indo-Fijian diaspora in Liverpool. The age groups and number of respondents indicate the research interest in gathering responses from a cross-section of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. As such it is not intended to be indicative of demographics in the Indo-Fijian diaspora in terms of their age groups. The employment figures again links to occupational strands among the Indo-Fijian diaspora which is made of a fair proportion of professionals, mainly secondary school teachers, health professionals, and accountants. The three retirees had joined their children under the family migration stream. The retired respondents, two male and one female had all worked in Fiji, but spent most of their time in Liverpool, engaged in community work and looking after their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. In the communication area all respondents used telephones, relying on prepaid cards for the most part. A feature of Indo-Fijian and other shops in Liverpool is a barrage of posters advertising prepaid cards and their features especially cents per minute, in many instances these are indicative of call period and costs only at very low peak hours, early mornings.

Among the workers is a general tendency to explain their particular work and much of this entailed siting such work in relation to previous work in Fiji. The siting of Fiji and the second shift diaspora linguistically is through the inscriptions of ‘Here’ (Yehaa/Ihaa) of the Liverpool and ‘There’ (Wahaa/Wuaa) of the Fiji. This siting of place is part of everyday language working as habitual references to the everyday with the reflexive bringing in of Fiji. This situating of place was a comparative of the much better pay and working conditions in Liverpool than in comparable work especially in the non-professional sectors in Fiji.

Among the professionals, most of whom had left their careers midway in Fiji, there was also the contextualising of their present work and position, relative to what might have been if they had stayed on in Fiji. This group justified their migration in terms of advancing fairly quickly in their new work or the often repeated qualifier, that ‘it was necessary for the future of their children’ or the ‘situation in Fiji left them with no choice.’ All the respondents indicated that they either lived in a house owned by parents or children or they owned their own house.
text messaging and the internet were cited as cheap and fast ways of communicating with friends and relatives in Fiji, but just as importantly with the second shift diaspora in New Zealand, Canada and the United States.

The importance of digital technology in the daily lives of the diaspora takes on special signifiers as part of Appadurai’s technoscape. Appadurai relates this movement of information to money flows, political possibilities and labour flows. For the Indo-Fijian diaspora the role of the technoscape needs to be refined as part of their communication ideologies on siting place and people. On one level this needs to be related to the relatively small islands from which this diaspora has emerged and the particular implications of largely coup ‘factored’ migration after 1987 and 2000. This thesis acknowledges that a part of this diasporic shift was inevitable given the flows of international labour markets and migration flows, given the emphasis on education among the Indo-Fijian diaspora. However, the interviewees in ascribing to the idea of ‘greener pastures’ also mention the particular push factors of assertions of ethnic Fijian identity at a visible cost to the Indo-Fijian diaspora through coups and the various discriminatory practices under the 1990 constitution and the Affirmative Action Blueprint for Indigenous Fijians and Rotumans instituted in the post coup period of 2000.

Interviewees used the digital highway was to keep in touch with family and friends and news from Fiji and the other second shift Pacific rim diasporic centres. News for the most part included getting daily updates from media sites such as Fiji Live, Fiji Village, Fiji Times and the larger spread of Fiji and Indo-Fijian related websites. Sports, especially soccer and Fiji Football.Com was the most popular site, but political news and general news, especially instances of crime and violence, evoked emotive responses, usually justifying their migration.

There was a general pessimism about Fiji and its future. Some views border on an obsession with the idea of getting the rest of ‘our people out of there’. Interviewees tended to greatly exaggerate ethnic violence and directly related crimes to a conspiracy theory on its use to intimidate and eventually force all Indo-Fijians off the land and then off the islands. Along the lines of Appadurai’s ‘Deterritorialization’ or as ‘…one of the central forces of the modern
world, since it brings labouring populations into the lower-class sectors and spaces of relatively wealthy societies, while sometimes creating exaggerated and intensified senses of criticism or attachment to politics in the home state.’ (225)

The Indo-Fijian diaspora in these interviews tended to display the exaggerations of criticism to justify their own migration and the push to ensure more of ‘our people’, Indo-Fijians, to come ‘away’ (migrate) from ‘there’ (Fiji). The emotional attachment to politics is an extension of this criticism, with the two main strands of political thought, “For Mahendra Chaudhary and Fiji Labour Party” or “Against Mahendra Chaudhary and Fiji Labour Party”. The latter thought, usually framed with references to the formerly powerful Indo-Fijian aligned National Federation Party and its demise, associated with lost opportunities to ‘work with the Fijians.’

These criticisms does not exemplify attachment, instead there is a sense of detachment with the politics of Fiji, the only real concern comes with its association on what happens next to ‘our people.’ The exaggerations despite the continual information flows as verified by the communication strand of the table continue in ways consistent with Appadurai’s problematic of the ‘deterritorialized.’ The political scape of Fiji for the Indo-Fijian diaspora in these ordering of place and memory takes on in the sense of Certeau’s words, ‘In spite of everything, they provide the possible with a site that is impregnable, because it is a nowhere, a utopia.’ (57) Utopia, here of course, moves away from the ideals of bliss or perfection, to a remove a distance, from the paradise that was in the popular construct of Fiji as, ‘The way the world should be.’

Table 7: Identity, Popular Culture and Migrancy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indo-Fijian Identifiers</th>
<th>Clothes</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Food</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indo-Fijian Identifiers</td>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>Films (Hindi)</td>
<td>Music (Hindi)</td>
<td>Music (Indo-Fijian Folk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>Other Sports</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second section of the interview questions on identity, popular culture and migrancy and solicited responses as identifiers of/for/by the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Language, food, race and religion were cited by almost all respondents as important markers of their identity and formed an integral construct of their self. Clothes were asserted as part of their identity mostly by female respondents, with the proviso that they mostly wore it at cultural functions or for social visits, but also were comfortable wearing it to the city centre or in workplaces. The assertions of cultural and ethnic identity were based on a universal acceptance of the Indo-Fijian diaspora first as their initial modality. Intra-cultural identities did not come up as a topic until the question on interactions within sectarian groups. Among ‘Other’ as ethnic/cultural identity were responses like ‘drinking kava’, ‘talking English like in Fiji’, ‘Use of Fijian words and expressions,’ ‘Fiji Time-relax and take things easy,’ and ‘being able to identify (Pacific) island food and people.’ Hindi films and music were also cited as significant markers of identity and gave them a ‘sense of India’ and also a sense of ‘being Indian’.

The originatory point of the Indo-Fijian diaspora extended to cricket, as the significant other sport to soccer, and a source of identification with and identity from. India in cricket came in for support among the older age groups, but sectarian divides meant Pakistan was also a signifier, with the younger generation supporting Australia first. Australia when playing another country apart, from either India or Pakistan, was the preferred team. In sectarian divides among ‘fans’ of India, Pakistan and Australia performative identities as assertions of sporting nationalism where the diaspora can and often does shift allegiances between their different hyphens of origins, location, dislocation and re-locations. These performative identities exist not only in places but in sectarian divides and loyalties of icons such as flags or symbols such as the crescent and moon, and spaces in between.
Golf, is a significant departure in both interviews and questionnaires, with the assertions of a common Indo-Fijian identity, on Fiji’s Vijay Singh’s position as among the top golfers in the world in the period of the surveys. The assertion of such identity spread across sectarian divides, even to the Indian Tourism Board in Australia, hosting a special function to mark Singh’s achievements capped by his rise to being the top ranked player in the world during 1994. The assertion of this identity is often flaunted in the interviews along the lines of a struggle and the success of a player of the Indo-Fijian diaspora, who is legendary for his work ethics. The idea of ‘work ethics’ as a type for the Indo-Fijian diaspora is worked into this identity as a performative. As indicated earlier in this thesis the much vaunted ‘Indo-Fijian work ethics’ is a double edged sword, and allows the diaspora to enact roles of the ‘victor’ or the ‘victim’, based on previous experiences, memories and the creation of ethnic and cultural legends. The basis for this interaction changes in roles and expectations and in interactions with other groups, migrant/non-migrant in Liverpool, towards different modalities of identity and representation.

In the Liverpool the Indo-Fijian diaspora first negotiates interaction among its sectarian and communal definitions and then ventures out through, school, work and play into the larger community. The textual reading of the streetscape of suburbs in Liverpool engages communities, that site diaspora’s among diaspora’s, among the original diasporic shifts of Sydney as penal colony. This thesis does not engage with the questionnaire responses as empirical analysis of numerals, only, in the next section. It is placed as a marker, as a point of reference, for the final section where the same suspicion on statistics and analysis is placed as Certeau’s insistence in referring to the language of the stories of miracles as ‘a different discourse, a discourse one can only believe.’ Statistics in this sense if it were to exist as facts or as analysis of facts or as a signifier of the ‘truth’ it needs a narrative, its metaphors and symbols, from the everyday to bring it out of its reducible state as numerals on a table. These statistics are engaged as textual reading of the scapes of Liverpool as city, as site, and as a diasporic shift with narratives of/for the Indo-Fijian diaspora, to be found in ticks on questionnaire sheets.
2.4: Questions and Answers: Second-shift Liverpool Indo-Fijian diaspora Survey.

**Questionnaire Respondents**

109 filled questionnaires were collected from a total of 400 that were distributed in the Liverpool, Sydney area between November 2002 and March 2003. Respondents indicated by ticks responses to a number of possible answers to various questions. Respondents who chose to specify their response otherwise were given additional spaces. A breakdown of the questions and responses is provided in the tables that follow in this section.

**Area of Survey:** Liverpool, Sydney from a survey sample obtained through contacts with major Indo-Fijian cultural, religious, community and social groups.

**Main Purpose of Study.**

The survey conducted through a questionnaire and personal interviews aims to locate the main popular culture activities of the Indo-Fijian diasporic community in Liverpool, Sydney. The questionnaire attached to the information sheet required mainly responses through ticks below the appropriate answers. The questionnaire required between 10-15 minutes of respondents time. Personal details such as names were not required.

**Terms for Survey Respondent Approval**

Respondents were advised that the views and opinions presented in the questionnaire would be used primarily as material for the thesis. No part of the questionnaire or interview was to be made available publicly. The use of the materials in the thesis would be subject to supervision and examination by the supervisors and examiners of the thesis. Survey respondents were advised of their right to review their responses on completion of the questionnaire or interview and give a final approval or ask for responses to be excluded from the survey.

**Table 8 : Age, Gender, Place of Birth, and Year of Migration.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>18-25</th>
<th>26-35</th>
<th>36-45</th>
<th>46-55</th>
<th>56-65</th>
<th>66 and over</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of Birth</td>
<td>Viti Levu</td>
<td>Vanua Levu</td>
<td>Other (Fiji)</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 in this section shows figures on age, gender, place of birth and year migrated as being consistent with accepted interpretations and data on the particular areas. Much of the diaspora is concentrated in the middle age category (26-55), but as well as in the category left out of the survey due to ethical, supervisory and legal concerns on the under-18’s. The relationship between peaks in migration and the years of the coup in 1987 and 2000 and the immediate post-coup years explains the ‘forced’ nature of migration. The coups act as catalyst for migration for both the skilled and those in the family category. The latter category of course includes large numbers of ‘Bureau Marriages’ the Indo-Fijian equivalent of the mail order bride. No actual figures are available on these marriages and the duration of the union, but anecdotal evidence suggests that in most cases such marriages do not last due to pre-arranged conditions to separate or personal or inter-cultural difference. In which case the bride seeks another, usually Indo-Fijian mate, in some case re-marry their original spouses from Fiji. In either case, immigration regulations, make such practice harder over the years. Changes in parent migration laws and the resulting ‘wait list’ is expected to push down the family migration streams with fewer parents able to migrate to be with their children.
The Indo-Fijian diaspora is an increasingly mobile one with their Australian passport and citizenship makes meeting of visa requirements much easier for travel in most parts of the world. Higher disposable incomes and the tendency among the young to hold off marriages or to travel the diaspora looking for prospective matches also leads to such mobility. Travel to Fiji is increasingly becoming a matter of taking a holiday and visiting relatives. Travel agents in Liverpool cite an increased number of families and individuals taking package tours that include hotel accommodation rather than just buying air tickets. The digital global world means that keeping in touch with the rest of the diaspora is usually a click of a mouse away or the dial of a phone. The respondents showed a higher incidence of usage of the digital world and its interactions. Most respondents indicated a home computer or access to one at work or school, and family email lists, were among means of keeping the diaspora connected. The relatively high number of other travel destination indicates travel mostly to Asia on package tour and outnumbers those going to India.

Table 8 : Travel and Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Travel To</th>
<th>Fiji</th>
<th>New Zealand</th>
<th>USA/Canada</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>Interstate</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Websites</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>USA/Canada</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Interstate</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Mail</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>USA/Canada</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Interstate</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>USA/Canada</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Interstate</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 : Education, Home Ownership, Profession and Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Technical</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Post-Grad</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Profession</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profession</td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>Homemaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Ownership</td>
<td>Own</td>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>Share</td>
<td>Live with Parents</td>
<td>Live with Children</td>
<td>Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Fiji-Hindi</td>
<td>Hindi-Shud</td>
<td>English/Fiji</td>
<td>Fijian</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Regional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

48
The figures for education, home ownership, profession and language skills match with the
statistics and figures on demographics and categories of migrations. The number of university
graduates indicative of migration under the skilled category requires a trade certificate or a
professional degree. Teachers, accountants and finance professionals make up the bulk of
graduates in this area. The high numbers of home ownership and parents living with children or
children living with parents indicates acquiring of property as a priority as well as the
prevalence of the family unit, even in its extended form. As per data on English proficiency
most respondents knew English and were also well versed in Hindi. Regional dialects included
Urdu, Tamil, and Telugu.

**Table 10 : Popular Culture: Film, Radio, Music, Television and Internet.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Films</th>
<th>Hindi</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Regional</th>
<th>World Movies</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>82</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>Fiji Station</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>SBS Radio</td>
<td>Internet-Fiji</td>
<td>Internet-India</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>83</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Pop</td>
<td>Folk</td>
<td>Fusion</td>
<td>Devotional</td>
<td>Classics</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>96</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>Satellite</td>
<td>Cable</td>
<td>Free-To-Air</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>Indian PTV</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>93</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>Fiji Sites</td>
<td>Indo-Fijian</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>Fiji Football</td>
<td>Music Sites</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>97</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 indicates preference to films, internet and music from India over other places and sites. This is indicative of the popular consumption of these Indian expressions of popular culture among the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Local Hindi stations aimed exclusively at the Indo-Fijian diaspora account for a fair percentage of listening, but this is usually confined to the everyday outside of working or travel hours. Internet radios fill in the void with access to radio stations in Fiji available. Bollywood films are a major popular culture consumable for the Indo-Fijian diaspora and various references are made to it in this thesis at various points. The responses in the interviews and questionnaires bear out this major influence on the Indo-Fijian diaspora as it does for the greater Indian diaspora.

Indo-Fijian literature and the various memoirs also feature the Bollywood fare as a staple over the years for the Indo-Fijian diaspora and make individual and communal comments on its influence on creating a India/various India’s, and its images. The large number of video shops stacked with Bollywood films and increasing consumption through satellite television in Liverpool, Sydney is evident at the observational level and through surveys. This thesis has earlier extended an engagement with its particular roles in influencing Indo-Fijian identity and representation as these influences are not transitory or only as a consumable for the diaspora, but continue to place India as a originatory moment. Films frame India as influences fashion and fads but are also committed to memory as a significant identifier for the Indo-Fijian diaspora, as site for original location and dislocation.

Table 11 : Popular Culture: Food, Eating Habits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Indian Spices</th>
<th>Rice/Sharps</th>
<th>Live Meat*</th>
<th>Root Crops</th>
<th>Asian/ Vegetables</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>88</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>Indian/Asian</td>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>Fast Food</td>
<td>Vegetarian</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habits</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>European</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>Islander</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>104</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Indo Fiji culinary habits can be quite distinct from mainstream Indian cuisine that are split into its regional varieties and specialties. The fusion of island foods and preferences for tinned fish and corned mutton are among some of the distinct markers. An indicator of the distinctiveness of Indo-Fijian cuisine is that dedicated restaurants are recognized and patronized for its particular food. The spread of cooking, eating and food sources again replicate that of Fiji. The Indo-Fijian preference for ‘live’ meat as in freshly butchered meats, and especially for ducks and goats has seen prevalence of such good in butcher shops around Liverpool. Farms are identified and weekend expeditions undertaken, a la Seona Smiles Captain Blight/Babu to get such meat that is usually stored in the chest freezers to be found in the garages of the Indo-Fijian diaspora in Liverpool. Increasingly widening social circles through work, community, sporting or through friends of children mean there is inclusion of other foods during social occasions or to cater Indian/Indo-Fijian foods to appeal to a more universal palate.

Table 12: Popular Culture: Entertainment Shows, Stage Shows, and Festivals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>Indo-Fijian</th>
<th>Festivals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stage Show</td>
<td>Folk Group</td>
<td>Devotional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>77</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stage shows featuring Indian pop or classical groups or Indo-Fijian folk groups or state shows attract large crowds in Liverpool. The table shows feature artists from India become one of consumption of a popular or sometimes a folk culture form in the Ind-Fijian diaspora along the lines of Bollywood cinema or music. Indo-Fijian stage shows often replicated their India counterparts but also included items that were specifically Fiji in nature or have comedians like John Mohammed, who used Fiji-Hindi, Fiji-English and Fijian as the basis for his comedy shows that focuses on Fiji. His retrieval of place and people is through his variance and nuances of language, often that of the ‘voiceless’ subaltern and gives it popular form. The influence and
popularity of John Mohammed is evident in the fact that there are 25 Volumes of recorded cassettes of his comedy. Community festivals celebrating Fiji Day, or fund-raising festivals such as the Bula or Hibiscus that replicates such events in Fiji, or a number of religious festivals, notably Diwali, the ‘festival of lights’, celebrating the life of Lord Rama are part of the social calendar. As indicated earlier the particular affinities of the Hindu Indo-Fijian diaspora with the trials and tribulations of exile and banishment of Lord Rama, finds affinity in their religious practices as well as the title of Vijay Mishra’s construct of their ideology and consciousness. A 2002 dramatic enactment of Lord Rama’s life and times, a ‘Ram Lila’ in Liverpool, featured the use of Fiji-Hindi in the more comic dialogues to a mixed reception.

**Table 13 : Popular Culture: Sports**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport Interest</th>
<th>Soccer</th>
<th>Rugby</th>
<th>Rugby League</th>
<th>Cricket</th>
<th>Golf</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer Team</td>
<td>Fiji-District</td>
<td>Fiji-Club</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer Team</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows the wide spread of sports and the instances of the diaspora taking on the sports of its hyphenated country. Soccer remains a popular sport and district affinity and identity is maintained. The particular siting of Liverpool in the rugby league belt of South West Sydney sees a following for the sport especially among the younger respondents. Rugby is also widely followed with the Fiji sevens team one of the main reasons for the following as well as the large number of Fijian players in top level competition such as the Super Twelve featuring teams from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

**Table 14 : Identifiers as person of Indo-Fijian origin**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clothes</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Drinking Kava</th>
<th>Sports</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table eight is representative of the universal formation and acceptance of identifiers/signifiers of ethnic identity through clothes, food, language, sports and community activities. Drinking kava (yagona) is another signifier of place and is popularized during social occasions but also during religious and cultural events as there is no taboo against it as opposed to liquor. There are logistical and legal considerations such as being able to drive after consuming yagona without fear of penalties.

Table 15: Reading Indo-Fijian Literature and Academia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Studied at School</th>
<th>Read at Home</th>
<th>Never Read</th>
<th>As Academic Texts</th>
<th>Never Heard Of it.</th>
<th>Read Indian Literature</th>
<th>On Internet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table makes for interesting reading as indicators of the spread of Indo-Fijian literary and academic texts (mostly in literature and history) among its diaspora. There is the normative function of literature as school texts, and this of course refers to a canon of writers usually Satendra Nandan, Raymond Pillai and Subramani. As this survey included a relatively large number of graduates the overall figures probably do not accurately reflect actual readership of academic texts among the larger Indo-Fijian diaspora as a percentage. The relatively large numbers who said they read ‘it’ at home could be a reflection among the second shift diaspora to read about literature from their diasporic origins in Fiji as well as in India. It could just as easily have been a case of a biased reader response given the nature of this research and survey. Responses of various scapes as narratives are what this thesis turns to next in engaging the various modalities of home, the everyday, streets, parks, malls, and shops for instances of Indo-Fijian identity and representation.
3. Reading Cityscapes, Streetscapes, and Suburbia in Liverpool

3.1: Reading and Text: Everyday and Everyscape

Michel de Certeau is wary of epistemological inquiry that has the ‘ability to construct social phenomena, just as biology synthesizes insulin.’ (20) This thesis has engaged with Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representation with the view to move away from formalist methods of inquiry that removes subjects from their discourse. In the construct of the everyday there are difficulties that relate to truth and validity of discourse for consumption, academic, popular, archival or for the media of global technologies and its praxis and divides. The subject for study can bring to the research a performance for the epistemology to be charmed or disarmed with. Or when the subjects are placed under laboratory conditions there is exclusion, as there is in all samples, statistics and graphs, much of which is accounted for with disclaimers and conditions on the use of such data. This is exemplified by the disclaimers to statistics found in their original sources that have/are used at the beginning of the previous section. Certeau contrasts these exclusions and absences to the ‘speech act which cannot be parted from its circumstances.’ (20) These speech acts includes place, objects, language, signs, colours, architecture as markers of ‘acts’ that cannot be removed from its circumstance that provide an intimate reading of a diaspora and its people in Liverpool.

“Speech act”, “objects” and “places” are engaged to further discourse into Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representations. The aim is to produce textual readings of the everyday in city, streets, suburbs, home and garages of Indo-Fijian diaspora in Liverpool to engage and expand the textual readings to approach Certeau’s contention; ‘Something essential is at work in this everyday historicity, which cannot be dissociated from the existence of the subjects who are the
agents and authors of conjunctural operations.’ (20) In making this caveat there is also the insistence that such readings are marked by social, economic, historical differences between the ‘ruses’ of the subjects of the discourse, and the interpreter and tools of research, recording, analysing and writing for academic examination. There is no space, neutral, arbitrary or any other construct as reason, even ruse, to try and overcome this schism. Relational spaces exist are taken up in performance, are re-covered, re-membered, and re-placed in the overall performance of identity and representation in the Indo-Fijian diaspora. It is from this position of guilt/association that this section of the thesis moves forward to engage with the politics of identity and its performance in Liverpool, as site for one movement of the second shift Indo-Fijian diaspora.

3.2: Streetscapes and City

Northumberland Street, in the central business district of Liverpool City, is site of identity and representation in concrete, glass, signage, neon, boards, posters and logos of the Indo-Fijian diasporic. The street interrogates the walker of its pavements with its particular constructs of place in the practise of business. Liverpool’s city centre has a large shopping mall, city square on one side of the businesses in the older CBD. Liverpool, as name is an export out of England from the Merseyside city on the banks of the River Thames. Marlow or Marlows, names from a read past, from Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and a colonial corporate name in Suva. Both names tell stories of the quest that began from a river, of colonialism and the towns from where the heart of darkness begins, of the colonial project, into an unceasing sea. An ironic reading of Conrad, sites the heart of darkness as much in the metropolis of port cities like Liverpool, in Europe as it did in the upper reaches of the Congo. Or from the treachery of the recruiter, the arkati in Calcutta, another heart of darkness to the darkness of the heart in the treacherous waters off Nukulau, the quarantine island, for the Indentured labourers from India to Fiji. Liverpool, England as name is part of the inexplicable links of name/association/history to the colonial juggernaut that stays even as indenture is now a new adventure for the second shift Indo-Fijian diaspora in Liverpool, Australia.
On the streets in Liverpool is the glitz and light of shops of the Indo-Fijian diaspora on Northumberland Street. This site is one of the largest urban centres on the outer fringes of South-Western Sydney. Liverpool and its spread of suburbs provide various scapes for narratives on the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Narratives on people, individual and communal spaces and the replications and expansions of ‘conjunctural operations, so that site becomes one of identity and representation. Streets and shops begin to take meaning based on a shared code among a people. Habits and inhabitants of popular culture as a constituent of their identity sprout in shops, on shop windows, in the language of the street, Fiji-Hindi, Fiji-English, the swaggering of Australian twang, the inscribed printed words remain fluent and calm among all these storms of voices, laughter, a suppressed cry.

Brij Lal provides an apt summary of these narratives of Liverpool:

It is a mini-Fiji, with its temples, mosques, churches and its spice and grocery shops, video outlets, fashion houses selling sari and salwar kamiz, restaurants and takeaway joints. A variety of social and cultural organisations competing with each other for membership and funds, serves the community. Cultural evenings of song, music and dance, the celebration of festivals such as Holi, Diwali and Eid, are regular fare there. Newspapers proliferate, disseminating news about forthcoming events, soliciting contributions for this cause or that, announcing news of death, births and marriages. Pettiness and bickering the bane of our community, are alive and well there, causing fissures and frictions which enliven the mindless suburban life. (Mr. Tulsi 196)

This narrative of the Indo-Fijian diaspora in Liverpool is available to the cursory visitor or the inveigler of narratives and studies of people in their everyday. It is possible to begin siting this diaspora in among other things a flip through the Sydney version of the ‘Fiji Times’. Amidst a pastiche of post-haste unedited regurgitation of cabled news on Fiji and the Pacific, ads for
matrimonials, movies and mandaps, is an article on Fijian identity. Written by an indigenous Fijian PhD scholar from the US, there is a heartfelt questioning of the appropriation of the term “Fijian” by “Indians” by Brij Lal among others. The line of questioning is fairly straightforward and not the least bit squeamish about the inherent racism in the logic justifying the conspiracy theory of the larger plan to strip the indigenous of their authenticity by appropriating “Fijian” and hyphenating it with Indo-.

The settler-indigenous binary provides a narrative of racial divides finding voice, a telos, as academic debate, in the realm of the colonising of intellectual property as name by claimants to a place through ‘generational’ claimants, descendents of Indentured labourers to Fiji. The importance of the debate is lost to later letter writers and in informal discussions of the article is part of the world/word order of the ‘deterritorialized’ construct of Appadurai, where the home country and its politics take on a larger than life form. The indigenous affirmation in the Sydney Fiji Times is read as validation of migration and as addition to the growing construct of a homeland connected by nostalgia and performative identification and a withdrawal of a sense of belonging, now a place of departure from.

Even the process of parking a car provides another narrative as construct of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Or part thereof. The Liverpool City Council car park is almost full as a heavily laden late model Ford Falcon inches out slowly of a slot close to the historic Anglican Church buildings. I can’t see the driver. A pair of dark hands, fingers crammed with gold rings, arms laden with glass bangles, grips the red and black embossed wheel cover. A large plastic sheathed portrait of a luscious goddess in pink hangs from the rear-view mirror. Three children, two girls about 4 and 5 in identical pink flossy dress, flank a child-seat holding a boy in an orange jump suit and a red and black cap. A bespectacled old lady sits in the passenger seat in a floral pastel sari, her grey hair swept into a tight bun. The driver in a bright red blouse with heavily padded shoulders, peers out from beneath the spokes of the wheel in her hands.

The bright yellow New South Wales numberplate of the disappearing Falcon reads “Punditji”. The Fiji flags waves cheerfully from underneath cushion and bouncing dogs under the rear
windscreen. The heavy thump thump of a fusion remix bollywood film song wafts by, as the driver adjusts the rearview mirrors, at the exit to the park. Fodder for another stab at “The Guru” for Satendra Nandan. The Indo-Fijian writer domiciled in Canberra, could have a field day with all the images that blurred past me in that Falcon. The car as a space that is usually inhabited as it moves provides a site for the diaspora. The Ford Falcon; did with its constructs of narratives, of people, of objects, of music, of flags and a numberplate. There is no spoken utterance that passes between the interrogator of a popular culture moment and subject, yet there are utterances all around in a passing of cars of a gaze upon a site.

Certeau contends, ‘The operational models of popular culture cannot be confined to the past, the countryside or primitive peoples. They exist in the heart of the strongholds of the contemporary economy.’ (25) The operational modes in this instance are present as temporary lived space that incorporates into the material an aesthetic sense, gaudy replications as they well might be, but from an engagement of site, to look at identity and not pass judgement on dress sense, choice of colour, or even of music. Innate to the narrative of this site, of a car, of Indo-Fijian diasporic identity that can move, not of its own accord, but as and when the builder/participant/driver/s of the construct wants to or is sometimes obliged to.

On the street, language constructs its own sites of popular culture, Fiji-Hindi is the vogue, even among the young schoolchildren congealing around the Liverpool railway station at close of a school day, an assertion of identity in a site where different migrant groups converge, and each closes off their site, by choosing utterances in a cipher language, their own. The particular Australian nasal-twang the common language to break across such siting. On Northumberland Street, the Saturday morning shopping spree is on and with it “Sab set hai, man. Ha phir milio!” (All’s well, catch up later!) Fiji-Hindi, this one more urban Suva than “Fiji Lal’s” Batnikama version in Subramani’s Fiji-Hindi epic Daukaa Puraan, abounds like alleyways.

The ‘Daaukans’, is close to the idea of the country bumpkin in translation, are here in force with their mandalis, cultural dance and music groups, sanatanis, samajis, sunis, shias, gujis, denominational catholics, Methodists and new fangled gospel choirs, Punjabis, bauns, lauans,
rewans, naitasirians, soccer tournaments, Fiji Day celebrations, holi, diwali, eid, navratri dandias, community halls, temples, mosques and churches. Minutes are keyboarded into websites and email platforms of the local sectarian/religious/cultural/sporting Fiji-Australian Association AGM’s or as Sudesh Mishra proclaims in the poem Indian-Australian Association Annual General Meeting ‘ South says North’s smeared with turd;/ North says South is Turd;/ West, lachrymose with fervour/ Will brook no schism on the grounds of regionalism” (Tandava 65) – all this as the clock guffaws at the Memorial Avenue Centre, site of Fiji-Australia/Fiji-Sydney/Fiji-Liverpool community meetings and events.

Northumberland Street, the site of a few archives, stocked with saris, salwar kameez, choli kurtas, spices, tinned fish, corned mutton, ghee, fish from Fiji, pooja samagri-religious items, Hindi film posters-videos-vcds-dvds-cds. Tara’s Mart the central spice and grocery shop on Northumberland Street is a virtual cavern of these goods. The front counter is also the checkout point behind which are stocked the film and music archives, cross-shelving on walls have household goods particular on Indian cooking, spices in large tubs, or pre-packed for twice the price. India is left behind in the freezer section with root crops, vegetables, pickles and fruits from Fiji, aisles are filled with tinned goods from, the popular tinned fish and corned mutton, take centre stage. The shelves and walls along the right wall of the shop is stocked with dry goods, wooden boards and rolling pins and a wide assortment of religious items and posters.

On the front window are the loud posters of overseas telephone calling card companies and of the next ‘Qawwali battle between Salen and Aten’ or the “Uciwai Thirunaal Troupe” featuring ‘Fijian’, a troupe for the South Indian festival dance/drama. George and Scott streets among others stocks lawyers, doctors, dentist, travel agents, restaurateurs, djs and an assorted school of retired people from Fiji. Shops trade in goods, gossip and in news. Colour schemes of companies as well as names and logos from Fiji are duplicated in Liverpool. There is comfort in the familiar. And marketing in those familiar colours. Just as there is in wearing the colours of a favored district team from Fiji. Posters advertise the latest Bollywood films on DVD, the preferred filmic format, among the diaspora.
Religion is power. Religion is all-powerful entertainment. In Fiji, a popular talking point is the predisposition towards religion of their second shift diasporic cousins. A construct brought to life in interviews with three Hindu priests and an Indo-Fijian Muslim respondent who conducts religious pilgrimages, the *Haj*, to Mecca. Three Hindu priests—‘Sanatanis’—all talk about the importance of religious education as the means to ward off the evils of living in Australia, of drugs, alcohol, sex, rock’n’roll, reggae, inter-racial marriages, among others. One priest fills in an e-diary for religious ceremonies as the interview is conducted, and advises clients on auspicious dates and times for such ceremonies, from Hindu astrology internet site.

Another priest is the editor of the ‘only and largest Hindi newspaper’ in Sydney, the ‘Hindi Prachar’, styled on the ‘Shanti Dutt’, the longest running Hindi newspaper in Fiji, with religious, news, and entertainment contents for the wider Hindi readership from India as well. The templates are a replication of the Shanti Dutt, in addition to re-writes of news from India and Fiji, are opinion pieces and features on religious instruction, and advertisements for a wide variety of religious and cultural services abound. The Indo-Fijian Muslim respondent talks about the work of the Sydney Fiji Muslim League, for the most part a replication of their counterpart in Fiji, and also makes reference to the sectarian groups within Islam and their followers in Liverpool. Community projects such as the mosque and a Muslim school dominate discussions of the diaspora with an insistence on being ‘good Muslims first’ and then everything follows.

Exiled in the Park, like the characters in the Subramani short story, two grandmothers speak warily at first, but warm quickly into rural savvy Fiji-Hindi patois. Turns out they are widows now harnessed with the task of baby-sitters for shift-patterned children. The children keep them occupied and happy and they are glad to be of service to their offspring’s. Their children have good big houses and car. Good jobs, security for their children and a future. What more can one ask for, nothing left in Fiji. The land was gone and so were the children. Relatives scattered around USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. In Liverpool, you can get everything that you got in Fiji, even the people and their language, they continue. And they were better organised as
a community. Religion followed more studiously here than in Fiji. Even professionals from Suva partook of religion as they had never done before. They both agreed on a few problems.

Mostly youths with drugs, alcohol and sexual relationships before marriage, nothing that could not be solved if parents took better care and they all attended the weekly Ramayan mandali meetings as a family. The family that prays together stays together. They begin talking about an upcoming wedding, or a funeral, or both, each outdoing the other in their Nausori style Fiji-Hindi, a reminder of the Indo-Fijian comic John Mohammed. A construct of the cipher world of the word that constructs private worlds in the public space, for inclusion and exclusion, or as Naipaul exclaims “Ghany could follow their conversation. He disliked the way Indian women had a way of using Hindi as a secret language in public places, and asked impatiently, “Date of Buth?”(43) It is from this public space with its cipher language that this thesis now moves into the intimacy gradient of the everyday lived space of the home in Liverpool in the next section.

3.1: The Intimacy Gradient: Indo-Fijian Home, Architecture and Island

John Achari’s (1985) unpublished thesis paper ‘Culture: Conflict: Architecture-Directions for a Fiji Architectural Identity.’ is prefaced with the aim of bringing in the spatial forms of architecture to talk with cultural:

Through architecture, I thought Fiji people may be encouraged to realizing that the person standing nearby is not a Fijian with curly hair, thick headed and backward or an Indian with eyes like a fox, money-minded, and manipulative, but people with a vast cultural heritage from which one can be enriched. (ix)

Achari’s paper interplays theoretical forms with cultural markers to enable ‘…designing public buildings, places where most inter-ethnic interaction occurs, in the hope that the incorporation of cultural elements will assist people to tolerate each other just as different elements will co-exist in architecture.’ (v) As part of the lived and the everyday for popular culture expressions,
production and consumption and as markers of Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representation, the house/home as site and its streets and surrounds, becomes the last vista for interrogation in this thesis.

Achari provides background of Fijian society, customs and traditions in relation to architecture. He begin with place as ‘site where the “Yavutu” was the ‘threshold of tribal traditions’, and gradual rise of custom in the old village communities and of totemic and ancestral influences of kalou vou, or ancestral spirit as important to architecture. The traditional house as site in Fiji ranged from the bure kalou or priestly house with its elevated platform to gain mana as the basis of power and influence over objects as well as people. Achari points out ‘Social organization of the house is very hierarchical…the two side doors (Katuba levu-main door-Katuba lailai-side door) mark the division of the house into its two main social parts; the high or private, and the low or public parts of the house. While the loqi, is a very private section head of house, close to areas for sleeping and to keep belongings. (44) The Fijian ethos of a house in the everyday construct of a house exemplifies the universality of cultural forms in usage of space in the home, with its basis in the practical and the divine, towards allaying some of the identity politics of ethnicity and its divides, that underlie discussions on Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representation.

Achari as a comparative points out, ‘In Fiji, however, there are two aspects to Indian architecture-religious and domestic. While religious architecture has been imbued with the rich cultural heritage of Indian life, relatively undeterred by the demoralising years of indenture, domestic architecture underwent developmental stages from indenture through to the present time.’ (91) The house as space for the Indo-Fijian diaspora began in ‘Lines’, the barrack style accommodation, on plantations as the first site of the everyday for the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Gillion’s observations on these ‘Lines’ form the early markers for architectural and other narratives on the initial space for their everyday:

Each line usually had eight rooms on each side, each ten feet by seven feet, or ten feet by twelve feet (after 1908), and assigned to three single
men, or to a lone man, one woman and not more than two children. The rooms had doors but no windows, and for ventilation (but not privacy) the partitions were not carried to the ceiling but were topped with wire netting. There was no flor, except that made by immigrants themselves out of cow dung and clay, as in India. … The mud and straw houses the immigrants had come from in India had often been miserable hovels, but they were homes and they had blended into the surrounding earth. The lines were crowded, dirty and ugly. (105)

House for the Indo-Fijian diaspora becomes a significant marker for this thesis, as it is the basis of location and dislocation, but also as the space for the individual everyday it represents, and its archives of family and domesticity. Achari traces this evolution from the ‘single rows with attached kitchen after 1910, and individual units to accommodate the larger families’, to when ‘Indians started building houses for themselves. With the Colonial policy of allocating 10-12 acre lots per family, numerous settlements emerged in the countryside. While many carried the remnants of the “lines” with corrugated-iron buildings, others adopted the Fijian bure form which was cheaper and, in many cases quicker to build. (99)

Achari makes the point, ‘It was in these bures that the influence of the traditional farm architecture in India was most evident. A mixture of cow-dung and clay was used to make the floor and lime added to the mixture to provide a waterproof membrane for the outer surface of walls. Colours were often varied using different types of clay.’ (99-100.) Later usage of tin sheds, thatched walls, 44-gallon drums stripped and flattened into materials for walls and corrugated iron and timber buildings on urban squatter lands and leased rural farms were in many instances due to the impermanence of existence on leased land. Early urban houses of Indo-Fijians mirrored Colonial designs, but according to Achari many ‘… also incorporated strong Indian influences with typical arches, balustrades, the use of temple-like colonnades and the use of “typically Indian” colours as well.’ (99)
Achari outlines typical examples of architecture among the Indo-Fijian diaspora in Fiji that show strong indications of an ‘Indian’ type emerging; where identification with temple motifs is an interesting attachment when in some cases the owners may not be Hindus. Achari observed ‘…many houses owned by Indian Christians and Muslims were observed with such motifs, perhaps suggesting that such typical Indian motifs cut across religious lines.’ (101-02) One explanation for this kind of “ghetto architecture” (that is architecture specific to one ethnic group) is that in the face of ethnic diversity (multicultural), where cultural institutions maintain a high profile and strong influence, the emergence of a typical type is inevitable.’ An observation of urban architecture of shops and commercial buildings in Fiji especially from the 1950’s and 60’s even in art deco buildings in Suva. An example of the replicatin of shop architecture/shelving/window dressing can be found on on Northumberland Street in Liverpool. The spice, food, video, grocery and household goods shops replicate traditional Indo-Fijian shops from Fiji, with an accretion of goods, on cross-shelved walls with the more modern supermarket aisle style stocking in the middle.

This section of the thesis analyses transgressions into the everyday space of architecture and its various siting of people, culture, place, and identity in its representations in material forms and colours of the house. Achari’s summary of Indo-Fijian buildings in Fiji provides a significant point for expansion into the study of the lived spaces in the second shift Indo-Fijian diaspora in Liverpool.

Whether the context is urban or rural, the internal social organization of the Indian house is fairly standard. Strong traditional norms have persisted in influencing the arrangement of rooms and functions in even the homes of the more Western-influenced families, who also partake of the “ghetto architecture” mentioned earlier. The most significant of these norms is the “intimacy gradient” (figure 5) which draws its origins from the temple plan (Appendix 3). In the house this is a progression of functions from the most public to the most private. Prayer room / Kitchen - living room – entry – porch - public. In its
overall concept, the house parallels the temple in terms in hierarchy of spaces. (104)

The ‘intimacy gradient’ as theoretical construct is integrated with Michel Foucault’s construct of the heterotopic and deployed in analysis of the replication of spaces in the Indo-Fijian diaspora in Liverpool with its ‘…coming together with other spaces that seem to bear no relation to them.’ (113) Various instances of this can be found in the colonial experience.

In Fiji for example, the establishment of ‘gentlemen’s clubs’ such as the Fiji Club or the Defence Club, along the lines of those formed in England and replicated elsewhere as other colonial modalities in colonies like India. The Defence Club in Suva, Fiji thus appropriates a space in the colony, outfits it in various colours, architecture, military regalia, popularizes particular food and drink (gin and tonics), places dress codes-evening suits, subscribed to British newspaper, and played cricket at Albert Park in the city. A heterotopic continuum that exists to the present day as another instance of the original project where the heterotopic construct and its logic controlled and regulated the movements of people in the colonized space.

This moment is also present in the diasporic replications that take place in the second shift diaspora in the house with its particular conventions on movement following the Achari construct of the inner logic of the Indo-Fijian house. This, of course, is not the intention or the project, in the construct of a house or a space, as a replication for the Indo-Fijian diaspora. The heterotopic construct is used in this section of the thesis to engage with the everyday to point out instances of replication of Indo-Fijian diaspora from Fiji in its second shift diasporic removal in Liverpool. The logic of this replication is interrogated as an integral part of the practise of performative identity by the individual and the communal in their lived spaces towards construct of people, their removals, dislocations, locations and reproduction of earlier lived lives and spaces.

The reading in this section is an accretion from various houses visited in the Liverpool LGA, particularly the housing estates in Hoxton Park, that are largely single storey dwellings built to developer plans in the early 1990’s. And the more recent developments in Greenway with their
larger double-storey manor type constructs. House and land packages sold in the area maximize the size of houses on small sections, usually between 450-600 square meters. According to interviews and questionnaire responses much of the Indo-Fijian diaspora own their houses. As such this reading excludes those individuals who rent or live in flats, buying such places is not a preferred option, especially among the first generation of the second shift Indo-Fijian diaspora in Liverpool. Yet, the intimacy gradient is not much different in flats and apartments, evident from observations of such places as part of the fieldwork.

The housing boom and spread of Western Sydney with pressure from a growing, largely migrant population among other factors is displayed first hand in the new housing estates in Liverpool. Indo-Fijians in these new suburban areas displays their propensity towards replications of the middle class ‘houses on stilts in beach estate’ construct of Subramani in their choice of homes. The narratives of names in front of houses talk about the major task of keeping up with the Kumars, Prasads, Lals, Ali’s, Singh’s, Naidus, Patels among other Indo-Fijian surnames as a major player in their settlement patterns and choice of houses. The textual reading reverses the inner logic of the ‘intimacy gradient’, where the intimate is the divine, and entry to the innermost sanctuary begin at the door, instead the interrogation/er is led to the garage.

The large double garages with remote electronic doors house more than cars. A whole people are garaged with their table-top gas cookers, larger gas burners kept in a corner, a chest freezer, a second hand bar fridge, bbq’s on trolleys, assorted second hand chairs, plastic tables and vinyl settees. The second hand rugs are free of sump oil. Shelves with books and religious pictures adorn bare brick walls. This is home. Inside the designer kitchen and sparkling equipment stand free of the smell of food. The large formal family area houses photographs that would make an installation artist like Mohini Chandra based in London begin to take measurements and make videos. The bedrooms are misty corridors of lace and chintz, only to be glimpsed at from the garage.

The intimacy gradient in Liverpool begins with the division of a house with informal and formal living areas. The formal living room, dining room and bedrooms stay in the backgrounds. It is a
lived space that intimates closure to the rest of the world. This is a colonial construct, neat and ordered with sitting and sleeping areas closed off by design to the outside world. Leather couches, formal dining tables set to a ordered space but never lived in, bar or buffet hutches displaying duty free liquor with their foam wraps or boxes intact, full of silverware and unused glasses and china. Indian art and painting, mostly of the mass produced iconic variety line up other shelves. Bookshelves are rare, but in one instance is filled with mainly by works of Indian writers or writers of Indian origin in English. Rushdie sees the diaspora in a different vein in the iconic world of Indo-Lillyputian Neela:

India was insisted upon everywhere in the Bedford Street apartment, in the overemphasised manner of the diaspora: the filmi music, the candles and incense, the Krishna –and- milkmaids calendar, the dhurries on the floor, the Company School painting, the hookah coiled atop a bookcase like a stuffed green snake. (Fury 208)

India becomes a projected logo to be emulated and replicated in the lived space. In the Indo-Fijian lived space among its second shift diaspora in Liverpool, India becomes one centre, one origin for which identity is performed in the artefacts of the lived space. Formal family portraits over dark cupboards polished and shiny, holding important documents on a house title, mortgages, citizenship certificates, birth, and marriage certificates. The family shrine or prayer rooms are usually in the designated study, again closed off, the whiffs of incense or camphor faint around the edges of the door. Large religious portraits around mass-produced wooden shrines for Hindus or the large lithographs of Mecca and the faithful at prayer. Shoes are taken off at the door a practice that is adhered to, workmen asked politely to do the same. Over time regular guests unfamiliar with the Hindu and East Asian practice find it a habitual practice. One or two homes have the same polite instructions on a laminated sheet stuck discreetly to the door. The intimacy gradient comes with its own markers, instructions and rules.

The family room, kitchen, informal dining area are the lived spaces where individuals come together to share a space. It is usually accessible through the garage. Small garden plots are dotted
with the staples of Indo-Fijian cooking, chilies, curry leaves, eggplants and for the more ambitious home gardeners, cabbages, tomatoes and a few other exotics in spaces planned for a flower garden. The kitchen is usually a space for immediate family meals. Informal family portraits, school and sports photographs of children, bills, a small radio that catches the off-mainstream channels Hindi radio, traditional Fijian mats and masi, a whales tooth or Fijian handicrafts can be quiet interlopers, in this space. The family room houses the home entertainment systems, large screen televisions, and stacks of CD’s and DVD’s, covers are on the settees, the frilly lace doilies or the more colourful raffia edged coverlets, provide decoration and protection from dust and wear and tear.

Filmic India is played on DVDs or through satellite Hindi channels or the increasing number of Pay Channels, that brings in the universal melodrama of a mostly mythological India in new avatars in the form of soap operas, travel and food shows, Indian MTV, Asian Sports, and various cinema offerings. The gaze or panoptic positions from the Indo-Fijian diaspora on India, imagined and real, a place to be visited to check on origins, specials on ‘girmit tours’ are flashed in posters and travel web sites. This is the world of Bollywood dreaming for the Indo-Fijian diaspora, increasingly a space that finds less of an audience among the Australian born Indo-Fijians. A group that will perhaps decorate their houses as Rusdies puts it like, ‘Neela’s Bombay alter ego, Solanka mused, pulling on his clothes, would probably have gone for a heavily Westernised Californian-minimalist simplicity…but never mind about Bombay.”  (Fury 208)

The garage is insisted on as the final reading of a lived space for the everyday for Indo-Fijian identity and representation in Liverpool. It is a site that incorporates elements of the Indo-Fijian diasporic identity that moves along various shifts and movements towards an interrogation of a shared space in the divides of the intimacy gradient. The garage is the heterotopic space for the loss of the larger spaces of settlement rural Indo-Fijians or the urban houses, or even the shared communal spaces of the ghetto, squatter Indo-Fijians, or those in housing authority ‘Lines” (commission, state housing estates). The garage becomes an important space, an indoor space that replicates, is a substitute for larger outdoor spaces or the relative anonymity of the shared communal space in Fiji.
As indoor space it becomes an year round space that overcomes problems of weather (cold, rain) as well as the prying, appraising, disapproving gaze of the new space where the heterotopic construct forms as a tactic of the weak, and not as tool for the oppressor or the colonial. The walls enclose but the doors are large. When opened it provides the open space, a space longed for and newly replicated. The garage then provides the balance between fitting in to a new environment while maintaining the ‘sanctity’ of this individual, family, communal space, and a semblance of control over what is considered ‘a natural’ way of life. In the world of Appadurai’s ‘derritorialized’ in this technoscape of the heterotopia is the construct of a replicated space, as a constant, in a world of movement of people, good and technology and its constructs of an infinity of different and often conflicting spaces, as aberrations of identity and representations. The complete world is present in the garage as an Indo-Fijian construct of the heterotopia but with the removes of the logic of the colonial instance, into an assertion of diasporic continuity and performances for Indo-Fijians.

In this heterotopic construct of the garage as replication of space for the Indo-Fijian diaspora there is no division of this world, no exclusions, it is the one space in the intimacy gradient of the house that provides a common space. A space for meeting, greeting and holding of social, cultural events that keeps the rest of the house and its spaces intact from contact with much of the outside world. It can be an informal kitchen and dining area. Or a place to site the tanoa, the carved wooden bowl traditionally used in Fiji, for drinking kava, or the old bar fridge for beer, or the chest freezer to store meat, or shelves of religious texts for free classes for the young. It is a heterogeneous space that provides a world for various identities to be performed, and various rituals to be attended to.

In this space there is always the negotiation of a world that makes sense to a people as they move through it from various locations and dislocations, dismemberings and re-memberings, towards an intimacy gradient of the self, of others and of a house, its garage and spaces around it. As such it approximates the universal ideal of a dissolve of spaces of the high and low areas of a lived space. A space for sharing to overcome divides of ethnic and cultural identity performances and its various manifestations such as the schisms of the settler-indigenous binaries. The garage thus has prospects of being the allegorical rara or village green, that informs part of the Indo-Fijian
identity of place, that keeps intact the intimacy gradient of a house or people, but provides grounds for a coming together, a dissolve into non-dualist positions of alterity. A conclusion on the various engagements of this thesis follows with the acknowledgement of the need for shared spaces among the alterity divides in the everyday narrative as validation of research or scholarship and its explanations of people, their identities and representations.

Chapter 7

Conclusion: Indo-Fijian Diaspora, Identities, Representations as modalities of the ‘Popular’, the ‘Everyday’.

The central objective of this thesis has been to arrive at an expansion of current research and scholarship on Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representation. Identity is not uniform, nor representations always constant, as individuals and community perform/retrieve particular identities for specific historical/everyday conditions and circumstances. The sustaining argument of this thesis has been to provide for an expansion of these performative identities or the politics of the retrieval of such identities for the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Narratives/images, as varied as Indo-Fijian literature, memoirs, essays, travelogues, tourist ephemera, are deployed to break free from existing homogenous constructs that tie down diasporic constructs to a fossilised or ruptured
moment from the past, for example, the initial period of dislocation, of Indenture or Girmit for the Indo-Fijian diaspora.

The thesis has demonstrated that discourse such as the Girmit Ideology and Consciousness and the various Outside/r texts from James Michener to Paul Theroux, and their replications in tourist ephemera, among other mediums, of reductive images of the Indo-Fijian diaspora, acquire status as text, as fact. In this first instance, a theoretical construct, that reduces identity and representation to a fixed alterity construct of center/margin, homeland/motherland-land of the diaspora, provides a starting point of understanding a people. In the second, text, extant or ephemeral narratives can construct identities and images that persist and resist modalities of change, difference and interpretation over time and space. A particular image, of the surly, bickering, petty, ursurping, selfish and various thesaurus bound metonymic associations to these words, define Indo-Fijians, and begin their own litany of a discourse. In both instances, there is a technology of textual/non-textual discursive means to limit, reduce and provide convenient labels for the Indo-Fijian diaspora.

Such a process can leave a people without identity or representation as subjects created and left as a packaged commodity. There is translation of the imperial project of the West and Enlightenment based on rationality, maturity, superiority and the ability to cipher discourse, to be found in academic constructs or in the ephemeral, on the Indo-Fijian diaspora. The inherent reductionism of the Girmit Ideology and Consciousness is also found in the gross generalisations of a travelogue or stereotyped images in tourist ephemera that comes with a ‘yours to keep’ tagline in airline seat pockets. There are of course, ‘same but not same’, all the while engaging the process of discourse and to manipulate it to achieve the same result. This thesis brings in a wide variety of narratives, literary and non-literary, to provide a counter-discourse that brings in the everyday and the lived spaces of the individuals as sites of identity and representation. The comparative aspects of the various narratives inform each other in presenting the complexity of identities and representations of a diaspora, at the same time, their inter-textuality highlights the semblance of a collective world that inhabits all discourses created on/by a diaspora.
Comparative and complementary narratives in the thesis are processes of generating knowledges that are informed by but also resist easy definitions of people and place for the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Traditional modalities of diaspora studies include binaries of the center-margin, whether it is Britain-Indo-Fijian Diaspora or India-Indo-Fijian Diaspora. Subversion of such binaries is innate to the Fiji colonial experience and its Indo-Fijian diaspora. The dislocation of Indenture provides its own examples of specifici archives of removals and movements inherent in the binaries of the Indo-Fijian diaspora as mediated in the colonial project of Britain. The mediation is through India as colony as source of labour, but just as important is Australia by stocking personnel for the colonial project in Fiji, as well as providing a parallel Raj in the Colonial Sugar Refinery. The complexities of the mediations are indicative of the specific historical artifices and conditions that underlie each colonial project. Within these specific instances are the various undertakings of binary explanations, useful as starting points, scaffolds for the scraphead, once its utility in establishing basic historicity is over.

Many narratives remain outside the scope of this present research. There is the pressing need for extended interrogation of narratives from the Indo-Fijian diaspora in Hindi or Fiji-Hindi in the vast newspaper, journal, occasional magazine and other ephemeral rags that exist. A study of the ephemera of the soccer souvenir programs, for example, could add greatly to present studies on Indo-Fijian identity and representations or the comprador nature of football adminstrations with the colonial administration, or in more recent times with various big businesses or the government of the day. In this regard, the inclusion of women writers, juvenilia and the place of children in Indo-Fijian narratives are important expansions on current studies, in this thesis. It is by no means an exhaustive study and is an area that can be the subject of more comprehensive studies. The present study brings up a large number of important areas that can be developed into major research projects at this level to better complement existing and current scholarship on the Indo-Fijian diaspora.

At a superficial level, the construct of Girmit Ideology and Consciousness can be gratifying for the Indo-Fijian diaspora, as it writes back to a past, that is often deified in popular consciousness. Some instances of this performative identity are found in moments of crisis, for political/religious
leverage or as a means of self-assertion of identity/location of homeland. As a superficial deceit it manages to coerce and legitimise itself and grasp discursive and hegemonic control from moment to moment. The ‘Outside/r’ or tourist ephemera operates another deception by turning its back on the subject of inscription and providing a sketchy, censored, scratchy images/text in the cartoon mode of back-alley pornographer. Flashing slides, to the consumer the tourist, traveller by foot or of the mind, from/in faraway places. The legitimisation of reductionism or instances of absence/erasure, of Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and representation, comes about as much as in the power/prevalence of such discourses, as it comes from an abdication of responsibility to provide alternative narratives/images to provide answers to such monolithic constructs.

This thesis has taken the responsibility of expanding on the existing narratives of study in texts that can be at times ‘nostalgic/sentimentalistic/even melodramatic’, in memoirs of example. Yet, the discursive movement attempts to unseat reductive constructs of Indo-Fijian identity and representation, remains clear, sustained and legitimate. While a ‘true’ representation or a definitive identity is impossible, or as this thesis argues not even a desirable pursuit for any diaspora or community, there is much empowering possible through memoirs. The placing of individual memories in a collection retrieves and retraces the many faces, hands and feets that make up the Indo-Fijian diaspora. Empowering should not just be in academic constructs or as the domain of the ‘canon’ or the ‘achieved literature’ of a diaspora. They have their valid places in this process, as this thesis concurs, at various instances. There is also the need to acknowledge, that in the processing of memories into memoirs, is self-assertion of respect, dignity and homage to a place and past, that deserves its own place in the pantheon of narratives/images/texts.

This inquiry of ‘narratives’ needs to be taken into the public and private domain of the everyday to better structure self-empowering readings of various scapes that contribute to the complexity of existence. Such readings are not meant to be all-powerful assertions of self-mythology, but a recognition of the everyday, that will provide palimpsests of identity and representation that can be sketched to approximiate the whole. Soccer is identified as a popular culture construct and explored for replications of space, place/locality and even time in the scanning of the everyday to provide clues to idea of belonging, for instance. This is a powerful modality, as evident in the case
study in Liverpool, for the artifice of the game lends itself to powerful human emotions, and the premise of a district from Fiji, becomes a powerful signifier of place and belonging.

The expansion of existing areas of narratives and theoretical perspectives to analyse the Indo-Fijian diaspora provides rationale of the first order for this research. There is the removal of passivity and retrieval of the individual lived spaces in this expansion, for instance through memoir writing or in reading soccer. It is in this order of removal, in the placing of the text in the domain of the everyday, that it takes on value, significance and meaning, for the diaspora, rather than imposing theoretical models or creative texts/narratives to define them in a continous process of reductionism. Immediate social formations can be mist-like in its constructions and removals, yet, it exists, like the ephemeral tourist brochure, its life is extended through a series of ‘reprints/reformations’, each time replicating certain features but also incorporating new ones from a life lived. The justification in this regard, comes from Fiskes appraisal of De Certeau’s work on the ‘everyday/everywhere’ so that such a ‘…shift accords to “the people” the respectability and respect that their popular texts have achieved.’ (305)

It becomes a case of being academically blas_ to attempt denial of positions on the ‘everyday’ due to the blithe spirit, the mist that envelops the ‘Everyday’. To see it’s cultural construct as ephemeral fails to enagage with its importance for identity and representation for the Indo-Fijian diaspora. As texts, such as street, home, garage, soccer field, among other modalities, demonstrate in this research, it carries substantial meaning towards demarcations of identity and representation for the Indo-Fijian diaspora. This thesis demonstrates the need to move away from academic constructs that epistemologies in some sense should approximate the ‘truth’ because this is a totalitarian position mobilising knowledge for power in academic tomes/towers. Instead the epistemology/discourse of this study justifies the need to integrate the ‘…academic to social relations, of the academy to the popular. It can play a role in the redistribution of social power.’ (305-6) Thus, the discursive modalities of this research is an integral part of the various existing discourses in related fields. This research is a resource among many, to provide narratives on identity and representation on the Indo-Fijian diaspora, that do not have to continuously justify itself as academic/social/popular construct and its instrumentality.
Life does not entirely revolve around a soccer ball, or leavens and dies, in the flipping of academic tomes. In between these metaphors, lie the balance between revolving lives, through the various doors of time and space and the flipping of identities to perform particular roles. Identity takes on the language of late capitalism even as it moves in the various scapes outlined by Appadurai, for instance. It acquires shelf life. It acquires space on the shelf of life. And with time a diaspora begins to recognise the various logos and colours that denotes particular identities and begins to stock/stack them as required. The acquired currency is that of a self-empowering realisation that space and time, present different modalities of behaviour and expression, and these can be traded at whim to move between bouncing balls or flipping pages, trading off whatever is required, whenever it is required. There are constants and variables in these performative identities as expounded in much of the thesis. At no stage does this research insist on a one or the other, or all or nothing, binary. Instead the sustaining arguments have been that all narratives carry powerful linguistic, semantic, visual, aural, sensory codes, whether in the everyday, as popular culture, as cinema as sports or as printed pages. These narratives must be used to empower the Indo-Fijian diaspora towards a cosmopolitan acknowledgement of the lives that are led in the present age of modernity in the recognition of their identity and representation.
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