

ACROSS CONTINENTS

WRITING GOANS, MAKING WORLDS

R. Benedito Ferrão



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Across Continents

Writing Goans, Making Worlds

R. Benedito Ferrão

University of Michigan Press
Ann Arbor

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Published in the United States of America by the
University of Michigan Press
First published August 2026

A CIP catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data has been applied for.

ISBN 978-0-472-07821-9 (hardcover : alk. paper)

ISBN 978-0-472-05821-1 (paper : alk. paper)

ISBN 978-0-472-90601-7 (open access ebook)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.14488314>

Publication of this volume has been funded in part by the African Studies Center, University of Michigan.

The University of Michigan Press's open access publishing program is made possible thanks to additional funding from the University of Michigan Office of the Provost and the generous support of contributing libraries.

Authorized Representative: Easy Access System Europe, Mustamäe tee 50, 10621 Tallinn, Estonia.

For Rufina and Felix

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Digital materials related to this title can be found on the Fulcrum platform via the following citable URL: <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.14488314>

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The debt I have to those that have helped me on the journey to creating this book stretches, like the title of this volume says, across continents. I am honored to have so many to thank, in so many places, for their generosity. What follows is an atlas of gratitude.

This book would not have come about had it not been for a conversation in a moment of crisis in Sharjah. In spite of it being the first time I had met them, Pamila Gupta and Laura Fair graciously lent me ear while we were together at a conference. Because of them and Kelly Askew, the series editors of *African Perspectives*, this book is in the perfect home. I am grateful to them and previous editor Katie LaPlant, as well as my present editor Marcella Landri and editorial assistant Delilah McCrea for their wise and thoughtful stewardship at University of Michigan Press. It has also been a pleasure to work with Marcia LaBrenz and the press's other staff.

When I first met Anjali Arondekar in Goa more than a decade ago now, I found a mentor, interlocutor, and friend most importantly, who I will continue to look to for advice, camaraderie, and for always being badass in all she does. What Anjali has provided me over the years is a model of how to do work as a literary and cultural studies scholar interested in and committed to research, community support, and activism around those rendered marginal even though their place in life and history is anything but. That we are Goan kin is a bonus. While this is a gratitude list, I must also apologize to Anjali for all my bad jokes and those she will have to endure in time to come . . .

I also met Lucy Mae San Pablo Burns in Goa for the first time, but we have journeyed together as academics, writers, and friends in the Philippines, the United States, and South Asia. From Lucy I have learned how to bring together scholarship, creativity, community work and care in what I do; this book is no exception and I am grateful to her for continuing to create a path in helping me make these kinds of connections.

Goa is also where I met my dear friend and collaborator, Vishvesh Prabhakar Kandolkar. As fellow travelers in academia and research, we have worked

apart, geographically, and in close proximity. I have learned so much from Vishvesh's deep interest in Goa's cultural history but have also been inspired by his research and work ethic. Countless emails, WhatsApp messages, texts, calls, and in-person conversations are some measure of the work we have done together on many projects. Yet, Vishvesh's encouragement in making this book happen is immeasurable. I am thankful to Vishvesh for being part of this journey and I look forward to the ones to come. (Also, a special thank you to my friends Lila and Luke.)

As readers will find, intermediality is one of the methods I employ in this book, within which art and art history play their parts. It was thus important to me to include the work of Goan artists. *Christ, the New Temple* by Angelo da Fonseca appears here courtesy of the Xavier Centre of Historical Research (XCHR), Goa. The cover of this book carries an original creation made especially for it by the artist Maria Vanessa de Sa. I am deeply grateful to Vanessa for *Across Continents* and *(Not) Only You*, which appears later on in the book. It has been my privilege to work with and learn from Vanessa who I have admired for her ability to harness her artistic perspective to chronicle Goan history and contemporary socio-politics. So also, I am very thankful to my other artist-collaborator and friend, Karishma D'Souza for allowing me to include *Going Home* here. The work I have been doing with Karishma over the last few years has expanded my research and thinking processes; the ideas that have emerged from our teamwork imbue *Across Continents*, for which I am grateful.

This book is tied closely to my career as a professor and in this regard I owe so much to my former colleague, boss, and forever friend, Francis Tanglao-Aguas. Francis has seen me through so much, and I will always be so honored that he took a chance on me right out of graduate school. From Francis I have learned how to navigate our profession, especially as faculty of color in the humanities. My gratitude also extends to the Tanglao-Aguas family for their warmth and generosity which I have experienced in Virginia, California, Philadelphia, and the Philippines.

A book like this on pluricontinentalism in fiction would not be possible were it not for friends, colleagues, and research partners in many places across the world. When I lived in Los Angeles, one of the cities I called home longer than any other, I was lucky to belong to a supportive community. This is where I met Deborah Al-Najjar and in whose residence I sat on many days as we worked together as graduate students. Even though we both moved to other cities, we continue(d) to work online and discuss ideas on the phone.

Deb has been my co-editor, conference-boo, and confidante, sharing as we have in comradeship, learning, and our heritage. This book owes so much to our friendship.

Perhaps no one knows more of the nitty gritty of the text that has become *Across Continents* than my friend, Jih-Fei Cheng, who read several very early versions of its chapters. Together, Jih-Fei and I have traveled through graduate school, the job market, tenure-track positions as professors, . . . and shenanigans. “Hand-tumbling-like-waterfall” is what Jih-Fei has named that alleged gesture I make to explain things away. It is one of the many ways he has held me accountable intellectually, interrogating and pushing my ideas further – thank you.

Darren Gray, Alia Yunis, Elton Naswood, Leonardo Colemon, Rahul Bjørn Parson, Sabrina Chong, Gitanjali (Gina) Singh, Jaspal Singh, Jane Bitar, Sriya Shrestha, Anjali Nath, Arvin Tsosie, Clifford Pun, Jenny Breyer, Paul Ocampo, Ashley Thompson, Zlata Bubar née Sanca, Marita Hacopian, Gladys Nubla, Sohni Sarbuland, Anthony Pinga, Shruti Garg, and the late Tony Evans and Anand (Andy) Shah are other Angelenos (in some cases former ones themselves) who were part of my intellectual and community life. I thank Darren for many years of friendship and care, and for many more to come. I am grateful to Alia for our continued friendship, collaborations, and exchanges (now in four continents and counting!). Rahul I have known since undergrad and so little seems to have changed given that we are still in school and still exchanging notes (thank you)! I continue to feel the loss of Andy and am grateful that he was in my life. I also thank the members of my LA Goan family, the Pereiras and, family by extension, the Correias.

This book draws in part from my PhD work. I obtained my degree in England under the tutelage of Mpalive-Hangson Msiska. His guidance continues to hold me in good stead, as a scholar and teacher. Mpalive was the first to tell me that he foresaw a career for me in academia and that I should write a book. That this one exists has much to do with the years I spent learning from him. So also, bearing witness to his navigation of Britain’s academic system as a minority has been its own pedagogy, lessons I turn to in my own career in a no less challenging place.

That I continue to be a long-distance Londoner is because my friend and fellow-PhD colleague Ekua Agha opened up her home to me in that lean year when I was to be done with my degree. I am ever grateful to the Girl Born on a Wednesday, not only for that time but for all the times that have followed when she housed me on several research visits to Blighty. Rowyda Amin and

the late Simon Upton were also similarly PhD “classmates,” and I am glad to have had many conversations with them about our work in postcolonial studies. My network in London extended beyond school to include friends and community members like Esko Riekk, Arvind Kannan, Selma Carvalho, Eddie and Lira Fernandes, and Anuya Upadhyay, as well as my cousins, the D’Silvas of London—thank you.

Unexpectedly, the beginnings of my academic career would occur in a different continent. That had much to do with the backing I received from Alberto Gomes who put me in touch with Sue Thomas. Thanks to them both, I was made an Australian Endeavour Postdoctoral Research Fellow, an opportunity that allowed me to begin publishing some of my first peer-reviewed research. Sue encouraged me to pursue writing a book. I thank her for her counsel then and now, and also for her career advice and support. In Melbourne and Sydney, I was fortunate to be in community with Steve Pereira and Michael Mifsud, Suneeta Peres da Costa, Samia Khatun, Roanna Gonsalves, Ruth de Souza and Danny Butt, the de Souza family, and my cousins, the D’Silvas of Sydney.

A Mellon Faculty Fellowship brought me back to the United States, leading to the job I have now at William & Mary. While I have already mentioned Francis Tanglao-Aguas, I am happy to say that there are many other wonderful colleagues to also acknowledge. I was the first person at William & Mary to be hired in a tenure-track position in Asian & Pacific Islander American (APIA) Studies and also the first to be tenured in this capacity. So many were responsible for making this happen, with Deenesh Sohoni leading the charge as Chair of the program; Deenesh, Francis, and many of our students were instrumental in instantiating APIA Studies at the university, the first program of its kind at a liberal arts school in the southern states. I am grateful for and inspired by all they do. The program has been the place where so much of my scholarship has developed, much of it closely related to this book.

I thank my colleague Stephen Sheehi from whom I have learned so much about doing the work that brings together scholarship, community, and activism; it means so much to call Stephen and Lara Sheehi my friends. I am also very grateful to Chinua Akimaro Thelwell. My thanks to past administrators, Monika Van Tassel, Mouna Litz, and Sharron Gatling. I am immensely thankful to the Liu-Zhang family and Benming Zhang for their backing of my scholarship and am honored to have been named the recipient of the Jinlan Liu Prize for APIA Research at William & Mary, 2024–27.

I share my position at the university with the Department of English.

One of my great privileges in the department has been the chance to develop courses on postcolonialism, diaspora, Asian American literature and film, and literature on Goa/ns. These, in turn, have benefited my research, given me the chance to present my work at events, dialogue about it with colleagues, and develop ideas in the classroom along with my students, all of which relates to *Across Continents*. I thank all of my colleagues in English, our Chair Arthur Knight, and our administrators, Shanay Butler, Tyler Reeves, and the now retired Jeanne Smith.

When I began at William & Mary, it was as a fellow in Asian & Middle Eastern Studies (AMES), a program I continue to be affiliated with, and its larger umbrella, Global Studies. Accordingly, I have been able to create and maintain interdisciplinary ties with those doing work in these areas. I thank Chitralekha Zutshi and Kevin Vose who happened to be, along with Francis, on the hiring committee that brought me into the institution. Chitralekha continues to be a great source of intellectual inspiration for which I am grateful. Thank you, too, to Andrea Wright, Jennifer Bickham Mendez, Richard Lee Turits, Hiroshi Kitamura, and Mark McLaughlin. I am grateful to Andrea for the many discussions we have had on research, community, and, most notably, about being there for our most vulnerable students.

I am also an affiliate of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies (GSWS) at the university and thank Claire Pamment, the Chair, for inviting me to be part of this program that has reinforced my research and teaching. My interests in interdisciplinarity have also meant that I have found myself in enriching exchanges with colleagues in other fields. I am grateful to have found community with many scholars in Africana Studies, including Iyabo Osiapem, Hermine Pinson, Olaocha Nwabara, Suzette Spencer, Mei-Mei Sanford, and Robert Trent Vinson. I would also like to thank Leisa Meyer and Francesca Sawaya in American Studies for their support.

My first work-friend at the university was Michael Iyanaga, both of us having been hired as postdocs. That we shared common interests in luso-phonetic colonial contexts was a remarkable coincidence, one that still animates our intellectual interactions. I am also glad for having gotten to know my fellow-luso-diasporic, Fabiana da Silva Campos dos Santos. A great benefit of carpooling and being neighbors with colleagues is the conversations one has about teaching and research—my pedagogy has developed so much because of those kinds of talks. Thank you. I am also grateful to my colleagues Addie Tsai, Brian Castleberry, and Marco Millones for numerous deliberations, scholarly and creative.

I am thankful to Suzanne Raitt for hiring me in English whilst she was Chair. In her capacity as Dean, I am grateful to Suzanne and other colleagues at the College of Arts & Sciences for the grants I have received to pursue research and attend conferences, internationally. Likewise, I thank the Reves Center, Global Studies, AMES, APIA, GSWS, and English for their generous support of my research.

The work of a researcher is enhanced greatly by their access to a well-resourced library and, in my case, this was exactly so because of the university's Swem Library; moreover, I have been beholden to the library's staff for their assistance, often, in obscure areas of research. A big thanks to Gina Woodward, Liz Bellamy, Natalie Rue, and Paul Showalter for their insightful assistance. Also at Swem is the Reeder Media Center whom I have relied on to translate my research into teaching tools: thanks in particular to Stephen Locklin and Troy Davis. Another library I am grateful to is the one at Goa's XCHR and equally so to its librarian, Arti Fernandes.

My international research which has led to this book has been aided by various fellowships. I am thankful for having been named a Fulbright-Nehru Academic and Professional Excellence Research Fellowship awardee, which vastly helped my scholarship in Goa. The United States-India Educational Foundation were extremely supportive during my time as a Fulbright fellow, their workload exacerbated by the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. My special thanks to Adam J. Grotzky and Priyanjana Ghosh. As a Fulbrighter, I got to meet Ryan Booth and deepen my relationship with Geeta Patel. We continue to be in touch and I always look upon our online conversations as a shared celebration of this career highlight. The breadth of Geeta's knowledge and the depth of her compassion stun me every time. That Geeta has stood in my corner so often is something I do not take lightly. Thank you.

Also during the pandemic, I found myself in Bavaria as a Fellow of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence at the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies. It was a challenging time but one that allowed me to get a lot of writing done. In such circumstances, one does not take for granted those they get to know. My thanks to Ute Fendler, Christine Vogt-William, Eleanor Tiplady Higgs, Clarissa Vierke, Landry-Wilfrid Miampika, and Farzam Abrishami. Post-pandemic, a fellowship from the American Institute of Indian Studies helped me continue research in Goa that I began before the shutdown. Elise Auerbach was tremendously helpful during this time—I am grateful.

The aforementioned fellowships led to the publication of a couple of pieces which are now included in this book. Appearing in chapter four is a

section titled “The Music of Neoliberalism,” which, hence revised, was first published in *Roadsides* no. 6 (2021) as “The Music of Neoliberalism: ‘Only You’ in Roger King’s *A Girl from Zanzibar*.” My thanks to the journal and also to Christina Schwenkel who conceived of and edited the brilliant issue. Chapter five, “The Other Black Ocean: Indo-Portuguese Slavery and Africanness Elsewhere in Margaret Mascarenhas’s *Skin*,” retains the original title with which it first appeared in *Research in African Literatures* 45, no. 3 (2014), although this version bears many changes. Yogita Goyal edited the special issue and I am thankful to her for including my work in it at a time when I did not have any institutional affiliation to speak of. This publication was one of my first peer-reviewed ones and its appearance, along with Yogita’s support, proved massively helpful as I entered the job market—thank you.

Because of the job at William & Mary, moving to the east coast meant developing a new support system. Elton Naswood has been my bridge between the coasts. I am so grateful to Elton/Eartha Quake for our long friendship and I thank him for inviting me to learn from the Navajo community in the DMV area and in his homeland as well. What I know about indigeneity and Native history has transformed because of our friendship and such learning; it has also changed me. I am honored to count as my community such friends as Mellor Willie, DeWayne Crank, Shawn Imitates-Dog, and Lael Echo-Hawk. I also will take this opportunity to pay my respect to the Native communities of Virginia where I work.

Also in the DMV are others whom I have relied on: Samhita Sunya, Penelope Mitchell, Rob Read, Deryn van der Tang, Rafael Hernandez, Link Warren, and Andy Pulsirisaroth. I have so many shared cities to count between Samhita and me now—Beirut, London, Saadiyat Island, and the DMV burghs. Knowing that Samhita is always just a call away has been so meaningful, as are the many conversations we have had on film, literature, music, teaching, scholarship, and more.

As a writer in multiple registers—academic, creative, and journalistic—I have been favored by my association with various people and groups. They have all contributed to my practice as a writer, scholar, and researcher. Let me begin by thanking Kevin Wood and Abeer Hoque—remarkable writers in their own right and gracious advice-givers on the craft. I thank Naresh Fernandes and *Scroll.in* for giving me the space to link academia and the world beyond in my writing. I am grateful for and miss Kenneth (Ken) Trupp as well as my yearly visits to his home in Blaine where he patiently read my work—no matter what it was—and provided useful feedback.

The good people of Radius of Arab American Writers and the journal *Mizna* have been profoundly influential in helping me develop as a community and social justice-oriented writer. I am thankful to Priscilla Wathington, Stephanie Abraham, Shannon O'Neill, Laila Farah, Lana Barkawi, Randa Jarar, Mejdulene Shomali, Charlotte Karem Albrecht, Leila Ben-Nasr, and Deb Al-Najjar. Priscilla and Stephanie are always near despite physical distance and I am ever grateful.

As an interdisciplinary scholar of literature and culture, I have gained much from colleagues in multiple fields, at domestic and international conferences, and even from email interactions. For their advice, guidance, and for inviting me to give talks or participate on panels or in publications—all of which have added much to my work—I thank Martin F. Manalansan IV, Roderick Labrador, Rachel Afi Quinn, Amalia Mora, Paul Michael Leonardo Atienza, Bettina Judd, Natasha Bissonauth, Iqbal Akhtar, Dredge Kang, Tan Hoang Nguyen, Hentyle Yapp, Elliott Powell, Evren Savci, Stanley Thangaraj, Anne Rademacher, K. Sivaramakrishnan, Andrew Toland, Rashmi Sadan, William Gow, May Joseph, Gaurav Desai, Darshana Sreedhar Mini, Bindu Menon Manil, Neelima Jeychandran, Neferti Tadiar, Pithamber R. Polsani, Neelkanth Chhaya, Priya Joseph, Sonal Mithal, Prita Meier, Lucas Joshi, Alexandra Lourenço Dias, and rockstar Nidhi Mahajan.

As an Afro-Asianist and also as someone with familial and scholarly ties to East Africa, much of my thinking about the past and present of Goan Africa comes from my connections with Kenya. I thank the de Mello family and my late aunt Ortulana, as well as the D'Souzas—Jason, Aaron, Cynthia, and Tony—who hosted me on research trips.

Both as a diasporic scholar and a scholar of diaspora, I have been reliant on the connections I have built in Goa. Even as this book is about diaspora, it also reflects back on the homeland for it takes displacements and its influences to be multidirectional and never linear. Therefore, my thinking over the years of producing this book has been marked by interactions with Goan scholars, academics, writers, artists, and friends, but also those who think and write about Goa from afar. I mention with gratitude the names of the late Teotónio de Souza, Favita Dias, Isabel Santa Rita Vás, Rochelle Pinto, Fleur D'Souza, Nalini Elvino de Souza, Jessica Faleiro, António Vaz, Vivek Menezes, Nigel Britto, Fatima da Silva Gracias, Fernando Velho, Prema Rocha, Rosa Maria Perez, Paul Melo e Castro, Inês Figueira, Clifford (Cliff) Pereira, Angela Ferão, Peter Nazareth, Savia Viegas, Augusto Pinto, Solano José Savio da Silva, Aaron Savio Lobo, Albertina Almeida, John Pereira, Loretta Pinto, Nicole-

Ann Lobo, and the late Alito Sequeira. Before her untimely passing, I was able to share my essay on her novel, *Skin*, with author Margaret Mascarenhas and was deeply touched by her encouraging words about my work. Roger King, writer of *A Girl from Zanzibar*, also responded helpfully to my reflections on his novel and I thank him for this.

My family have been an important part of my research journey. I continue to feel the loss of my cousin Gordon Lobo who died during the pandemic. Gordon was a staunch ally, there to help me do the work, to buy me books, and check in on me. There will always be a Gordon-shaped hole in my life. His memory is kept alive for me in Flavia and Logan. Despite him no longer being with us, I would like to think that some part of him lives on in this book because he was such an integral part of its development. Memory persists and what I learned from the matriarchs in my family who are also no longer with us: my aunts Ana (Anita), Matilde, Jolsa, Maria (Mary), and my grandmother Inacia, among other departed members of the family. To the Ferrãos, Mascarenhases, Menezeses, de Souzas, and Raikar-Khauntes, my thanks. As true as any family member, my dog Maya faithfully kept me company on many long nights of writing; she is missed.

I thank my sister Fiona for believing in me. She with Adele, Vedanth, and Yashpal are my anchor, giving me a sense of place to return to no matter how far the journey may take me.

This book is dedicated to my parents, Rufina and Felix. For generations, on both sides, my family have been crossers of continents. It is these stories my parents gave me, encouraging me to pursue a life that meant something to me. I saw my parents struggle and face discrimination as migrants, I saw them fight back. It was my parents' example that taught me the importance of social justice, something that permeates what I do as an academic. My father died as I was writing this book, but the love we shared lives on, as also the lessons of place and connection I have learned from him and my mother. It is in every page of this book.

As I close, my final acknowledgment is of a visit I made to occupied Palestine on a grant I received a few years ago. That visit changed everything I thought I knew about coloniality despite having been a scholar of it for years. This book has been shaped by that visit and the belief that a people must be given their due.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The Many Worlds of Goa

Because of my own family's history, I had grown up knowing that Goans lived in Africa, but what came as a surprise to me later in my youth was that there also existed Africans in Goa. The passages of both these groups across continents was mainly due to colonialism, both British and Portuguese, I would come to discover. Shortly after beginning graduate school, I traveled to Kenya for the first time. In a Mombasa cemetery not far from the lighthouse, the Kenyan groundsmen helped my family and I locate the last resting place of my maternal grandmother, Felicidade, whom I had never known.¹ After they were married, my grandparents journeyed from Portuguese Goa to British East Africa where my mother and her siblings were born in the first half of the twentieth century. The end of British colonialism saw an exodus of the family from postcolonial Kenya, one that took them to different parts of the world, much like the characters in the novels this book is about.

Although from a diasporic family, I spent a few years growing up in Goa. My parents had a friend in Goa whose surname was the same as that of one of my uncles. In addition to his Portuguese name, the fact that I only ever heard him speak Konkani rendered this family friend a common enough figure. Years after he passed away, I learned that Mr. M was a Black Mozambiquan man who had married a Goan woman; together, they adopted children from a local orphanage. As with the grandmother I never knew, I wondered what Mr. M's story was. He and his family, as well as Felicidade, could well have been characters in the kinds of novels I came to research to understand the circumstances that made transcontinental movement so much a part of Goa's place in the world, and that of those who journeyed to and from the small enclave.

It is true that the works of fiction I found that bore a semblance to the lives of people I knew were not many in number. Yet, such literature brought to the surface the kinds of stories that fell between continental divisions, stories that invisibly connected Goa's many worlds, especially in touching upon the everyday experiences of subaltern diasporic people. Speaking to the correlation between lived experience and the narrativizing of it, Paul Ricoeur (1984, 3) conveys how "[t]he world unfolded by every narrative work is always a temporal world. Or, . . . time becomes human time to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative; narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal experience." Consequently, time, in the making of a nation's story, must be seen to unfold in diverse narratives. Often at the margins of the histories of multiple nations simultaneously, fiction that involves Goan diasporic figures provides the basis for understanding how the complex colonial and postcolonial political circumstances that inspired such stories located or employed Goan subjectivity, while at the same time portraying how these subjects navigated political intricacies within and between polities.²

Across Continents: Writing Goans, Making Worlds deals with Goan subjectivity in fiction that tethers South Asia, Africa, and the West (North America and Europe). Using novels with these geographic, historical, or political coordinates, I argue that it is the subjectivity of displaced Goans that is constructed and deployed to cohere and/or contest the idea of nation at multiple global sites. Through the movements of Goans from continent to continent, the experiences of these figures in dealing with the processes of nation, statecraft, and political intrigue at various historical junctures offers a comparative understanding of the circumstances of post/coloniality, many of them tumultuous. For the Goans in such milieus, the outcome is that their identities are irreconcilable with the idea of nation—they are always at odds with such constructs for reasons I make apparent throughout this book. Even as I instrumentalize Goan diasporic subjectivity to make my argument, I do so to query how such identity-formations expose the conceptual and geographic limitations of geopolitics, be they in the shape of colonial empires or postcolonial nation-states.

Goan characters are set apart from other diasporic subjects in the novels studied herein because the national identity of the Goan is malleable, lacking fixity even. This draws from the circumstances that historically attended the lives of Goan people as citizen-subjects of the Portuguese empire in Asia. From the eighteenth century, reforms put into place by Marquis de Pombal

(1699–1782) allowed Goans to be recognized, ostensibly at least, as Portuguese citizens on par with those in the metropole. These changes favored elite Goans but as is indicated by the literature analyzed in this book, those from the margins of Goan society also sought to change their circumstances by harnessing these rights.

The conspicuous expansion of Portugal's citizenship rights beyond its borders developed as its colonial power dwindled across the globe in the face of the growth of the British empire. This also became the reason why many Goans sought opportunities beyond Goa, parlaying their colonial rights as citizens to move beyond the remit of Portuguese India. That Goans can still access Portuguese citizenship subsequent to the illegal annexation of Goa by the post-British Indian nation-state in 1961, demonstrates how Portuguese colonialism, even after its demise in South Asia, continues to have an impact on the lives of contemporary Goans. As I will come to argue in more depth, their navigation of coloniality made Goans postnationals, a status that continues to evolve in an era of globalization and neoliberalism.

My work brings together postcolonial literatures from dis/connected diasporic contexts to engage in a wide-ranging array of postcolonial subject-formation. Precisely because Goans are a small community, utilizing the literary representation of the broad networks global Goans traverse(d) challenges settled histories of region, diaspora, and race. This also has much to do with the fact that Goans moved across colonialities in multiple continents, often functioning, for example, as Portuguese citizens in British colonial settings. As this book inspects novels with Goan characters whose movements bridge continents, it depends on methodological approaches of literary and cultural studies. One of these is the intermedial analysis of such cultural elements as art and sonic histories that imbue the literary. Further, *Across Continents* links postcolonial and diaspora studies, the latter of which includes Asian American, Afro-Asiatic, and Indian Ocean studies. It also thinks across oceanic worlds rather than simply considering the Indian and Atlantic Oceans as discrete systems.

The novels my book analyzes have in common a multiplicity of locations that are connected by narration or itineraries of displacement by choice or forcible removal. While not all the novels are works of historical fiction, all draw inspiration from the well of history and period-specific political changes related to national formation due to post/coloniality. In all cases, it is a Goan subject who holds together the threads of the different continental locales within the spatiotemporal spans of the novels. These characters are apt for

such roles, one gathers, because of their seemingly amorphous identities, be it on the basis of nationality, racialization, and the intersection of these with gender, sexuality, caste, and class. Accordingly, even as my book seeks out what influences the construction of Goan diasporic characters amid pluri-continental histories, its intent is to probe how works of literature can offer perspectives from the standpoint of those with marginalized identities.

Of the role literature can play in bearing witness to or evoking diasporic legacies, Peter Nazareth (1995, 37) muses that it can “[show] Goans . . . a history they do not know, . . . how to recognize it, draw from it or draw it out . . .” Likewise, in “Goans on the Move,” an editorial in a journal issue dedicated to the literary study of the subject of its title, its authors take cognizance of how

Goan diasporic narratives ultimately view alterity as a constitutive element of Goanness, both because, since 1510 (if not before), Goa has been decisively shaped by outside forces and because, for the centuries after . . . , Goans have flowed out across the world, changing and being changed by all the . . . places they have come to call home. (Festino et al. 2018, 14)

The pivotal date of 1510, which was the year of the Portuguese conquest of Goa, signals the importance of colonialism in the history of the diasporic movements of Goans for it was made possible, and even more conducive, by the oceanic transits that would allow for the intercontinental exchange of merchandise and people (the enslaved included). The date is also significant in indicating the antiquity of Goa’s colonial experience. While diasporic movement is not unique to the Goan experience, what becomes apparent in literature about such displacements is that there is still a peculiarity to them expressly because of the condition of being Goan. Or, rather, the way Goan subjectivity is constructed in literature.

“How does one reconcile regionality with universality?” enquires writer Selma Carvalho (2021) in surveying Goan diasporic writing that “overcome[s] the specificity of geography . . . [by birthing] a new modernity” beyond Goa. Of fiction by Goans in the diaspora, such as herself, Carvalho (2021) believes that it “reconfigure[s] the boundaries of our literary traditions.” Another result is that it also reorders relations between self and place when Goan characters produced in such endeavors grapple with the Goan past, class and caste hierarchies, as well as their own morality in “asking questions about the new world they inhabit and their place in it” (Carvalho 2021).

While such an interrogation as Carvalho’s affirms how displacement pro-

vides context and material that is different from that of the homeland, it also conceives of diasporic cultural production as only being spatiotemporally unidirectional. The diasporic writer and the characters they craft (in mirroring the trajectories of their creators) are immigrants who leave behind their land of origin as place and history (usually by choice) only to reflect upon it from afar while carving out new selves in new nations. Immigrant literature by and about Goans has been written in Konkani, Portuguese, Marathi, English, Kannada, and other languages.³ Carvalho (2021) includes her name alongside those of Armando Menezes, Lambert Mascarenhas, Victor Rangel-Ribeiro, and Roanna Gonsalves—anglophone writers who have produced works about the immigrant experiences of Goans in several genres.

Although certainly exemplary of post/colonial displacement, the reason that immigrant fiction (where characters leave their homeland to reside elsewhere permanently) by these and other writers is not central to *Across Continents* is because this book's primary function is to apprehend dis/located Goan subjectivity pluricontinentially and in spatiotemporal multidirectionality. In effect, this approach makes possible numerous considerations, including how dislocated lives affect and are affected by place and movement, but also how the multiplicity of movement can reverberate in several directions at once and with repercussions in more than one location. In this sense, *Across Continents* is in keeping with the reading of Goan literature offered by the editors of "Goans on the Move," referenced above, where they ruminate on how Goa and Goans have been as influenced by displacement as the displacement of Goans has also influenced other places. Unlike "Goans on the Move," this book also takes on literature by non-Goan authors in evaluating the multiplicities of Goan displacement.

For Ghassan Hage (2021, 92), displacement-induced multi-directionality, as I have been characterizing it, unfolds because diasporic subjects experience lenticularity, where "multiple realities are the product of multiple enmeshments." Hage draws from the idea of lenticular visuals where "[t]he angle of vision makes one relate to different points within the total environment comprising the photographic surface" (2021, 94). Departing from the idea of memory and nostalgia as only being conceivable as "notions of time" rather than also as "notions of space" (2021, 84), Hage explains that "[m]emory is an important component of the process of, rather than being a substitute for, inhabitation of place" for those of the diaspora (2021, 85). Memory, not so much as time, but as "[a]nother place [that] permeates . . . [the] diasporic worlds" of the displaced (Hage 2021, 86). Contrapuntally, "transnational

migration” also imbues homelands with the worlds of the diaspora (Hage 2021, 96). It is not only the displaced subject who experiences this multiplicity, but also the multiple places, societies, realities, and cultures they find themselves enmeshed within; matters made all the more complex in literature about repeated geographic movement, often not by choice.

Undoubtedly, there are many texts (literary and otherwise) that are about Goan displacements; nevertheless, an extremely small number—in any language—are about multicontinental dislocation, which is the explicit subject of this book. This is also the reason why each of the book’s chapters is primarily orientated around a single text. Every novel I write about has, or gestures at, at least three continental settings or linkages through which Goan subjectivity is routed. *Across Continents* may consider the literary representation of immigration, diaspora, and even transnationalism as forms of displacement, but it does so only to gauge such occurrences in coincidence with the movements of characters across Asia, Africa, Europe, and America. Such novels “[act] like a literary atlas that [may contextualize] Goa in its historically global associations,” but in so doing “[subvert] glib considerations of identity as being definable only by a single place” or even a single national history (Ferrão 2024, 80–81).

That Goan writers of fiction are not widely represented in this manuscript (even as Goan theorists and critics are) is precisely because my attention is given to the creation of Goan subjectivity regardless of authorship. Instead, relying on depictions of Goan subjectivity rather than Goan authorship allows for considerations of Goa/Goans/Goanness, not only as identity formation but as a phenomenon of subject-formation that aligns with or subverts post/colonial geopolitics in multiple and imbricated circumstances across many continental sites. Alongside a mobilization of geopolitics as epistemology, my choice of novels also makes possible deliberations on the intersections of placemaking, gender, sexuality, race, class, and even religious identity, thereby intervening in how Goanness has otherwise been written about.

ACROSS OCEANS

In examining how the literary representation of Goan characters positions them as figures incommensurate with the idea of the nation at various sites, this book takes a cue from the dislocation of Goans from the oceanic non-country of their origins. Lapping the edges of multiple continents, the cos-

mopolitan terrain of the Indian Ocean world constitutes no single nation. As they gauge the cultural exchanges, trade networks, and displacements and movements of people across the Indian Ocean, scholars take stock of the fluidity of the region as it pre-existed the formation and fixity of nation-states. In this manner, Indian Ocean studies emphasizes the complex identities that formed and flowed within this oceanic-world region. In *The Indian Ocean*, Michael N. Pearson (2010, 3) notes that distant parts of this oceanic arena established civilizational contact with one another and that the voyages that made such connections possible occurred before, and in distinctly different ways from, other maritime regions, including the Mediterranean Sea. What set the Indian Ocean world apart, even after European contact, Pearson (2010, 4) maintains, was the interactions it generated; these were of a measure unseen in other seafaring and coastal economies, therein also indicating the cultural exchanges that transpired within this oceanic sphere.

With the rise of European imperialism in the Indian Ocean, territoriality came to be defined by and between colonial powers to supersede older forms of translocality. Though various local formations of geopolitical authority pre-existed European contact, that colonialism led to the resultant fixity of nation-states is demonstrative of how prior regional relations were irrevocably changed culturally and politically. However, in “Universalizing the Indian Ocean,” Isabel Hofmeyr makes a case against privileging nation-states as the only sociocultural formation and unit of political economy through which the Indian Ocean should be understood. Eschewing the monadic contemporaneity of the singular nation for the transnationalism of this region, Hofmeyr (2010, 722–723) gives evidence of older transregional trade formations that persist despite present-day states. As such scholarship discloses, the geographical heritage of the Indian Ocean formed a crucible of identity and far-reaching networks of trade and cultural exchange that, at first, pre-dated national distinctions and then were enveloped within or curtailed by them.⁴

Inasmuch as the pre-colonial Indian Ocean world is one to which Goan identity can be attached, as I indicate above, because of their nominal European citizenship, the diasporic experience of Goans differed from that of their fellow-colonized Indian Ocean peoples. Additionally, and as can be witnessed in the literary representation of Goan diasporic characters, colonialism extended the oceanic influences that shaped the experiences of such figures. The early modern European quest for the Indies would encompass two oceans. Even the erroneous “discovery” of the Americas was the product of a disorientation in this occidental pursuit. Though Italian, Christopher

Columbus's 1492 voyage was financed by the Castilian-Spanish monarchy after his enterprise had been turned down by Spain's competitors, those other Iberians, the Portuguese. The first successful Portuguese navigation to the fabled Indies came with Vasco da Gama's landing in Calicut on the Malabar coast just a few years later in 1498. From there, it was to be only a short period before Portugal made Goa the capital of its Asian empire following Afonso de Albuquerque's conquest of the region in 1510.

The voyage that da Gama undertook to Asia would not have been possible without the navigational knowledge the Portuguese gained on Africa's east coast; there, they learned of the Afro-Asiatic trade routes which were plied well before European contact with either location.⁵ Therein, the European Age of Discovery was aided by a multiculturally networked effort, one that would result in the future colonization of the very locations traversed by the Portuguese. Because of its coastal location, Goa was to become entangled in world history. Connected to various parts of the world by the globalization wrought by colonialism, Goa's diaspora spread widely. Reliant on such history, the novels this book analyzes retrace colonization's reach across the globe through the movements of Goan characters across oceans, continents, empires, and polities as witnesses to colonial and postcolonial events, and even as the go-betweens, victims, and agents of such proceedings.

In their imbrication of Goa, these literary works engage with the region's involvement in inter-oceanic history-making, not least because of the enclave's participation in transcontinental early modern global economies. This is most evident in Margaret Mascarenhas's *Skin*, a novel that locates its characters in multiple continents because of the Portuguese Indian Ocean trade in enslaved African people. Concurrently, a novel like Roger King's *A Girl from Zanzibar* echoes the inter-oceanic colonial past in its portrayal of postcolonial Britain's political economy, especially by involving a Goan character in neoliberalist schemes that have global ramifications. Despite its seeming recency, globalization's history runs deep, its roots (and routes) embedded in the thalassic paths of colonialism. The interdependence between these systems of political economy, past and present, is inflected by legacies of displacement.

As the early modern capital of Estado da Índia (State of India), Goa's lusospheric connections entrenched it in political and economic networks that extended transoceanically and transcontinentally from the shores of the European metropole, across Africa, and into the peripheries of Asia. I employ the term lusosphere often in this book, preferring it over the perhaps more widely used "lusophone." The term lusophone marks the linguistic and

cultural influences of Portuguese colonialism, while the concept of the luso-sphere is more emblematic of the political, diasporic, and sociocultural flows of people—and certainly the colonized (many of whom may not have been proficient in the language of their colonizer, particularly if from marginalized backgrounds)—across the Portuguese-colonized world.

Portuguese colonialism entrenched Europe, Africa, and Asia, allowing for a wide span of governmentality, commerce, human trafficking, and cultural exchange. As a result, Goa and Goans not only participated in intra-Indian Oceanic circuits, but also mediated between these and the networks of the Atlantic Ocean world. Can one truly say where one ocean ends and the other begins? Scrutinizing oceanic historiography with regard to trade and slavery, Richard Allen (2008, 48) inquires into “how we view the relationship between the ‘worlds’ of the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic.” The kinship between these oceanic worlds manifests in literature about diasporic figures whose movements transgress the limits of nation, empire, and other formations of place. Representing inter-oceanic trajectories through the intercession or direct involvement of their Goan characters, the novels discussed in this book underscore colonialism’s reach across the globe through a network of watery routes. What also becomes obvious in such literary terrain is how the displacements of Goans result in and from challenges to, and negotiations with, coloniality. Inevitably, what this literature brings to the fore is the connections and frictions between colonizer and colonized, but also among the colonized in the multiculturalism of continental displacement.

ACROSS COLONIALISMS

Insomuch as British and Portuguese colonialisms varied from one another, Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2002, 11) depicts the relationship between these as a hierarchical one where British colonialism set “the norm . . . in relation to which the contours of Portuguese colonialism [was] defined as a subaltern colonialism.” Yet, despite the differential authority wielded by each of these colonialities in relation to one another, there existed between them the conditions of what Laura Doyle (2014) calls inter-imperiality which made relations of coexistence immanent. Hence, even as Portuguese colonialism may have dwindled in power because of, and in comparison to, the expansion of British colonialism in Asia and Africa, the Portuguese empire (which was the older regime) sustained its overseas presence by liaising with the English. Accept-

ing their lower status in the imperial order, or their assumedly subaltern status as de Sousa Santos defines it, did not mean that the Portuguese were any less of a colonizer. In fact, because of their later liaisons with the British, the Portuguese were able to prolong their colonial efforts even if in a diminished capacity.

In spite of this, de Sousa Santos elides any consideration of how complicity between the colonial powers “extended the imperial reach of both . . .” (Ferrão 2014, 325). The concurrent and intimate presence of the British and the Portuguese in Africa and Asia was made extant through the movement of people and products on the one hand, but also political liaisons across territories and between continents (Ferrão 2014, 326). For instance, Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*, which is the focus of a later chapter, bears evidence of the movement of the Goan character Mary Pereira across the boundaries of Portuguese and British Indias. Simultaneously, the novel also connects the transits of this Goan figure to a royal accord between the two empires, dating to 1662.

As Thomas Metcalf (2007, 2) posits, “the British established and directed [the] vast imperial enterprise” across the Indian Ocean, but the initial inroads into regions outside South Asia were made by “Indians . . . As they flocked to the new colonial territories . . . Indians increasingly came to . . . [conceive] of themselves not merely as colonial subjects but imperial citizens.” These paradigmatic shifts also transpired within South Asia itself, *between* colonial regimes, as is to be noticed in Goan literary history. Carvalho (2021) detects that some of the major shifts in writing by those of Goan origins occurred as a result of colonialism and displacement in the nineteenth century. Of cultural production by Goans in “languages . . . non-native to the Indian subcontinent,” namely Portuguese and English, Carvalho (2021) determines that “[n]ot only was Portuguese alien and inaccessible to much of the Indian-subcontinent, but the style of Goan storytelling was heavily influenced by Eurocentric literary traditions and interpreted through . . . [the Goan] colonial experience.” While colonialism brought its linguistic and cultural influences to Goa, these external forces, conversely, gave rise to new local forms of expression that made Goan literature endogamic even as it became lusospheric.

Such insularity, Carvalho (2021) observes, was doubled by the “exclusionary” nature of

Goan literature . . . imagined into existence by the idle classes, wealthy enough to follow literary pursuits. “Little lives” were not voicing their own

stories, they had no agency or opportunity to do so, their stories were being told by the same power-nexus of land, Portugal and patronship which created a Eurocentric elite in Goa, and which largely reinforced the dominance of the landed classes.

At the same time, while Portuguese colonialism may have literarily (and otherwise) extended patriarchal class and caste hegemonies set against the backdrop of Goa's agrarian and *bhatcar-mundcar* (landowner-tenant) societies, it unwittingly also offered those of the "little lives," subalterns, an escape from their birth-ordained conditions of feudality and caste oppression.

Portuguese India's transcolonial relationship with British India would give rise to regular transits and displacements between the two regions. Calling British India "a nodal point" within the larger global empire, Metcalf says of its significance, especially in the nineteenth century, that, from it "peoples, ideas, goods, and institutions—everything that enables an empire to exist—radiated outward" (2007, 22). While this was certainly the case in the context of the transcontinental reach of the British empire which saw South Asians journey globally, the existence of the Raj in Asia alongside its much weaker Portuguese counterpart created a transcolonial vacuum that caused such subjects as subaltern Goans to radiate *inward* to that nodal point of Bombay before then moving elsewhere.

In such instances, their service enabled not just the British but also the Portuguese "empire to exist," for Goans continued to function, inter-imperially, as Portuguese subjects in the British colonies. In defining inter-imperiality as "a political and historical set of conditions created by . . . plural interacting empires and by interacting persons moving between and against empires," Doyle (2014, 160) is mindful of how this model can "clarify the social histories of communities within or at the edges" of such imbrications (Doyle 2014, 163). Coequally, Doyle asks for a "consider[ation of] how aesthetic forms have arisen in part to negotiate in-between positions . . . of large states and within politically, ethnically or religiously layered traditions" (2014, 191). Literary traditions (and changes) then offer a useful gauge of how the marginalized reacted to their liminal, inter-imperial dis/locations.

As Carvalho (2021) records,

By the mid-19th century, a substantial migration of Goan working class populations made their way into . . . Bombay. A spontaneous upwelling of a working class zeitgeist in this satellite community gave rise to a seminal form of

theatre which came to be known as *tiatr*. Influenced by Italian opera but rendered in Konkani, it countered the privilege of Portuguese-centric narratives. Within the church halls of Bombay, Goans flocked to live performances of song, dance and plays, which savaged the Goan elite, often through comedic performances.

In their displacement to British Bombay, which beckoned with new opportunities and ones not beholden to the strictures of Portuguese Goa's feudal systems, working class Goans were also able to exercise their artistry. Of the opportunities available to those in the British empire as its global influence increased, Metcalf says particularly of British India that it afforded its residents a chance "to imagine their own identities in new ways" because it provided "an arena open to talents" (2007, 23). For subaltern Catholic Goans in Bombay, both imagination and talent seemed to have flourished as they remade themselves away from the old-world order of Portuguese India.

Occurring as it did in inter-imperial circumstances, the rise of *tiatr* in the dislocation encountered by the Goan community bears out Doyle's observation that the precarity experienced by artists "between . . . contemporaneous empires . . . [reflects] in the forms and content of their art," especially due to its "entanglement in . . . geopolitics" (2014, 182–183). That *tiatr*, written in Roman-scripted Konkani, would originate and first find an audience and flourish not in Portuguese Goa but, diasporically, in late-nineteenth century Bombay of the British Raj illustrates how literary development by and about Goans is closely tied to the movement and self-making of the community.⁶

Their entry into British India from Portuguese India would then offer elite and subaltern Goans a gateway into the transcontinental reach of both these empires. Much like Indian diasporic colonial subjects who made the British empire a reality through their transcontinental movements (Metcalf 2007, 2), a comparable trajectory can be charted for Goan movement between Portuguese and British colonial mandates. This permitted Goan diaspora communities to "[perceive] of themselves as imperial citizens, markers of their Portuguese past defining them" as being distinctly different in British East Africa (Gupta 2019a, 267). Neither Indian nor Black, Goans may have been South Asian but as Portuguese colonial subjects in British East Africa, their citizenship status was that of Europeans.

When they moved across the continents of the lusosphere, Goans met with uneven circumstances, ones that did not always privilege them. Pamela

Gupta (2019b, 39) reflects on how “the histories of Goa and Mozambique were always intertwined throughout the era of Portuguese colonialism.” The colonial braiding of these Indian Oceanic pasts was produced by and relied upon the intracolonial movement of subjects primarily because such transits were of use to the colonial regime. Gupta apprehends the distinctiveness of the instantiation and difference of Portugal’s colonial heritage by classifying it as “one of multiple migrations in a multitude of directions” (2019b, 39). Goan migration was incentivized to strengthen “a weak colonial state” in the nineteenth century, Gupta deciphers, and while some Goans became successful and gained “a status closer to the colonizer,” their presence, over time, often “complicated the racial order of things” (2019b, 40–41). Sometimes part of the colonial apparatus, Goans were at other times distanced from accessing its power (Gupta 2019b, 36).

Rochelle Pinto (2007, 16) observes that the “upper caste Catholic Goan intelligentsia was accustomed to a fair degree of mobility within Portugal and its colonies . . . [and saw] themselves as prominent, if not equal, citizens of the expansive cultural milieu that constituted the Portuguese empire.” Nevertheless, Pinto also finds that

[t]hese avenues of circulation introduced another element into the constitution of colonial identity—that of race. If the reconstitution of caste structures through colonial administration and the church signaled the onset of modernity within Goa, the interpellation of the Catholic elite into race hierarchies was the process through which they were inducted as subjects of the wider empire. There were at least two spheres of interaction through which Goans were inserted into a racialized colonial discourse: one of these, obviously, is the presence of the colonial state in Goa, and the other, the circulation of Goans through other Portuguese colonies. (2007, 17)

While race inflected the experience of the Goan elite in colonial Goa and across the lusosphere, so did caste. Elite, upper-caste Goans were not the only ones to travel beyond Goa’s borders as the novels scrutinized by this book reveal. At the same moment as their encounters with multiculturalism in the other colonies added an international element of racial difference Goans had to deal with, caste also continued to be negotiated translocally. In effect, the diasporic dislocation of Goans not only meant they had to contend with colonially instantiated multicultural difference, but their transnational move-

ments then also caused them to be confronted with issues of caste and race in the homeland due to their exposure to these concerns elsewhere.

Being part of the lusosphere allowed the Goan elite to bolster their caste identities by participating in the global network created by Portuguese colonialism. To be clear, elite Goan Hindus also benefited from partnering with colonial enterprises, even if this community were not as likely as Catholics to travel beyond Goa. As J. Bohorquez (2020, 34) documents, in looking to profit from oceanic trade (slavery included), the Portuguese found willing financial partners in Hindu merchants with the means to participate in the “web of multidirectional capital [flow]” that encompassed the lusosphere across the Indian and Atlantic Oceans. For the elite, their involvement in networks made possible by colonialism may have increased their reach politically, economically, and even culturally on a global scale. Still, the limits of such privilege were tested by the transits of Goans, elite and otherwise, across colonialities.

Moving from Portuguese India to British India and then to British East Africa offered new opportunities and the chance to remake identity. Taking up the displacements of Goan East African subjects, Gupta makes a case for studying the unique circumstances of minority diasporas “caught within and between larger imperial networks,” that is “horizontal mobilities within the Indian Ocean world rather than [only] vertical movements between colony and metropole” (2019a, 266). As is apparent in *The Book of Secrets*, subject of a subsequent chapter, M. G. Vassanji’s Goan narrator journeys from South Asia to East Africa, bypassing the metropole entirely even as its colonial reach pervades the lives of the novel’s characters. Even so, the tides of the Indian Ocean world are not the only ones upon which Goan characters find themselves afloat, their movements crossing over into the realm of the Atlantic Ocean, as is to be seen in the novel *Skin*. Thus, *Across Continents* deliberates upon the geographically divergent movements of fictional characters to point out how multiple colonial and postcolonial polities and political geographies produce Goan subjectivity. This terrain may be as diverse as the European metropolises, North America, British and Portuguese Asias and Africas, as well as the postcolonies. In concert, the displacements of Goan characters allow for a comparison of how various national contexts define themselves based on the questions that arise around the mobility of such figures and, indeed, the questionable national status of Goans themselves.

ANOTHER POSTCOLONIALISM

My intervention in postcolonial literary studies through an inspection of lusospheric South Asian diasporic representation draws attention to, and derives from, the peculiarities of the colonial regime that governed the lives of Goan people in more than one continent. One of the ways Portuguese colonialism set itself apart, notably in relation to British colonialism with which it co-existed and was in contest with in Asia and Africa, was that Portuguese citizenship was extended to the colonies. Nonetheless, these colonialisms and the colonized themselves did not exist in hermetically discrete zones, often making Goan subjectivity an aberration in relation to burgeoning or established national identities at several points on the globe. As proven by Goan diasporic representation in novels with pluricontinental locations and interconnected histories, coloniality extended along with the colonized across borders; these were then also the circumstances in which the colonized colluded with and resisted colonialism.⁷ Insofar as postcolonial studies may attend to diasporic literature, much of its focus has been within the boundaries of British colonialism and the postcoloniality of once-British dominions.

The problem of the rather uncritiqued anglocentrism of postcolonial studies is that this bias can eclipse scholarship on non-British post/colonialities altogether, and where it makes room for these seemingly discrepant disciplines, shape their contours to such an extent that epistemologies of other post/colonialities are expected to align themselves to the hegemonic form of (anglospheric) postcolonial studies. A one-size-fits-all approach to postcolonial studies falls short, mainly when contemplating, at the very least, the temporal difference between the existences of British and Portuguese Indias. Because Goa was under Portuguese rule from 1510 to 1961—nearly a half-millennium—its historical status as a European colony pre- and postdates that of British India. As Rochelle Pinto discerns, Goa's "sixteenth century colonization by the Portuguese and the subsequent articulation of Goan history, up to the moment of liberation in 1961 has generated a series of problems resulting from its isolation from and/or ill-fitting inclusion within histories of British India" (2007, 24).

Central to the study of postcoloniality, India's British past continues to colonize how South Asian post/coloniality and diaspora are researched. Of issue here, when one considers the study of the literary representation of Goan diasporic subjectivity, is what gets lost of its specificity when the pre-

ponderant form of postcolonial analysis is neglectful of the lusosphere. What is also undermined when non-British post/colonialities are understudied is the complex nature of the overlaps between colonialities within and beyond South Asia, a matter that extends to the relations between differently racialized colonized groups in multiple oceanic and continental settings. Countering these omissions through transoceanic scholarship, Ananya Jahanara Kabir (2021, 1588–1589) recovers various elements of Black Atlantic and lusospheric Indian Ocean world influences that have come to be memorialized performatively in Goan culture. Persisting as they do beyond 1961, these cultural remnants and remakings of “transoceanic histor[ies] of . . . Indian Ocean and Black Atlantic networks” still evidence how “the Portuguese empire and concomitant inter-imperial exchanges” came to bear on Goa and its heritage (Kabir 2021, 1594).

Describing the political fate of non-British-colonized South Asian regions like Goa as a “traumatic rupture from the cultural density generated by their erstwhile function as thriving contact zones connecting the . . . Atlantic and Indian Oceans,” Kabir labels the postcolonial cultural memorialization of the transoceanic legacies that survive and are kept alive by Goans “as a . . . ‘remembering-back” (2021, 1635–1636). For Kabir, such memorialization holds space for transoceanic (and transcontinental) histories that postcolonial nation-making seeks to subsume. Moreover, these memorializations contradict Goa’s forced “belonging” to a once-British India whose national and cultural identity can only be routed through the anteriority of Indian history cleaved from non-British Indian heritages.

Other scholars of Goa and its diasporas similarly highlight the problems of postcolonial studies that are unmindful of the attributes of the lusosphere. In a study of the history of the Gomantak Maratha Samaj, a bahun (caste-oppressed) community with Goan roots that navigated the divide between Portuguese and British colonial locales in Western South Asia, Anjali Arondekar (2023, 15) critically examines how studies of post/coloniality are “overwhelmingly focused on the affective and temporal weight of British India, with Portuguese India lurking as the accidental presence in the landscape of colonialism (despite the startling fact that the Portuguese occupied Goa for nearly 451 years).” Lamenting how “Goan historiography . . . [has] long [been] written off as an underdeveloped and undertheorized kin of Indian historiography,” Arondekar goes on to recommend how refocusing attention on the colonial diversity of South Asia can be radically insightful, functioning “as incitements to analytical reflection that produce more robust idioms of the historical” (2023, 15).

As *Across Continents* offers, the idiom of displacement is one way to address the lacuna in understanding lusospheric post/coloniality, principally through an inquiry of literature that imagines diasporic pasts, linkages, and movements across continents and colonialities. As Hélder Garmes and Melo e Castro (2019, 21) find in their work on colonial-era and anticolonial fiction by Goan writers, its production in multiple languages, including Portuguese and English, cannot be divorced from the varied sites of its diasporic production, these necessitating an understanding of “Goan Literature’ [as] a geographically dispersed phenomenon that must be read in its multipolar context.” Displacement and the multiplicity of the Goan diaspora is then a central concern of humanistic scholars of the post/colonial lusosphere, this view emphasizing the need to distinguish Portuguese post/coloniality. In the Goan case, what continues to impel the need for a more nuanced postcolonial perspective, one that breaks from anglocentricity, is the ongoing coloniality of the region, which when illegally annexed by India in 1961 went from being a Portuguese colony to being an Indian one. Sidelining the self-emancipatory efforts of Goans themselves,⁸ the military takeover by the India that was once a colony of Britain made Goa a colony of a postcolony. This is the condition in which Goa continues to exist today but was a matter already being foreshadowed by some writers of Goan origin in the lead-up to 1961.

Even as her fictional writing does not fall within the purview of this book, the life of the Portuguese Mozambiquan-born Goan writer Violet Dias Lannoy (1925–1973) emblemizes the shortcomings of understanding postcolonialism through the confining prescriptions of anglocentricity. A woman who lived in multiple polities and continents, Dias Lannoy’s oeuvre is likely obscured because of the difficulty of pinning her work to a specific national origin. This itself speaks to the exclusionary hermeneutics of national canons, classifications that novelist Aminatta Forna (2015) describes as being “the very antithesis of literature . . . [which] seek[s] universality. Writers try to reach beyond those things that divide us,” Forna advises. Dias Lannoy’s writing has a similar ethos. Not set in her Portuguese-colonized African-birthland nor in the land of her ethnic origin, *Pears from the Willow Tree* (1989) is a posthumously published anglophone novel that has echoes of Dias Lannoy’s time as an acolyte of Gandhi’s during the anticolonial movement.

Sebastian/Seb, Dias Lannoy’s Goan protagonist, is employed, not in Goa, but at an educational institution in adjoining and recently decolonized India. While Seb’s diasporic subjectivity resonates with that of his Goan creator, the school he works at, with its purpose of educating independent India’s youth, stands in for the promise and problems of post-British India. Although Seb is

philosophically in step with the school's mission, he repeatedly finds himself regarded as an outsider at his workplace; in tandem, readers also learn that the school is religiously ethnocentric and casteist in its dealings with staff and students. As an ideological state apparatus, the school is representative of new India, including the archaic problems it has failed to shirk off despite the instantiation of a postcolonial regime. Finding himself at odds with the school's administration and constantly reminded of his tenuous position at the institution, Seb's precarity emerges from his regional and religious difference in comparison to those who administer the school.

If it is Seb's Goanness that renders him other at the school in Dias Lannoy's novel, then post-British India—for which the school acts as simulacrum—ostracizes the Goan as an aberrant figure. Considering that this is a book by a once-Gandhian begs the question of why its author would paint such a bleak image of the place of Goans within the postcolonial Indian nation-state (which itself appears in poor light in the novel). Functioning as a critique of post-British India, *Pears from the Willow Tree* arises out of Dias Lannoy's frustration with a nation that despite its own anti-colonial struggles—one that she herself participated in—annexed her native Goa, thereby curtailing its path to self-emancipation (Lannoy 1989, xix). Internationally vocal about Goa's recolonization by India upon that new nation's dismissal of the Portuguese, Dias Lannoy's activist stance was met with the myopic notion that she was "pro-Portuguese" (Lannoy 1989, xix).

In this accusation, the conflation of Goan anticolonialism with pro-Portugueseness refuses to allow that Goans had developed their own self-emancipatory subjectivity. It only deems their identity legible as Indians who should have aligned themselves with the post-British nation that "rescued" this minority community from European colonialism. This perspective only accepts South Asian anticolonialism as being legitimate if it is anti-European and pro-Indian; its refusal of Goan independence thereby posits India as a primordial nation that in its anticolonial struggle endeavored to bring back together a country of yore divided by colonialism. Attempts to thwart this effort then readily lend themselves to being labeled anti-national and/or pro-colonial, as Dias Lannoy was to learn.⁹ What gets lost of Goan subjectivity in the midst of these nation-defining politics is any perception that Goan subjectivity may conform much more closely to that of lusospheric and transoceanic-continental networks that predate the idea of "the nation" all together.

So, what is the purpose of thinking of Goan literary subjectivity beyond the remit of *any* nation? Using Goan literary subjectivity as epistemology,

I critique a specific limitation of postcolonial thought. When the liberated, once-colonized nation becomes the de facto symbol of postcolonial identity, what is to be made of those subjects and regions whose histories and identities refuse to cohere with such hegemonic self-conception? That the postcolony can itself deploy coloniality, as is exemplified in literature about Goan displacement, speaks to the peculiarities not only of lusospheric post/coloniality but also the making of Goan subjectivity. As the texts I study convey, because such subjectivity develops in and across multiple sites across continents, Goan characters are always in excess of the nation-state that conceives of identity as being beholden to its confining borders singularly. As *Across Continents* propounds, it is these excesses that offer alternate ways of comprehending subjectivity, including the idea of the postnational which I turn to in the following section.

Because of its multidisciplinary investments, I foresee *Across Continents* being of use to scholars of postcolonial literature and contemporary fiction, contributing to these areas with a critical analysis of multiculturalism because of the book's coverage of novels with a range of global settings in different time periods. In being informed by Afro-Asiatic politics and anticolonial histories, the book will be of service to those with an interest in Indian Ocean studies, migration, enslavement, and diaspora. By focusing on colonial and postcolonial connections between the West, Africa, and Asia, the book puts various siloed fields in conversation with one another, attempting to speak across literary, ethnic, postcolonial, and area studies.

THE POSTNATIONAL GOAN

Writing in 1944, the anticolonialist Tristão de Bragança Cunha infamously declared that “[i]n the whole of India, no people is so denationalized as Goans” (1955, 4). In his estimation of the deracination of his fellow-Goans, de Bragança Cunha saw in them an inability to truly recognize their Indianness because they had been under the yoke of Portuguese colonialism for far too long. To bring his people back into the fold of nationness, Parag Parobo asserts that “Bragança Cunha imposed India on Goa,” a limited reimaging that could only place the differently colonized land within the cultural and political purview of (post-British) India (2015b, 68). In so doing, de Bragança Cunha falls into the very trap of postcoloniality delimited by anglocentrism that I have elaborated above.

In this anachronistic remaking of Goa as only feasibly being India's property, de Bragança Cunha not only holds the form of the nation to have always existed, but "India" itself as that ineluctable nation that must be thought of as having remained unchanged before and after colonialism. One sees the parallel here with the nationalistic reaction Violet Dias Lannoy received when espousing the cause of Goan freedom. In both scenarios, Goa, when imagined as being detached from its colonizer, can only be conceived of as being drawn back into that primeval nation from which it was once severed. On the one hand, what Indian Ocean studies shows us is that Goans have participated in circulations of identity that cannot be bounded by the far more recent idea of the nation; on the other hand, the post/colonial movements of Goans across the globe are also illustrative of how the concept of the nation fails to contain Goanness when it is solely defined by place as (national) identity.

Providing an alternative view, *Across Continents* contends that Goan characters may be construed to be postnationals in novels that (dis)locate them transcontinentally, their identity and displacements serving as a measure of the evolution of one or more nations to which they are, or become, outsiders. As my work proposes, the Goan as a category has been postnational even before the conception of the nation-state as we now know it and as it appears in the novels examined here. Consider that Pombal's reforms in Portugal, which were meant to modernize his country in emulation of England (where he served as ambassador) played out in such colonies as Goa, making Goans nationals (rather than colonial subjects) of a land that many had never been to nor were likely to visit.

Rather, from the nineteenth century, given the failing Portuguese colonial economy, it was more probable that Goans, as Portuguese South Asians, traveled across empires and continents, parlaying their status as Europeans as a ticket to opportunities elsewhere. These postnationals journeyed as citizens of a country they did not live in to work in some other nation to which they held no immediate allegiance while having emotional and political ties to other lands on more than one continent. This notwithstanding, the outsider-status of Goans was not always to their benefit, as is to be seen in the novels that *Across Continents* explores.

The novels delved into in the chapters that follow fictionalize historical events in representing the lives of those in the margins of post/colonial developments that unfolded with global ramifications and resulted in continental displacement to render the Goan postnational. Take this episode from May 26, 1976, when Lord Orr-Ewing "[begged] leave to ask the Question which

[stood] in [his] name,” a matter that was primarily about ascertaining “who authorised the issue of United Kingdom passports to Goan citizens” (Hansard 1976, c. 259). At this juncture, Baroness Llewelyn-Davies of Hastoe (at whom the question seemed to have been directed) offered this clarification: “My Lords, there is no Goan citizenship” (Hansard 1976, c.259). Orr-Ewing’s question would have arisen in the House of Lords following what Selma Carvalho calls “[t]he sudden arrival in the UK on May 16, 1976, of 61 Goans” (2010, 219). These exiles “prompted a nervous reaction in Britain, [which was] as usual wary about accommodating Asian expulsions from Africa” (Carvalho 2010, 219). Carvalho also stresses that “[t]he Goans, save for a few families who were Portuguese nationals, were all UK passport holders” (2010, 219). As a later chapter details, even having a colonial British passport was no guarantee that a refugee would receive entry to the United Kingdom and for Goans, the myriad historical shifts in their identities only exacerbated their situation in times of political crisis.

The difficulty of apprehending diasporic Goan identity, there being “no Goan citizenship,” obtains resonance in Orr-Ewing’s query in the debate that ensued in the House of Lords because of this recent influx of Goan refugees from East Africa:

My Lords, would the noble Baroness [Llewelyn-Davies] agree that this situation is perplexing to the average citizen? Goa had been a Portuguese colony from 1510 until it was captured by India in 1961, and when that occurred the citizens were offered Indian nationality. How is it that they have now somehow arrived with British nationality? Surely, the first responsibility would have been with India and the second responsibility would have been with Portugal . . . Is the noble Baroness further aware that a number of Goans moved to East Africa, and that the nation is very perplexed as to how it is that we are obligated to receive all these Goans, if they wish to enter Britain, if they are turned out of Malawi and other East African territories? Could the noble Baroness clarify this position for the benefit of the House and the nation? (Hansard 1976, cc. 259–260)

While this questioning relies on an archive of Goan movement through places and times, its purpose is to demarcate the Goan as an outsider to the once-colonial nation of Britain. Synchronously, Orr-Ewing’s puzzlement over the status of Goans raises the question of how they could possibly belong anywhere at all!

That some of the just-arrived Goan refugees possessed a form of British citizenship that still made their belonging to Britain appear dubious was the product of British colonialism itself, a fact Orr-Ewing appears to be oblivious to even as the Lord seems very well-versed in all other things historical with regard to Goan/diasporic identity. The 1976 exiles also lacked uniformity because some of them were Portuguese citizens, and this could not have helped their case, either. Of those who were holders of British citizenship, that they were not guaranteed rights as Britons despite emerging from former British African colonies is a matter that was compounded by the murky circumstances of the end of Portuguese colonialism and the beginning of Indian rule in Goa.

The political events of postcolonialism and the annexation of Goa came to reflect on the plight of Goan refugees from Africa who found themselves on Europe's doorstep, accentuating why the idea of nation does not adequately fit Goan/diasporic identity. When regarded as postnationals, the incommensurability of the Goan as a national subject provides an idiom through which to gauge post/colonial transnational displacement as a complex negotiation of identity that does not seek to cohere place(s) but, instead, exists across and despite them. The chapters that make up the rest of this book are devoted to considering such articulations of Goan subjectivity across continents.

In the next chapter, I focus on a Goan character in what is arguably one of the most well-known postcolonial novels of all time, *Midnight's Children*. Mary Pereira disappears from the narrative, only to re-emerge upon adopting the name Braganza, thus harking back to the 1662 marriage of Catherine of Braganza to Charles II. Through this alliance, England received an important South Asian port city from the Portuguese; significantly, the novel leaves out that the Portuguese also gave up one of their African possessions. This is also symbolic of the elision of Africa from the portrayal of Portuguese Goan heritage in the novel, a contention I illustrate by using art history. Rushdie's novel may be mindful of the heritage of its Luso-Asian characters, but delimits their "national" identities under the sign of the new India. This postcolonial India has only one national identity, and that is a post-British one, an identity that foregoes the elsewhere of the region's past.

Just as the aforementioned chapter is about a novel that eschews Africa, the following chapter is about a novel that fails to mention the fact that its Goan narrator comes to British East Africa from a Portuguese colony. This omission, as I point out, is curious but also telling in how M. G. Vassanji casts Pius Fernandes as an isolated Goan migrant unmoored from national

belonging in *The Book of Secrets*. Pius's lone Goan subjectivity is seen to manifest itself in and as the periphery of an Indian community which reifies its own nationalist identity in the diaspora through processes of exclusion set against multicultural difference as British colonialism ends in East Africa. Pius's association with the Shamsi people, an Indian diasporic community in British Kenya, is that of a Goan character who in his "loneliness" seeks belonging among people of the same supposed national origin as himself. Yet, the Catholic Goan's subjectivity is cast as being incommensurate with the Muslim Shamsis' diasporic nationalist identification as Indians, the latter's claim to such authenticity arising from their allegedly originary upper-caste Hindu past. Along with the dubiousness of Pius's national identity compounded by religious difference, his queer postnational placelessness is additionally marked by his ambiguous sexuality.

In the chapter on Roger King's *A Girl from Zanzibar*, Marcella D'Souza's Goan subjectivity is set into relief through her encounters with multicultural societies across three different continents, none of which become home. Her repeated exits suggest the externality of Goanness to the possibility of national belonging. While such an existence may appear to challenge the hegemony of nation-states as predicated upon citizenship, this chapter argues otherwise. Through her transits, the transnational Goan subject functions as a globalized element—a postnational—whose very detachment from forms of specific national governance lends such subjectivity to projects of multiculturalism and neoliberalization that cohere rather than diminish national sovereignty. Thus, even as the movements of the Goan postnational may seem to subvert the norms of national limits in the era of globalization, it is neoliberalism that allows for and operationalizes her displacements across continents, reaffirming sovereignty and the character's precarity as a gendered and racialized subject.

The book concludes with a discussion of the novel *Skin* by Margaret Mascarenhas. By invoking multiple cultural traditions and racial identities that converge in, but do not settle on, the idea of "the Goan," *Skin* indicates how such subjectivity disturbs hermetic constructions of national(ist) identity because Goan history exists within and outside that of the Indian nation-state. As Mascarenhas's novel chronicles, Goa's history connects it to the worlds of the Indian Ocean, the Portuguese empire in Africa, and also to African slavery and the Black Atlantic. Because of its inclusion of enslaved Africans who are dislocated to Goa, *Skin* allows for a consideration of Asian and Black subjectivities under the influence of Portuguese colonization, moving away from

the primacy of British colonialism in postcolonial epistemologies. Within this, gendered legacies of racialization are proven to be more than skin deep in accounting for resistance and survival. The book concludes with this chapter to affirm how literature that represents Goan histories across continents frames Goanness as a spatiotemporal and embodied landscape that can interweave difference without seeking to subsume it. While the preceding novels attempt to situate their Goan characters (even if unsuccessfully) within the nations of their residence, *Skin* undermines the conception that Goan subjectivity and nation are reconcilable.

CHAPTER 2

The Missing Continent

(No) Africa in the Canvas of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*

One of the first churches the Portuguese built in early modern Goa was dedicated to St. Catherine of Alexandria. This architectural marker of their imperial presence, in what would become the capital of the Estado da Índia Portuguesa, was intentionally named for this patron saint. Dating back to the third and fourth centuries AD, Catherine's origins lay a continent away in North Africa. Yet, she is legendarily linked to Goa and appears as a namesake in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1991b). The Feast of St. Catherine falls on November 25 and it was on this day in 1510 that Afonso de Albuquerque defeated Adil Shah, the then-ruler of Goa. For the early modern Portuguese, this was a historic and identity-defining moment.

The daughter of an Alexandrian governor, Catherine was raised pagan; her conversion to Christianity caused her to be at odds with her father's employer, the Roman Emperor Maxentius who persecuted followers of Christ.¹ These victims were to include the pagan philosophers Maxentius sent to dialogue with Catherine in an effort to convince her of the error of her ways. Instead, unable to match wits with Catherine and answer her questions, they converted to Christianity. The alteration of their allegiances displeased Maxentius, who had his philosophers executed. Catherine's interlocutory ability in defense of her faith extended into her imprisonment and torture, causing an indefatigable conversion of others. The converts included Maxentius's wife, the empress, and several members of his imperial guard. Maxentius, however, was not to be so easily beguiled. Catherine was tied to a wheel and tortured, but she refused to recant her faith. Because the wheel broke, Catherine was beheaded.

Unsurprisingly, de Albuquerque saw in Catherine a patron saint for his own efforts. By then, a strong belief in the saint had existed for centuries in medieval Europe.² Catherine's shrine in Sinai, already a biblically important location, gave rise to a cult whose spread through Byzantine and then other parts of Europe proved her popularity. The saint's legendary steadfastness in her faith, made her a favored icon during the Crusades. Likewise, in the early modern period, faith was a necessary quality in embarking upon perilous journeys to never-before-seen lands; journeys that had the imprimatur of both Crown and Church. Catherine would have thus served as an apt exemplar to the Portuguese in their exploratory endeavors.

Catherine had more in common with the Portuguese than just a shared faith. She was also associated with the same region of the world from whence came the Moors who would rule over Iberia in a few centuries to follow.³ The battles that ensued to purge Southern Europe of the Moors would give nascence to Portugal by medieval times.⁴ In the early modern era of the Age of Discovery, Portugal itself would seek to bring its influence to other parts of the world. Through the spread of its empire and Christianity, the Portuguese arguably reversed the stigma of their previous Moorish occupation. In this quest, St. Catherine's life and legend functioned as an instructive allegory of the necessity of determination to change the world as it were.

Apart from establishing their presence in South Asia, the Portuguese victory in Goa was over a Muslim kingdom. Islam was a faith the ruler of Goa shared with the Moors Iberia had rid themselves of. In their defeat of Goa's Adil Shah, the Portuguese belatedly extended the late-fifteenth century Reconquista that sought to cull southern Europe's Islamicate legacy. Dedicating their victory in Goa to St. Catherine had as much to do with the saint's African history as with Portugal's Moorish past.

Likely constructed within the first few decades of the Portuguese occupation of Goa, the now absent church built to thank St. Catherine for their triumph "is known only through descriptions because it was demolished in the 16th century in order to give way to a more modern church," chronicles Paulo Varela Gomes (2011, 2). The newer church would become the Sé Cathedral after Goa was made a diocese in 1532. Marking its association with the earlier structure honoring St. Catherine, the main altar at the cathedral bears a likeness of her. Akin to the architectural history of edifices dedicated to St. Catherine in Goa, there are traces of her in Rushdie's novel.

Catherine is an elusive figure in this quintessentially postcolonial novel about South Asia. Not unlike the phantom Africa that I look for in *Midnight's*



Figure 1: Altar of the Sé Cathedral, Old Goa (2025), Vishvesh Prabhakar Kandolkar. The altar features St. Catherine and the wheel associated with her martyrdom in the central lower panel. (Image courtesy of the photographer.)

Children, Catherine appears to conceal herself, her name a guise, her legacy precarious. The saint's legend, with its European and African connections, is bound up with Asian history when de Albuquerque dedicates his conquest of Goa to her, the historical weight of which is felt in *Midnight's Children* when one of its Goan characters renames herself and, thereby, inadvertently recalls this intercontinental legacy.

In the novel, Mary Pereira returns after a mysterious absence, having now become Mrs. Braganza. She borrows her new name from Catherine of Braganza, the Portuguese *infanta* who was married to the English King, Charles II in 1662. The arranged marriage, a custom thought of as so typically South Asian, was a royal alliance between the two colonial powers; the import of this union is a matter I will turn to again. For now, it is important to note that Catherine of Braganza was named for St. Catherine on whose feast day she was born, this religious date again aligning itself with imperial history. As this

chapter explores, the iconicity of Catherine and her connection to *Midnight's Children* (be she saint, royal consort, or the namesake of a Goan woman) offers a focal point through which the novel creates an interplay of religious, continental, racial, and colonial identities.

In apprehending Catherine as an ephemeral yet iconic presence in *Midnight's Children*, I seek out the significance of this figure, moreover for her connection to Africa. To access this association, I go on to offer an intermedial reading of the novel through art history by relying on the work of artists Angelo da Fonseca, Wenceslaus Hollar, and Jacob Huysmans. Although none of these artists are referenced in the novel, I explain why their works are pertinent to understanding an underlying transcontinental history in *Midnight's Children*. My opening mention of the historic Catholic structures dedicated to St. Catherine in Goa is a nod to my use of intermediality in understanding the novel's reliance on history while also demonstrating how religiously symbolic references to this icon have come to represent Portuguese coloniality in South Asia. The disappearance, especially, of the earliest religious edifice made in honor of St. Catherine in Goa is metonymically indicative of the palimpsestic dis/appearances of her legacy through those named for her in *Midnight's Children* (both Catherine of Braganza and Mary Pereira-Braganza). Rushdie's indirect evocation of the legend of St. Catherine, particularly in relation to Goa, operates in his novel as a representation of modern South Asia's diverse Indian Oceanic and colonial pasts.

Yet, even as his use of Portuguese Indian history attempts to portray the religious and regional differences of the postcolonial nations that emerge with the end (and because) of European rule in the subcontinent, the long intercontinental history that Rushdie relies on erases Africa's connection to this past. Nevertheless, the fleeting references to Catherine function as an interruption of this literary casting of South Asian post/coloniality. I thus pursue St. Catherine, via Catherine of Braganza, as channeled through Mary Pereira to interrogate how the presence of this Goan character in the novel can be seen as a connective figure between South Asia, Africa, and the West. The connections across these continents mark out the lusosphere which emerges from the Portuguese-colonial specificities of Goan culture and history in contradistinction to British Indian coloniality; it also connects Goa to other parts of the lusophonic world, culturally and historically. In making these associations, my purpose is to determine how Goa, as it is represented through Mary Pereira in *Midnight's Children*, cannot only be seen within the purview of the post-British Indian postcoloniality Rushdie establishes but,

rather, as a region whose connections to intercontinental histories challenge its confinement by the limits of the nation-state.

POSTCOLONIAL INTERMEDIALITY

Rather than look to intermediality within the text, I turn to the works of three artists, two of them from Europe and the third of Goan origin, none of whom are directly referenced in *Midnight's Children*. My purpose in discussing the image-makers da Fonseca (a Goan painter), as well as Hollar and Huysmans (who were in the employ of Charles II and Catherine of Braganza) is to expand upon prevailing interpretations of this novel by using art history intertextually. Much of the existing readings of intermediality and ekphrasis in Rushdie's novels center on establishing how the author uses an interplay between narrative and (various forms of) visual art to deliberate on South Asian national history and identity. In contrast, my intention is to bring in other histories, transcontinental ones principally, to look beyond the nation as the primary mode of identity, most notably in reference to Mary Pereira, as a Portuguese-colonized Goan figure, in *Midnight's Children*.

I also briefly discuss Rushdie's other novel that relies on Iberian history and South Asia's colonial connection to Portugal. Indeed, *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1997b) has Goan characters in it, as well as a figure who links this novel to its predecessor, *Midnight's Children*. Adam Braganza, who is revealed to be the progeny of characters in the earlier novel, adopts his name from (and very much like) Mary (formerly Pereira) who fostered him. *The Moor's Last Sigh* has a number of artists as characters, inviting scrutiny of how intermediality functions within the text. As I will indicate, despite its intermedial references to Iberian history, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, like *Midnight's Children*, does not contribute to a representation of identity or belonging beyond the form of the nation-state. Instead, when it comes to investigating how one might attempt to locate a character like Mary Pereira-Braganza, because of her lusospheric cultural background, in a transcontinental context, a different approach is required and that is the use of intertextual intermediality.

My use of intermediality in the fashion I outline follows Birgit Neumann's observation that a consideration of the interplay between media can function "in literature . . . [to expand] the boundaries of . . . world-making and . . . forms of signification" (2015, 514). The in-betweenness of intermediality "is highly relevant to the field of postcolonial studies . . . [especially as] much

postcolonial literature is deeply concerned with transgressing established cultural boundaries and blurring binary oppositions” (Neumann 2015, 514). The interstitial spaces or in-betweens of an intermedial approach to postcolonial literary analysis take a cue from Homi Bhabha’s attention to such junctures as being ones where “difference” and “disturbance” occur (2008b, 2).

In the case of the presence of intermediality within Rushdie’s works, Ana Cristina Mendes finds that

[r]eferences to the visual—notably, film, TV, comic books, photography, and painting—crowd [his] writing. Several of his characters are directly connected to the realm of visuality and portrayed as availing themselves of the power of visual representation or as submitting to the pictures others make of them. In his writing, with its wealth of pictures, the visual is hence a site where meaning is constructed and struggles over representation are staged. (2012, 1)

Gabriele Rippl classifies Rushdie’s textual representations of visual media as “postcolonial ekphrastic projects . . . [meant] to activate collective memory” (2015, 131), words and their depiction of the visual participating in the larger trajectory of Indian Writing in English that “foreground[s] the idea of a composite nation” (Mukherjee 1994, 142). Therefore, even as intermediality allows for an accounting of difference, otherness, and multiplicity, when examined within Rushdie’s writing its use is revealed to be limited to a portrayal of the nationness of India, no matter how differently such representation may attempt to render the nation. As an alternative, I use intermediality to delve into the novel as I challenge its framing of the nation.

BIRTHING NEW NATIONS

That Rushdie’s novel has been canonized by postcolonial literary studies also manifests the recursiveness of the anglocentrism of the field, this despite the author’s inclusion of a Goan figure from a Portuguese colony, whose presence is central to the plot. As this chapter goes on to query, what might be revealed by considering the historical complexities of intercolonialities (within South Asia) and transcolonialities (across Africa and Asia) as they are represented (however fleetingly) in *Midnight’s Children*? The coincidence between Rushdie’s novel and the imagining of India within and beyond the confines of that

nation has as much to do with the genre of the postcolonial anglophone novel as it does with *Midnight's Children* itself.

For one, the narrative, twins the births of its protagonist and his homeland. Priyamvada Gopal asserts that Rushdie's "is an explicitly allegorical text where the life of the protagonist is both inextricably linked to and represents the life of the Indian nation which is born at the same time as he is" (2009, 95). No ordinary birth, the magical realism of the text is of mythic scope where, in addition to protagonist Saleem Sinai, other children he shares the moment of his nascence with, and that of his country, develop extraordinary traits. Born in a newly sprung nation, their magical qualities are symbolic of that land's promise, the forging of new possibilities.

Joyce Wexler's take on myth is that it "can be understood as a narrative of a culture's desire," and that in its likeness to the genre of Rushdie's novel, both magical realism and myth are a "symbolic representation of [national] desire . . . and realism . . . , [for] magic realism combines its fantastic elements with ordinary empirical experience" (2002, 139). Prema Rocha, in like fashion, remarks that Rushdie's novel "[gives] the entity of Independent India a new voice," one that distinctly represents a fledgling nation forging its own future (2015, 22). Wexler further elaborates that "Rushdie's mingling of the fantastic and ordinary seems distinctively Indian because the characters' supernatural gifts symbolize national longings," especially the desire for "a meaningful identity in a chaotic and violent world" postcolonially (2002, 144).

Midnight's Children, the title of Rushdie's novel, draws from a pivotal moment in South Asian history. It evokes the time of the end of British colonialism in the subcontinent and is the tale of the nation's first free children, born at the hour of India's independence between the stroke of midnight and 1 AM on August 15, 1947. In being about these children born free of European colonialism, these characters' lives symbolize the newly postcolonial country's hopeful future. The *Midnight Children* possess an ethereal telepathic connection that signifies their shared earthly trajectories (Rushdie 1991b, 192). In the midst of this enchantment, however, is a desperately gnawing anxiety. It is the anxiety of separation.

Two children are switched at birth in the novel, and are separated from their biological families, with only one of them eventually being identified as *the* child born at the exact moment of India's independence (Rushdie 1991b, 130). This cleaving of the children from their biological families at the moment of the creation of India and Pakistan demonstrates the arbitrariness of chance as well as the precarity of fledgling nations. In being tied symboli-

cally to the emergence of the new postcolonial regimes of India and Pakistan, the severance of the children from their original trajectories is metonymic of two simultaneous splits. One is that of Britain from the erstwhile Indies, and the other is the segregation of India and Pakistan in their creation as new nations. The birth of the children and their secret assignment to different familial trajectories parallels the experience of the violent Partition that rent asunder the lives of South Asians whose existences were once unseparated by the borders of the future India and Pakistan. The familial disavowal of the children echoes the tempering of the rampant joy of independence with the force of history, a traumatic present, and the unchartable future of many South Asians who found themselves having to deal with new national realities because of Partition.

Midnight's Children serves, therefore, as an allegory about newly postcolonial South Asia. While the narrative occupies itself with the end of British colonialism and the emergence of post-British India (even as there are forays into goings-on in Pakistan and Bangladesh), Rushdie's novel offers a way of reinserting Goan subjectivity into South Asian post/colonialism while still considering its regional difference and non-British colonial past. Yet, as I will also come to point out, how Goan subjectivity is shaped in the novel is not without its occlusions, especially that of Goa's lusospheric (and Afro-Asiatic) connections. These elisions, in turn, make it possible to imagine Goa as belonging to the polity of post-British India, rather than as a region with a longer history of connection beyond the domain of the nation. To put this differently, the (Indian) nation becomes the only way to imagine Goa in *Midnight's Children*.

This centering of Indian nationness, remarkably, occurs even as the genre of magical realism, of which Rushdie's creation is one of the best known exemplars, is itself beholden to a transcontinental trajectory. While its origins occur elsewhere and pre-date its application, most famously, by Latin American writers, it is the postcolonial legacy of authors like Gabriel García Márquez that has become synonymous with the genre and, by Rushdie's own admission, had an impact on the author of *Midnight's Children* himself.⁵ In eulogizing García Márquez upon his death in 2014, Rushdie compellingly bridges the Colombian author's continental contexts with his own:

When I first read García Márquez I had never been to any Central or South American country. Yet in his pages I found a reality I knew well from my own experience in India and Pakistan . . . Both are places with a strong colonial history . . .

I knew García Márquez's colonels and generals, or at least their [South Asian] counterparts; his bishops were my mullahs; his market streets were my bazaars. His world was mine, translated into Spanish. It's little wonder I fell in love with it . . . (2014)

Even as magical realism may have made its way across continents causing Rushdie to see its uncovering of postcolonial similitude, regardless of location, between the “rich and poor, powerful and powerless, the great and the small” (2014), Rushdie's enlisting of the form is in the service of establishing the nationness of India exclusively (and in marked contradistinction from its prior imperial attachment to Europe). Inasmuch as Rushdie's oeuvre may offer ways to reimagine the nation, its history, and multiplicity (Narain 2006 and Rippl 2015), or even as “a space for inventing and re-inventing the nation” (Morton 2012, 32), these works are ultimately only able to give readers an “alternate version of nationhood” (Rippl 2015, 137). Thus, as Rushdie's novels represent India, even in subversive ways, such representation is still conscripted by nationness.

Certainly, Rushdie's recognition of Goanness in his novel, while mindful of difference, continues to suggest that its ultimate place in the South Asia of *Midnight's Children* can only be contained within a national (that is, Indian) imaginary. In *Mirrorwork: 50 Years of Indian Writing, 1947–1997*, published in 1997 to commemorate the subject of its title and the coincidence of such cultural production with the Golden Jubilee of India's independence, Rushdie notes of *Midnight's Children*:

After its publication . . . I learned that the idea of a long saga-novel about a child born at the exact moment of independence—midnight, August 14–15, 1947—had occurred to other writers, too. A Goan poet showed me the first chapter of an abandoned novel in which the “midnight child” was born not in Bombay, but in Goa. (1997a, ix)

No more is revealed of who the Goan writer is or what became of his abandoned novel. One can only speculate the reasons for which the unnamed Goan poet gave up the task of completing a story so similar to, and dreamed up within the same chronological moment as, Rushdie's. Was it because unlike the rest of India, Goa was yet to be free of European rule, making a Goan midnight child a less likely symbol of South Asian independence? Rushdie's memory of the meeting with the Goan author serves to connect that writer and others in various parts of the subcontinent in much the same way that

the children in the novel are linked—as a creative community of like-minded individuals who together envision the postcolonial nation through the device of children born at midnight. Yet, in singling out the Goan writer and his unfinished opus, Rushdie appears to posit Goa as the other in relation to India, analogous to what Vishvesh Prabhakar Kandolkar (2020) and Pamela Gupta (2009) have referred to as the positioning of Goa as South Asia's internal other.

BLUE JESUS IS A HINDU/MUSLIM

It is, of course, not Rushdie's own *Midnight Child* who is Goan, although, conceivably, the character could have been a Goan born in Bombay. Indeed, there is much evidence of characters of such provenance in the book.⁶ And while the *Midnight Child* is not Goan, the genesis of the novel's protagonist, the very story and, as an outcome, the symbolization of postcolonial India would be unimaginable if not for a Goan character in Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. It is Mary Pereira, the Goan nursemaid, who switches Shiva and Saleem at the hospital where they are born. One child from a well-off family and the other from a disadvantaged background, Mary's intervention changes these children's destinies; she performs this act in an attempt to effect social change and to impress her lover, Joseph D'Costa, a radical communist (Rushdie 1991b, 130).

Alternative ideas of what makes a family arise in Rushdie's deliberate use of the biblical names of the parents of the Christ child for his characters: "[L]ike every Mary she had her Joseph," Saleem mentions (1991b, 115). Yet, where there should be an immaculate conception, there is anything but. Saleem imagines himself as the product of a fantastical Christmas tale when he muses: "Blue Jesus leaked into me; and Mary's desperation, and Joseph's revolutionary wildness" (Rushdie 1991b, 121). Rushdie "converts" Christianity in his story, and colors it with a South Asian frame of reference through his characters, a move that is indicative of the faith's regionalization and remaking through the iconography of a Blue Jesus as will be seen. The Catholic Goans, Mary and Joseph, are reminders of the history of Christianity in South Asia, though Joseph has turned to Communism.

Joseph's disturbed state of mind, arising from the crises that have become rife in the soon to be decolonized South Asian nations, leads Joseph to declare to Mary: "This independence is for the rich only; the poor are being

made to kill each other like flies" (Rushdie 1991b, 116). Mary believes she can appease Joseph by reminding him of their religious difference from those most affected by the political situation. She rebuts, "But Joseph, even if it's true about the killing, they're Hindu and Muslim people only; why get good Christian folk mixed up in their fight?" (Rushdie 1991b, 116). Irritated, Joseph retorts, "You and your Christ. You can't get it into your head that that's the white people's religion? Leave white gods for white men" (Rushdie 1991b, 116).

Perplexed, Mary visits a church where she asks a priest "about the colour of God" (Rushdie 1991b, 114). The response she receives is "Blue . . . Our Lord Christ Jesus was the most beauteous crystal shade of pale sky blue" (Rushdie 1991b, 114). The priest reasons: "Problems with recent converts . . . when they ask about colour they're almost always that . . . important to build bridges" (Rushdie 1991b, 114). He goes on to explain that he is following the Church's stance on new converts, presumably from Hinduism, who are being taught that "God is love; and [because] the Hindu love god, Krishna, is always depicted with blue skin," that choice of colour "[would] be a sort of bridge between the faiths . . . [B]esides blue is a neutral sort of colour, avoids the usual colour problems, gets you away from black and white . . ." (Rushdie 1991b, 114).

The invention of Blue Jesus as both an assumedly politically and racially neutral-hued icon, but still one that evokes aspects of Hinduism, can be seen as the Church's framing of Christianity as South Asian in the novel. By borrowing from the religious iconography of Hinduism, the priest's statement about blue being a color that is neither white nor black, presents the notion that there are versions of Christianity, and representations of its religious figures, that exist outside Eurocentric forms. In speaking to a binary between whiteness and Blackness, the priest's words represent a fleeting moment in Rushdie's novel where local identities are considered in juxtaposition with more global ones, including Black or African identities. Nevertheless, the priest's purpose in doing so is only to disaggregate localized Christianity from these global connections, instead positing a South Asian Catholic identity that stands apart from Black and white.

Stated differently, to the priest, South Asian Catholicism (especially when viewed artistically or iconographically), can *look* different from Western, African, and other forms of the faith. And yet, inasmuch as the priest appears to want to separate South Asian Catholicism from race, his characterization of it through a non-Catholic but still South Asian iconography firmly places the faith within a regional and, therefore, racialized context. Of course, what the

priest offers Mary is an interpretation of South Asian Christianity through a Blue Jesus who is not the white God that her beloved, the communist Joseph, disavows. But further along in this chapter, it will also become apparent that Catholicism in South Asia cannot be disconnected from Africa.

Mary Pereira's conversation with the priest surfaces two temporalities of the localization of the religion in the subcontinent. Through her own person as a Catholic, the Goan character invokes a nearly half-millennial history of Christianity, one that involves the Portuguese colonization of Goa in 1510 and the subsequent conversion of some of the region's people to Catholicism. Synchronously, the Church's grappling with conversions in the contemporary moment of the novel, which is the setting of Mary's dialogue with the priest, also signals the ongoing prevalence and localization of the faith. And while the priest may view Catholicism in South Asia through the Krishna-blue lens of Hindu iconicity, Mary's actions add a Muslim dimension to the Indian Nativity she presides over, very much in keeping with her being named for Christ's mother.

Saleem becomes part of the iconography of Rushdie's biblically inspired "Holy Family" when Mary involves him in her designs to impress Joseph. Blue Jesus of the Indian Church's making in the novel is superimposed onto Saleem, but the child is actually a Hindu who comes to be raised by a Muslim family, because of Mary's actions. Of mixed-race origin, Saleem, whose biological father is an Englishman, should have been Shiva, a child who would have been Muslim and is now raised Hindu due to the intervention of a Catholic woman. It is not only the faiths of these two non-Christian Christs that are altered, but also their economic fortunes as their birth families are of vastly different means.⁷ As such, the imbricated complexities of these children's identities mirror "Nehru's secular vision of postcolonial India" (Stadtler 2012, 128); it is the production of an idealized "national subject" through postcolonial "wish-fulfilment" (Kabir 2002, 260). Through Mary, Rushdie destabilizes familial order consigned by biology, culture, and economics, and in its stead envisions a postcolonial independence where such constraints will bear no consequence to the new Indian nation. In keeping with this, when Saleem's parents discover—due to Mary's guilt-ridden revelation—that their child is not biologically their own, they assert that their love for him remains unaltered (Rushdie 1991b, 131).

Through Mary's intercession, Saleem is welcomed into a life of privilege and is chosen by a newspaper as the midnight child, born at the same moment as India's independence (Rushdie 1991b, 133). Nonetheless, at the end

of all her un-motherly activity and undermining of elitist heteropatriarchy, Rushdie counters Mary's maternal instincts gone awry by making her become so consumed with guilt over her actions that she signs on to be a nanny to Saleem, the chosen male child of midnight (Rushdie 1991b, 132). Despite making known the fact that she had switched the children, Mary's guilt continues to consume her, because of which she absconds from Saleem's home. She does not stay absent forever, re-emerging later as one Mrs. Braganza—a remaking I will return to in some time.

THE CATHOLIC ICONOGRAPHY OF ANGELO DA FONSECA'S LUSOSPHERE

The notion of Blue Jesus suggests the painterly. The priest's description of the alleged azure shade of Jesus to Mary Pereira, a woman named for that very figure's mother, is meant to conjure a picture in the mind of the recipient of these words, be they Mary or the reader. Through his verbal description, the priest conveys an image, the visual intermediated through text. In apprehending the symbolism of this invented icon in Rushdie's novel, I turn to South Asian art history and, in particular, the oeuvre of Goan painter, Angelo da Fonseca (1902–1967). Art historian Savia Viegas locates the Christian art of da Fonseca within “a critical time in history” where “the opposing forces of the national imagination and [da Fonseca's] own colonial identity automatically made for a complex positioning of his work” (2010). Painting between “the mid-1930s to the 1960s,” Viegas holds that da Fonseca was “trying to give a new ‘visual lexicon’ to Christian art” in India (2010). At the same time as his Goan origins made da Fonseca conversant with Catholic iconography, he also drew inspiration from other South Asian aesthetic forms, even having trained with the Bengali artist Abanindranath Tagore in the 1920s (Viegas 2010).

Importantly, the timeframe during which da Fonseca “created almost a thousand works” (Viegas 2010) coincides with the period just preceding the independence of India and Pakistan in 1947 from the British—which is at the crux of *Midnight's Children*—and the end of Portuguese colonialism in Goa in 1961. Viegas construes the Goan painter's prodigious output of work during this exigent time as “an attempt to root Christian imagery in local culture and art traditions. In so doing, he also attempted [to] counter [sic] the feeling that Christianity was a ‘foreign’ religion” (2010). Rushdie similarly represents Christianity in his novel by creating a South Asian version of the

Christmas story that involves not only Goan Catholics, but also Hindu and Muslim characters.

In the argument between Mary and Joseph, the one that causes her to ask the priest about the color of God, Rushdie presents markedly different subjectivities within the same ethnic group and how they see themselves in connection with a yet to be independent India. When Mary questions Joseph about what Christians have to do with “Hindu and Muslim people . . . [who] have killed each other for ever and ever” (Rushdie 1991b, 116), she foreshadows the absorption of Goa into India and asks how a country that is not yet free, but already in tumult, will treat a minority religious community. Like the fears Rushdie’s Mary expresses, perhaps da Fonseca’s indigenized icons were an anxious artistic reaction to the moment of decoloniality that was unfolding, one that made the status of minorities precarious. In the novel, Mary seems to be evaluating if Christians like her will fare the same as Muslims, also a religious minority and one facing persecution as the Partition occurs. Joseph’s counter-criticism as a Goan Communist is to racialize Christianity. In referring to it as being “the white people’s religion,” Joseph does not necessarily censure only Goans as suffering from internalized racism, as much as he does the colonially induced differences that keep populations from seeing that “[their] own people are dying. We got to fight back; show the people who to fight instead of each other” (Rushdie 1991b, 116).

In Rushdie’s Joseph’s view, Catholic iconography (with its “white gods”) is itself the problem, but Viegas finds in da Fonseca’s ethnicization of Christian iconography a challenge to class and racial prejudices because:

The Roman Catholic Church took umbrage against his renderings of a brown-skinned Madonna and various saints . . . Moreover, for the [Goan] Catholics, the classical Mary was a source of identity that connected [them] with ‘white society,’ and da Fonseca’s work was deemed threatening. Likewise, the inclusion of plebeian elements such as working-class clothes . . . and grazing shepherds in dhotis genuflecting before the child Jesus was met with rancour. (2010)

Through the Church’s reception of da Fonseca’s work, Viegas conveys the casteist, elitist, and racialized biases of Catholic Goan society, much in concurrence with Joseph’s opinion in *Midnight’s Children*. But a shift was to occur following the Second Vatican Council, or Vatican II, 1962–65. “Ironically, less than a decade after da Fonseca’s death in 1967, the Roman Catholic Church



Figure 2: *Christ, the New Temple* by Angelo da Fonseca (1954). (Image courtesy of the Xavier Centre of Historical Research, Goa.)

replaced the Latin mass with a more participatory one in regional Indian languages,” Viegas declares, and sees the Goan artist’s hand in “opening-up . . . the realm of the secular through a ‘nativisation’ process of art . . .” which then “allowed for a similar movement to follow with regards to Christian ritual generally” (2010).

The nativized artistic compositions by da Fonseca included “the indigenised infant Jesus . . . [who] was naked like Krishna” (Viegas 2010), the blue Hindu God of love. The indigenised baby Jesus of da Fonseca, made blue by Rushdie, may not be Black or white as the priest says in response to Mary’s question about the color of God, but the Goan painter’s child icon is definitely racialized. In his nakedness, da Fonseca’s South Asianized Child Jesus’s brownness is made all the more inescapable and matches the hue of his mother, the sari-clad Mary. The nativization of the Christ icon “colors” Christianity and destabilizes elitist attachments to it, providing other ways to consider how religious culture is an archive of subversion. In so saying, this intermedial comparison of da Fonseca’s South Asian Christian art and Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* should not imply that the two are exactly the same in their delivery of South Asian Catholic iconography.

Where Rushdie attempts to involve Goan characters, despite their minority religious status, within the multicultural panoply of a post-British Nehruvian India, da Fonseca’s indigenized iconography continues to effect a dialogue about South Asian identity and belonging from within the Goan lusosphere. Accordingly, while the Goan artist’s aesthetic may be recognizably “Indian,” as is the garb (such as saris and kurtas) that adorn his renditions of Jesus, Joseph, and the Madonna, the milieu of the artist’s origins as well as the audience that would have been most conversant with the subject of his offerings, was a Portuguese-colonial Catholic one.

As a Goan, da Fonseca sought to situate Catholicism as a South Asian religion, one localized despite its colonial origins (Viegas 2010 and Mendonça 2022). In the iconography he created, da Fonseca attempted to turn the gaze of the faithful inward and upon themselves and away from the white European iconography associated with coloniality. For the artist, the brownness of his icons likened them to the worshipers of his community (their class and caste status disregarded), centering on their agency not as converts whose ancestral entry into the faith was under the aegis of colonial missionizing, but as South Asians born into the faith in its historically localized form. The artist’s darkening of his icons’ skins and the clothing of them in working class attire is a purposeful intervention in the local context of his Portuguese-colonized native community. Viegas’s chronicling of the reaction elicited by the artist’s

work identifies the politics around race, caste, and class that da Fonseca was ensconced in and was reacting to as a Goan.⁸

The South Asianizing by da Fonseca of his Catholic icons is akin to the work of other Goan artists, regardless of religious heritage, including F. N. Souza (1924–2002) and Vamona Ananta Sinai Navelcar (1929–2021), avers Vishvesh Prabhakar Kandolkar (2017, 42). This was the result of Portuguese Goa's importance as "the episcopal centre of Asia [from] the mid-sixteenth century," a fact that made "the region . . . the recipient . . . , and [producer of] much Christian-themed art" (Kandolkar 2017, 41). Meditating on Catholic iconographic representations by the Hindu artist Navelcar and the Catholic da Fonseca and Souza, Kandolkar writes that "[e]ven as [their] respective images are demonstrative of the artists' signature styles, they are similarly depictive of their cultural milieu . . . [I]t demonstrates Goa's cultural identity in its heterogeneity and fluidity, but also its rootedness in local Catholicism" (2017, 42).

Because of its lusospheric derivation, Catholic iconography in Goan art history draws from and circulates in an expansive ambit. This was also because, apart from their local Catholic contexts, some Goan artists traveled and worked across the lusosphere; Navelcar was one such artist, his career spanning Mozambique, Goa, and Portugal. While da Fonseca incorporated non-Goan South Asian aesthetics into his Catholic art, he participated in a common tradition with his fellow-Goan (and diasporic) artists who recursively echo "the theme of a mother and child . . . , [which] emerges from [their] lusophonic Catholic cultural contexts, be they Goa, Portugal, or Mozambique. This is because the theme of the Madonna and the child Jesus has played a central role in Catholic iconography" across the Afro-Asiatic lusosphere (Ferrão and Kandolkar 2022, 117).

This is not only true of Goa as its lusospheric connections radiate beyond South Asia, but also in how other locales in this gamut created their own Christian visual culture while embedded in this transcontinental realm. For instance, in much the same way that Kandolkar does in the Luso-Asian context, Cécile Fromont (2014) records the Portuguese-related cultural influence of Catholicism in Kongo, dating back to the sixteenth century. Based on research in the region's Christian visual culture, Fromont advises that "[c]onsidering the story of Kongo Christianity both in and out of Africa brings a fuller understanding of early modern Europe's engagement with other parts of the globe . . . and enlarges our knowledge of . . . cross-cultural transactions" (2014, 8–9). When applied to *Midnight's Children*, da Fonseca's art also illustrates the need to think beyond the national purview of the novel, especially when analyzing Goan characters.

In using da Fonseca's art as an intermedial intertext to *Midnight's Children* it is to stress the distinction between the portrayals of Catholic iconography and characters that are represented in each, even though they have similar origins. While South Asia's Portuguese colonial history informs the appearance of Catholic figures on da Fonseca's canvases and in the pages of Rushdie's novel, each creator locates these figures in different spheres. For Rushdie, his Mary may be Goan, come from a Portuguese colony, and face an existential crisis because of her Catholicism, but her role in the novel is to serve as a member of a diverse cast of Indians in a postcolonial narrative centered on post-British Nehruvian idealism.

With many similarities, da Fonseca also grapples with the thorny subject of impending decolonization, but in so doing, his Mary results from several embedded struggles. These include the caste and class complexities internal to the South Asian Catholic community, the question of what the decolonizing of British India might mean for Portuguese India, and how a Catholic minority might fare if Portuguese Goa were to become a part of post-British India. Concurrently, while Mary Pereira's Catholic Goaness figures into her characterization, its lusospheric dimensions are only gestured at upon her much later reappearance in the novel as Mrs. Braganza. Even then, her renaming as a figure to be associated with Portuguese Indian history is a narrative tactic and has little to do with developing the character herself, as I will come to explain.

Mary Pereira's arc as a lusospheric figure is curtailed in the novel, as is the prospect of seeing her as a character whose cultural history might extend beyond the catchment of the Indian nation-state. These possibilities find further imaginative reach in the art of Angelo da Fonseca. His brown Madonna and Christ ask for a deeper engagement within the Goan Catholic milieu, challenging casteist elitism and a racialized attachment to Portuguese coloniality. At the same time, in their mirroring of Catholic iconographies across the lusosphere, da Fonseca's canvases signal the opportunity of reaching beyond South Asia and across continents.

THE NOVEL AS FRAME

As I have been demonstrating, the use of intermediality that goes beyond the text is revealing of the limitations of the multiculturalism of *Midnight's Children* because the novel imagines belonging as only being specific to the

nation-state. This is most conscripting in the context of Goan characters like Mary Pereira. Lest it seem that the treatment of such Goan figures is an aberration in Rushdie's oeuvre, I offer another example here while I also show how intermedial literary analysis that is framed by the text alone is restrictive. Consider that *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1997b), Rushdie's other novel which incorporates Iberian history into its South Asian tale, borrows facts, lore, artistic and architectural motifs, and even names from Iberia's Jewish, Catholic, and Islamicate heritages, the title referring to the legendary sigh heaved by Boabdil, Granada's last Muslim ruler, when he surrendered to Catholic Spain in 1492. But intermediality and the Iberian conceit in Rushdie's novel are strategically used to point out the failings of the contemporary Indian nation of the moment of the publication of *The Moor's Last Sigh*—an India that was once secular.

In *The Moor's Last Sigh*, the Cochin Jewish da Gama-Zogoiby clan claim a genealogical link to Vasco da Gama, the Portuguese navigator who found the sea route to the Indies in the sixteenth century, landing on Kerala's shores where the family hails from. It is this very moment that is also the precursor to the Portuguese colonization of Goa in 1510, Afonso de Albuquerque picking up where da Gama left off. Apart from their Portuguese Catholic heritage, the history of the Zogoiby family, as rendered by the novel, makes it plausible that their ancestry, through intermarriage, is also Spanish Jewish and Arab Muslim.

These multiple diasporic and religious identities of the South Asian family at the center of *The Moor's Last Sigh* inform the works produced by Aurora Zogoiby, detailed descriptions of which are narrated by her son Moraes, nicknamed Moor. The artist's canvases, inflected with Moorish Iberian aesthetic elements, depict communities of various faiths coexisting in a multicultural India borne from "a Nehruvian secular and cosmopolitan nationalism" (Rippl 2015, 139). This, of course, parallels the postcolonial Holy Family Mary Pereira creates by switching the Midnight Children at their birth, evoking a Nehruvian idealism where class and religious difference are immaterial to multicultural kinship in the new nation.

In *The Moor's Last Sigh*, the ekphrasis of Aurora's paintings, as conveyed by Moraes, "links his family's . . . [and] India's history, from colonialism to a secular, independent India until the rise of right-wing Hindu fundamentalism in the 1980s. Moraes helps to visualize his mother's painted ideal . . . plural nation—even if this envisioned plurality, in the end, fails," as Rippl maintains (2015, 139). Stephen Morton also explains that

by tracing India's history through the genealogy of the Zogoiby family and Aurora Zogoiby's paintings, Rushdie draws a parallel between the disintegration of Moorish Spain, and the expulsion of Jews and Moors by the Catholic monarchs Isabella and Ferdinand in the fifteenth century, and the sweeping away of Nehru's secular pluralist vision of India by . . . [the rise of Hindutva]. (2012, 37)

While Rippl and Morton read the novel's intermediality accurately as the exposure of postcolonial India's failed secularity, there are elisions to be remarked upon here.

It is peculiar that even as critical analysis of *The Moor's Last Sigh* accounts for its parallels between medieval Iberia and latter-day India as Rushdie represents it, no consideration is given to the novelist's delimiting of cultural identities to the sphere of the nation-state. In *The Moor's Last Sigh*, the possibility of an intersection between Iberia and South Asia, as could be delved into through the heritage of a mixed-race diasporic community, is restricted because the "ethical and political project" the novel takes up is "an alternative story of [India]" (Rippl 2015, 135–136). The diasporic presence of the da Gama-Zogoiby clan in India is situated as being South Asian alone, but only because the family's various genealogical lineages culminate unidirectionally in that region. When in the sole moment in the novel where Moraes/Moor travels to the formerly Moorish Spanish town of Benengeli, it is as a foreigner. Trapped there by his nemesis, the painter Vasco Miranda, Moor recounts his family's past, primarily in Bombay, making Benengeli simply a setting for a South Asian story. In his review of *The Moor's Last Sigh*, novelist J. M. Coetzee puzzles over how the inclusion of Cochin and Spain at either end of the novel still cannot keep it from "belong[ing] to Moraes's life in Bombay" (1996). The likelihood of any transcontinental linkages to an elsewhere, be it southern Europe or Moorish North Africa, is precluded by the novel's foregrounding of India as the site of the family's belonging, even if their minority status is made precarious in a country that grows increasingly intolerant of religious and cultural difference.

In shaping *The Moor's Last Sigh* as a postcolonial Indian national saga, one that prevents an imagining of the da Gama-Zogoiby family's regional, historical, and cultural connections as lived experience across continents, another omission occurs. In the same way as outward transcontinental con-

nections are nationally curtailed in the novel, so are intranational colonialities and intercolonialities. Despite the presence of Iberia in the backdrop of *The Moor's Last Sigh*, a region with actual early modern colonial connections to South Asia as evidenced by the da Gama name of the family the novel is about, Iberian coloniality is merely a device in Rushdie's tale. In symbolically representing postcolonial India as a failed secular state that can be compared to post-Moorish Iberia, Rushdie's envisioning of the country is as a post-British contemporaneity.

No doubt, references to Iberian-South Asian history appear recurrently in the text, the da Gama family not being the only ones named for the Portuguese colonizer, as the novel's Goan painter-villain, Vasco Miranda, also bears the navigator's name. Vassilena Parashkevova recognizes how the naming of this character "is suggestive of the project of discovery and colonial exploitation" (2012, 60). But while Parashkevova gets the Portuguese colonial history right, ironically, in an essay about art, the critic misses the Goan art historical allusion in the naming of this figure who shares his surname with, arguably, one of Goa's most famous visual artists: Mario de Miranda (1926–2011). A non-awareness by literary critics of the specificity of Iberian colonialism in South Asia contributes to the erasure of these cultural contexts in postcolonial analysis. In turn, these complement Rushdie's own underdevelopment of non-British post/colonialities in his writing.

Its Kerala setting notwithstanding, the region of the beginnings of Portuguese colonialism in sixteenth-century South Asia appears in the novel as the homeland of the da Gama-Zogoiby family only to have them decamp for Bombay (whose own Portuguese history I later recount via Mary Pereira's return as Mrs. Braganza). No scrutiny appears in the novel about what becomes of historically non-British-Indian-colonial regions and communities in an India whose postcoloniality reifies the nation-state as a post-British polity,⁹ especially in envisioning the state's trajectory through a Nehruvian idealism as previously discussed. And so, while the da Gama-Zogoiby characters may exist in the Indian universe of Rushdie's novel, their place in it as people with an Iberian colonial past—like Mary Pereira in *Midnight's Children*—must be understood as contributing to the multiculturalism of a once-British India. *The Moor's Last Sigh* may bear witness to the growing intolerance of India but the novel's imaginative purview participates in how the nation's multiple pre-national pasts are eclipsed by its anglocentric postcoloniality.

ART IN THE COURT OF CHARLES II AND CATHERINE OF BRAGANZA

Heretofore I have been situating Mary Pereira within the lusosphere, arguing that the use of this Goan figure by Rushdie is in the service of his rendering of a multicultural post-British India. This may then evince the notion that Portuguese and (post-)British Indias should be read separately for their colonial, historical, and cultural peculiarities and with no possibility of an overlap. On the contrary, what the presence of Goan characters in *Midnight's Children* advises is that the two realms were connected precisely because intercoloniality in South Asia was a necessity and mutually beneficial to both the Portuguese and the British. In this vein, Pamila Gupta reads the transregional movement of Mary Pereira as the memorialization of "a Goan emigrant community that left Portuguese India starting in the nineteenth century in order to seek better living conditions in nearby British India," often in service professions (2014, 231). Such transits only made possible by an inter-imperial alliance, what Gupta unveils is how Mary Pereira was part of an underclass whose labor may have served one colony while their incomes were often sent to their families in the home-colony.

In keeping with this understanding of the intersection of imperial designs within the colonies, there is a particular implication in Mary Pereira being a Goan character. Re-emerging as Mrs. Braganza, having taken her name from Catherine of Braganza who herself was named for Catherine of Alexandria, Mary Pereira's reincarnation brings to the fore the history of how the British Indian empire acquired a key Portuguese Indian territory. In 1661, the British and the Portuguese signed a treaty which finalized the betrothal of Catherine of Braganza to Charles II, bespeaking the uneven relationship between the colonial powers. The two married the following year, the inclusion of a Portuguese Indian port in the royal dowry an acknowledgment of Britain's overlordship in the Indies. That port was Bombay.

Perhaps Portugal gave up the port of Bom Bahia (the Good Bay, renamed Bombay) thinking it far less significant than the natural harbor of Goa; certainly, Goa held historical importance for the Portuguese, it being the isle that allowed them to establish their presence in the Indies. But the wedding gift of Bombay was to become a major factor in the establishment of British commerce in the East. Due to the colonial alliance, Bombay became the conduit between Portuguese and British Indias, as well as other colonies across Asia and Africa, facilitating the movement of labor and goods. The coalition

between the colonizers was to be an unequal one—the queen signifying the feminized position Portugal was expected to accept as also signified by the dowry that was relinquished. This still did not make the marriage any less of an alliance in that Britain, far more powerful than Portugal militarily and financially, did not overrun the miniscule Portuguese India. The marriage of Catherine of Braganza to Charles II was orchestrated to secure the relationship between these colonial powers despite the power differential, extending the colonial reach of both empires.

In her Goanness, Mary Pereira-Braganza brings into focus the critical utility of her native land in the European imperial history of South Asia. The origins of the Goan character bring to mind the ports sought out by the Europeans in their search for the fabled Indies and the harbors that were to become the centers of imperial power. Tying together economic and environmental patterns, Radhika Seshan and Ryuto Shimada (2023, 3) establish how historic “intra-Asian networks” existed alongside Afro-Asiatic circuits, with “[m]erchants . . . and ships . . . mov[ing] around this world, in keeping with the two rhythms of winds and commerce.” In their Indian Oceanic journeys, Europeans traveled to South Asia via Africa, these intercontinental connections becoming paths of trade, cultural exchange, enslavement, and colonialism. But these are not the histories *Midnight’s Children* highlights, Mary Pereira’s purposeful renaming in the novel being to explain how Bombay became part of British India.¹⁰

Choosing her own name, one aligned with Bombay’s history, conjoins the Goan woman with the city in which she takes up residence, her reemergence and reinvention appearing to move her away permanently from her birthland in Portuguese India. A city of new beginnings and possibilities in the novel, Bombay is also where Saleem, the *Midnight Child*, is born. Taking cognizance of the narrative importance of Bombay to Rushdie, appearing as it does so prominently in his oeuvre, Rocha refers to the city as the author’s “beloved metropolis . . . [because of] its eclectic mix, its cosmopolitanism, its resilience, its excesses . . . [that make it] the quintessence of India” (2015, 137). In other words, Bombay’s centrality to Rushdie’s writing is in representing Indian multiculturalism as the promise of the secular postcolonial nation. To this end, Mary Pereira can only be a device who contributes to the background history of post-British Bombay in the novel.

If Rushdie’s rechristening of his character places Portuguese colonial history solely within the narrative construction of a post-British India, what the Braganza name itself does is to open up the lusosphere of Bombay’s con-

nections beyond the nation. Art history again proves useful here. In a series of etchings and watercolors, Charles II's scenographer, Prague-born Wenceslaus Hollar (1607–1677), recorded for the English court many views of the Moroccan town of Tangier. These would have provided the king a glimpse of the other gift he acquired upon the signing of the 1661 treaty, for it also included the North African territory which the Portuguese relinquished (Springell 1964, 70). Reading *Midnight's Children* alone may highlight how European imperial powers negotiated colonial authority via the strategic parlaying of South Asian geographic domains, but this did not happen in a hemispheric vacuum as proven by the North African dimension of the royal dowry. What this in turn recommends is a consideration of a more complex view of coloniality, one that is transcontinental and transoceanic rather than nation-specific.

In gauging Hollar's legacy, Gillian Williams concludes that his art "remain[s] the best memorial of England's forgotten adventure in the land of the Moors" (1983, 41). So describing it, Williams's own orientaling tone reflects how the British likely regarded the African gift the Portuguese gave them. Try as they might, the British were unsuccessful in "hold[ing] Tangier and in 1684 . . . the town had to be abandoned" after the attempts of ten governors, two of whom "[fell] in action against the Moors" (Springell 1964, 70). Despite their ultimate failure in Tangier, it is noteworthy that it was through their alliance with the Portuguese that the British were able to expand their colonial footprint across two continents. In comparison to the British failure "in the land of the Moors," Portuguese colonial history, as I previously note, allowed the Iberians the opportunity to belatedly reverse the dishonor of having been ruled by the Moors for centuries. Likely, for similar reasons, the cession of Tangier as part of the royal dowry caused "much resentment in Portugal" for it had been "[t]aken from the Moors . . . in 1471 . . . and [retained] at great cost in men and money," C. R. Boxer attests (1987, 80).

The Portuguese victory in 1510 over Adil Shah, the Muslim (hence "Moorish") ruler of Goa, was so self-defining as to be memorialized in what would become Portugal's national epic: the sixteenth century *Os Lusíadas* by Luis de Camões. The poet commemorates the conquest of Goa with these lines:

Of MOORS and PAGANS knit in *Leagues* intire!
 His gallant *Soldiers* in more blood shall wade
 Then *Lyons* pin'd, *Bulls* prickt with love and Ire;
 Upon the *Feast* (as pat as by designe)
 Of EGYPT'S *Virgin Martyr*, KATHERINE. (Fanshaw 2003, 201)

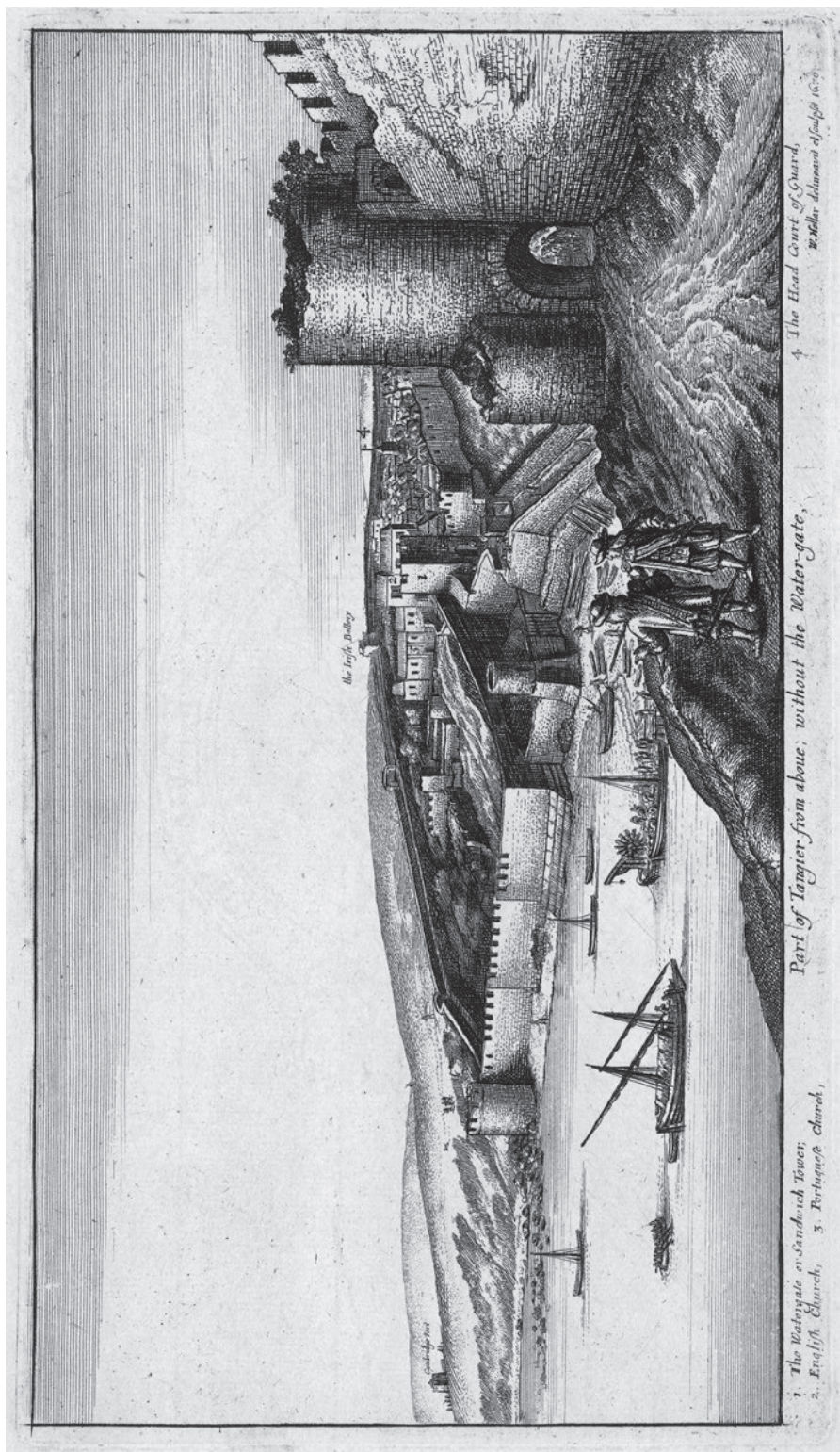


Figure 3: Part of Tangier from above, without the Water-gate (1670), Wenceslaus Hollar.
 (Image courtesy of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library.)

The verse lauds the bravery of the Portuguese soldiers against the non-Christian hordes, but also expresses its adulation for St. Catherine under whose benefaction the fortuitous triumph against the Moors occurred. The namesake of the queen for whom Rushdie renames his Goan character, the allusion to Catherine's African and lusospheric connections are delimited by *Midnight's Children's* manifesting of postcolonial India as a post-British entity.

Diverging from Rushdie's use of her legacy, Catherine of Braganza relied on the symbolism of her namesake to establish her own identity in the strange country she was married off to with little say in the matter. As a consequence, this urges an expansion of how one might engage with Mary Pereira-Braganza's lusospheric connections. It was common knowledge that Charles II had mistresses, which made for constant gossip as did Catherine's inability to produce an heir (Boxer 1987, 77). Never fully accepted in her adoptive country, Catherine of Braganza still managed to express an agential sense of self through art.

As the digital repository of Britain's Royal Collection Trust (RCT) explains, the queen "patronised the Flemish artist Jacob Huysmans over the fashionable court artist Lely, perhaps to distance herself from her husband's mistress Barbara Villiers, for whom Lely was the artist of choice" (2023). In one of the works she commissioned around the 1660s, Catherine had Huysmans (1633–1696) paint her "as St. Catherine of Alexandria, . . . her left [hand] resting upon the broken wheel on which the saint was tortured" (RCT 2023). Catherine's employment of a painter who was not of the court was a deliberate expression of agency. More so, her decision to pose with a broken wheel is an obvious allusion to her saintly namesake on whose feast day she was born.

As November 25 was also the day on which Goa was conquered, long before the British established their colonial presence in Asia, Catherine appears to make a symbolic gesture toward the *longue durée* of Portugal's imperial presence on the global stage in comparison to Britain, a country in which she did not feel at home. The queen's iconographic evocation of Catherine of Alexandria is a reminder of how the saint blessed the Portuguese with victory over the Moors in South Asia but may also hark to the lands of the saint's origin, North Africa. The same region as the celebrated Portuguese conquest of Tangier, remember that the English were unable to hold on to the Moorish town after it had been gifted to them as part of the queen's dowry. These contrasting colonial histories of Tangier may also be subtly insinuated through Catherine of Braganza's choice to be portrayed emblematically as the saint from North Africa.



Figure 4: *Queen Catherine of Braganza as Saint Catherine of Alexandria* (c. 1660), Jacob Huysmans. (Image courtesy of the Royal Collection Trust: © Royal Collection Enterprises Limited 2025.)

Made queen of England by treaty and with little personal choice, as the Huysmans painting shows, Catherine held on to her Portuguese identity, a self-representation that relied heavily on her country's history in Africa and Asia. Seeing Mary Pereira through Huysmans's portrait of Catherine of Braganza as St. Catherine reframes the Goan character and the Portuguese Indian lands she is associated with. Mary Pereira-Braganza and the Catherines her naming elicits link Bombay and Goa in a lusosphere that stretches beyond South Asia to encompass Africa and European metropolises as well. In this fashion, the character and her namesakes challenge the literary making of nation as the only site of identity-making in *Midnight's Children*.

UNFRAMING THE NOVEL

In 1969, St. Catherine of Alexandria, the icon to whom the Portuguese dedicated their success in Goa, would be removed from the Roman Catholic calendar because there was so much doubt of her existence.¹¹ Given this chapter's investment in spotlighting the history, iconographic representation, architectural memorialization, and religious influence of this saint in bridging Asian, African, and Western worlds, how is such a revelation to be treated? This question becomes all the more germane with regard to my investigation of how such transcontinental connections are undermined by the project of narrating the postcolonial nation in *Midnight's Children*.

If anything, the doubts surrounding Catherine of Alexandria's existence only further accentuate the nature of transcontinental connections as they undergird history and vice versa. Catherine may never have been real, but it is the representations of her that allowed her legend to persist and to be used transformationally. Those that employed her iconicity made her come alive in multiple places. The sustenance of legacies through intercontinental transference functions akin to intermediality for, as W. J. T. Mitchell points out, "visual representation cannot represent itself; it must be represented by discourse" (1994, 157). For the Portuguese, the saint symbolized a spiritually ordained victory over the Moors in Goa, and for Catherine of Braganza, her cosplay as the Alexandrian icon grounded the queen's Portugueseness in an alien land. Centuries and lands apart from the saint's origins, the reliance on her African legacy in Asia and Europe is indicative of the representational power of this icon, her legend heralding the possibility of establishing the self through linkages with other times and places.

Just as connections across continents can be perpetuated through the sustenance of legend, such relations can also be undone to establish the singularity of a place. In *Imaginary Homelands*, Rushdie concedes that his narration of India is “a version and no more than one version of all the hundreds of millions of possible versions” (1991a, 10). And so, while he portrays Mary Pereira-Braganza as a Goan woman with a Portuguese colonial background, the version he offers of her has less to do with her own lusospheric heritage than it does with the multiculturalism of post-British Bombay. In *Midnight’s Children* as well as in *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, allusions to the Iberian colonialism of South Asia are not meant to foster a transcontinental heritage, for the nation, flaws and all, is always to be imagined as the site of belonging even for the most nationally marginalized of Rushdie’s characters. The potential of their postnationalism is thereby undermined. Evidently, Rushdie’s intent may be to critique the nation’s insufficiency in protecting the rights of minorities, but in so doing, other forms of belonging are foreclosed, and most pertinently for characters whose legacies and identities cannot be assigned to one nation alone.

By calling on art history, I unframe the post-British canvas of *Midnight’s Children*, intermedially probing its pre-national connections to Africa and elsewhere in the lusosphere. Linking da Fonseca’s indigenized Catholic iconography to Mary Pereira-Braganza, named both for Christ’s mother and the Portuguese *infanta* who married Britain’s Charles II, I underscore the distinctions of Goan Catholicism but also its lusospheric connections. Then, through Hollar and Huysmans’s art, I analyze Anglo-Portuguese colonial relations across Africa and Asia, using that history to bring together St. Catherine of Alexandria and Queen Catherine. One Catherine christened for the other, both come together in the renaming of Rushdie’s Mary Pereira-Braganza; together, the three symbolize the transcontinental heritage of the tiny region of Goa. Rushdie’s character, then, recalls for the reader a history of once colonial ports, a royal dowry, and a saint whose legend connected Asia, Africa, and Europe. These global connections and crossings between the names Mary and Catherine speak to the histories and identities that even in being suppressed in the making of the postcolonial Indian nation-state never fully disappear.

CHAPTER 3

A Lonely Goan in Once-British East Africa

Making India by Omission in M. G. Vassanji's
The Book of Secrets

His name itself suggests solitude and piety but what the character seems to desire most is community. In M. G. Vassanji's *The Book of Secrets* (1994), the narrator Pius Fernandes is cast as an isolated Goan migrant in East Africa who is unmoored from other diasporic Goans for the novel does not offer any evidence of such a community. In turn, Pius's lone Goan subjectivity is seen to manifest itself in and as the periphery of an Indian community which reifies its own nationalist identity in the diaspora through processes of exclusion set against colonial multicultural difference. Pius's association with the Shamsi people in East Africa is that of a Goan character who, in his diasporic "loneliness," can only seek community among people of the same alleged national origin as himself. Yet, the Goan's subjectivity is rendered incommensurate with the Shamsis's diasporic nationalist identification because, in its very construction, the community must rely on exclusion as a form of self-definition.

As colonial subjects, the Goan and the Shamsis of Vassanji's making are South Asian religious minorities with the former being Catholic and the latter Muslims. However, the novel positions the Shamsis as colonial pioneers who, with the British, bring modernity to the East African hinterland. Bridging Asia and Africa as ideal subjects of the European colonial regime, the identity of the Shamsis as a community of Indians is secured in the diaspora by holding on to a mythic past that imagines them as once-Hindus. This origin-story then situates their Muslim identity as a belated one through conversion, making their Indianness concomitant with their legendary Hindu past.

Such identification mitigates the Shamsis' minority status because even Vassanji seems to believe that having a Muslim identity undermines the

claim such non-Hindu communities have to Indian citizenship, belonging, or the nation itself. In their ability to hark back to an originary claim to India through their primordial Hinduness, the Shamsis' diasporic identity is further cemented when it is contrasted against another minority subject, the Goan Catholic. Goan subjectivity in the novel is nationally incommensurate with India or the diaspora and exists as an example of failed otherness in cohering the idea of the nation across continents.

The novel achieves this division between minorities by demarcating Pius as ethnically different but without providing much detail about why, apart from naming his religious background. A major omission that makes this invisibilized distinction between the Goan and the Shamsis possible is that the novel never once mentions the fact that Pius comes from a Portuguese colony in South Asia. So, how does a colonial subject from the Portuguese Indies find himself in British East Africa? Engaging with this question may uncover the complex networks colonized subjects negotiated across colonialities and continents. However, in *The Book of Secrets*, Portuguese colonialism is eclipsed and no consideration is given to its overlaps with British colonialism in Asia and Africa. By default then, British coloniality is the primary condition through which to understand the migratory presence of South Asians in East Africa and, at that, to shape South Asian diasporic identity as a hailing of the homeland.

Pius's Goanness in *The Book of Secrets*, his religious and ethnic identity, function as a limit against which more ideal forms of Indian national identity are manifested in the diasporic representation offered by the novel. Outside the remit of the nation, Pius's inability to belong diasporically is made all the more suspect by the possibility that he may be queer. Unable to offer other conceptions of community belonging that do not rely on the construction of the postcolonial nation beyond the scope of British coloniality, even in bridging multiple continents, *The Book of Secrets* delimits Pius's Goanness to an aberration, a seeming failure rather than a mode of imaginative possibility.

THE FAITH OF THE NATION

Religious identification, which is tantamount to ethnic identification, makes the Goan and the Shamsis minorities in an Indian diasporic milieu, Vassanji's novel suggests, because *The Book of Secrets* takes Hinduism to be the religious-cultural default of Indian nationalist identity. Although Pius and the Shamsis

are both Indian minorities, and doubly minoritized in the diaspora as South Asians in East Africa, there is a marked difference between the Goan and the community that employs him. Confirmation of this distinction takes shape in Pius's own words when he asks himself, "How did I, a Christian Goan . . . come to be in the midst of [these] Shamsi Muslim[s] . . . ?" (1994, 237).¹ In both cases, there is a conflation of religion and ethnicity: to be Goan is to be Christian and, so also, to be Shamsi is to be Muslim.

As the novel's sole Goan character, bereft of his own ethnic community, Pius is set in stark relief against the Shamsi community which operates as the most obvious diasporic representation of Indian identity in the novel. Other than offering that Pius is a Goan Christian, little else is made known about the character's heritage in comparison to the depth of development of the Shamsi community and its constituents in *The Book of Secrets*. What ensues, then, is that the void of Pius's diasporic identity can only be understood through his subjective rendering in connection with and in distinction from the Indians around him.

In the novel, the Shamsis' presence in East Africa is historicized through Pius's investigation of a 1913 diary. It is this diary which is the book of secrets that the title of the novel references. Feroz, a Shamsi who finds the journal in his shop, entrusts it to Pius, who used to be the shopkeeper's history teacher in school. The retired Goan man is tasked with uncovering the book's secrets and potential value as an artefact of colonial times. The diary once belonged to Alfred Corbin, a British colonial administrator in East Africa around the time of World War I. Corbin was charged with governing the township of Kikono, an Indian settlement constituted by the Shamsis in British Kenya, near the border with Tanganyika that was then a German territory.

While Vassanji invents the Shamsis as a Muslim community, modeled after Khojas,² he makes apparent their Indian nativity by conveying that they were once Hindus. Evidence of their religious ancestry arises at a festive event in the novel where the performance of "a garba dance" is explained as being the cultural remnant of "the first conversions of the community from Hinduism, several centuries ago in Gujarat . . ." (Vassanji 1994, 42). As an outcome, the Shamsis are meant to be understood as a community whose origin is Indian because they were once Hindu, and that they are only circumstantially Muslim because of conversion. In other words, the community's claim to authenticity as Indians is through a Hindu past, the mythic memory of which persists centuries later as is demonstrated in celebratory cultural performance in the diaspora.

The inspiration for the Shamsis' Hindu origins seems to have come from Vassanji's own ethnic background. Born in Kenya in 1950 and raised in Tanzania, British East Africa, Vassanji is ethnically of the Khoja community which originates from Gujarat, just as the Shamsis do.³ In his essay "Life at the Margins," the author makes known that he "was brought up in a community of Muslims who had been converted in medieval times but who quite unembarrassedly kept many of their 'Hindu' beliefs and made sense of them" (1996, 119). Vassanji documents how his community amalgamated Hindu and Muslim beliefs in seeing "Allah [as] a form of Vishnu, Muhammad simply Brahma, and weren't the Vedas nothing but the Quran? . . . [I]t was a creative response to conversion . . ." (1996, 119). The author's possible application of his own community's religious self-making to his invention of the Shamsis, for narrative purposes, is itself metaphorical of what Homi Bhabha exposes as the narrativity of nations. Such narrativization is the reimagining or reconstruction of origins that are lost "in the myths of time;" thereby, nations can "only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye" (Bhabha 2008a, 1).

In keeping with the purpose of narration as the embellishment of national origin, Pius's role as a narrator in *The Book of Secrets* is to retell the stories of the Shamsi community, centering their Indian diasporic identity while his own is made peripheral. As I go on to explain, this is because Pius, as a Goan, is depicted as an outsider to the Shamsi community, a character whose religious and ethnic identity make him nationally inadequate. His otherness is productive as it allows the Shamsis to be seen, in contrast, as being more Indian despite their minority status as Muslims. Pius contributes to this task not only through his own lacking identity, but also through his narration.

The narrativizing of national origins, Bhabha observes, is driven by the "cultural compulsion [which] lies in the impossible unity of the nation as a symbolic force" (2008a, 1). What this points to are the acts of imagination necessary to unite inherently diverse peoples within a national community, a conception in keeping with Benedict Anderson's theorization of the nation as a shared image (2006, 6). In *Against the Romance of Community*, Miranda Joseph concurs that "national formations tend to depend on mythic origin stories, on narratives that aim to restore some imagined historical community as timeless . . ." (2002, xx). That such acts of imagination that bring people together in creating the image of the nation may also function by excluding some subjects by choice, is a discussion I will return to in considering Pius's identity as a Goan.

In noting that the mythic "image of the nation—or narration—might

seem impossibly romantic and excessively metaphorical,” Bhabha maintains that “those traditions of political thought and literary language” are the ones from which “the nation emerges as a powerful historical idea in the west” (2008a, 1). Likewise, in “History and the Nationalization of Hinduism,” Partha Chatterjee apprehends the roots of Indian nationalism as emerging from “the modern heritage of Europe” (1992, 149). In order to make this claim, Chatterjee engages with “the genealogy of modern historiography in India,” to show that it “is deeply implicated in the encounter with British colonialism” (1992, 112).

From this epistemological terrain, Chatterjee singles out the narrative “construction of the historical claims of *hindutva*,” or Hindu nationalism, as an inseparable feature of Indian nationalism (1992, 112). The designs of British colonialism gave rise to Indian nationalism when “[i]n the second half of the nineteenth century, European Indological scholarship seemed to have agreed that the history of Hinduism was one of a classical age . . . followed by a medieval decline from the eight to the eighteenth centuries . . . [T]he country [thus] fell . . . to the Muslim invaders” whose advent led to what “nineteenth century British historians” labeled “a period of despotism, misrule, and anarchy,” and which Chatterjee points out was “the historical justification for colonial intervention” (1992, 140). In characterizing the Muslims as not only invasive, but also despotic, no irony is expressed by the British scholars, who were studying a land so many miles away from their own and for which their country had its own imperial plans.

The Muslim rulers Chatterjee mentions in these historiographies are those of India’s Mughal dynasty (1992, 117). Chatterjee’s description of British-influenced Indian nationalist attitudes toward the Mughals coincides with Salman Rushdie’s apprehension of how Indian historiography creates mistrust about the presence of Muslims in India through “a technique of alienation. For if Muslims were ‘Mughals,’ then they were foreign invaders, and Indian Muslim culture was both imperialist and inauthentic” (1991a, 2). Put differently, the Mughal legacy in India is characterized as the imposed hegemony of invaders. Construed to be an external influence on Indian culture and history, this is not so much because the Mughals were foreign, but because they were Muslim.

By seeking out the scholarly underpinnings of the retroactive imagining of the Indian nation “in the myths of time,” Chatterjee echoes Bhabha’s take on the conjuration of national origins. Further, the glory days of classical India

are made synonymous with a Hindu past, which is pitted against the tyrannical medieval Muslim era. These prejudices Chatterjee assigns to “the European Enlightenment” which contributed to “the chapters from the twelfth century onward in the new nationalist history of India” where the “stereotypical figure of ‘the Muslim,’ [would become] endowed with a ‘national character’: he will be fanatical, bigoted, warlike, dissolute, and cruel” (1992, 141).

Given these nationalist trends that alienate the figure of the Muslim, perhaps Vassanji imbues the Shamsis in *The Book of Secrets* with a history of conversion from Hinduism to mitigate the conception of their foreignness in both the homeland and the diaspora. Correspondingly, in Vassanji’s novel, the cultural nationalism of the Shamsi diaspora is signified by the heritage the community shares with the homeland through Hinduism. Since the origin of Hinduism is within “‘India’ . . . the generic entity, with fixed territorial definitions,” being Hindu makes one Indian (Chatterjee 1992, 148). Comparatively, then, Chatterjee ascertains that because “Islam or Christianity come from outside [India],” they “are therefore foreign” (1992, 148).

Following Chatterjee’s reasoning, both South Asian minorities in Vassanji’s text—the Shamsi Muslims and the Goan Christian—are “foreign” because their religions are historiographically and nationally interpreted as originating outside India. Despite this, the Shamsis of Vassanji’s novel have more of a cultural claim to being Indian when compared to the Goan, because the Shamsis’ roots are still Hindu while, in the text, the Goan’s religio-national origin is left indeterminate. Through this omission, the Goan narrator is made the other to Indianness in the diaspora because so little is disclosed of his origins; in concert, any possibility of understanding the character through community association is restricted in the textual absence of other Goans.

(MAKING UP) THE PAST AS SAVIOR

With a Hindu-nationalist heritage so strongly inculcated that it continues to be evidenced even in the diasporic location of East Africa, the Shamsis are set in sharp contrast to the stark alienation of the Goan Christian narrator. When read in tandem with Vassanji’s other work, it also becomes clear that his understanding of the Indian Muslim derives from the distinction he creates between them and non-Indian Muslims. In the previously mentioned “Life at the Margins,” Vassanji writes of

[t]he medieval Indian poet Kabir . . . that he bowed neither toward the Kaaba (in Mecca) nor toward any *tirath* (Hindu place of pilgrimage), [because] Rama and Rahim were the same to him . . . Although the fundamentalisms gripping the world were, because of the partition of India, beginning to arrive on our shores, we were still relatively free from them . . . [O]ne of the hymns we sang also said that 'Rama and Rehman' (another, related attribute of God) are the same. (1996, 119)

Counterposing historically Indian Islamic traditions against the presumed later arrival of Partition-induced fundamentalism, Vassanji privileges the former as harmonious and peaceful by centering its retention of Hindu-Indian mythic values.

Thereupon, if the Shamsis are molded by Vassanji as Muslims of native origin, they are expected to be recognized as indigenously Indian because their culture is innately Indic, especially in antithesis to the foreign element of Muslim fundamentalism that is attributed to the Partition and, by extension, Pakistan. By harking to that historic moment that ended British rule in South Asia and created two postcolonial nations, Vassanji sharply divides Islamic traditions between the alleged harmoniousness of India and the foreign violent fundamentalism of Pakistan, India's other.⁴ In so doing, Vassanji cleaves Indian Islam from forms of the religion that exist elsewhere, situating a version that is uniquely Indian and more peaceful because it has been influenced by Indian (which is to say Hindu) traditions.

Despite his attempts to highlight the Indianness of the nation's Muslims, even Vassanji cannot deny the ostracism that this Indian religious minority experiences. In his travel memoir *A Place Within*, Vassanji once again dwells on Partition, saying that it has "sharpened the separation" Indian Muslims feel within their nation (2009, 83). This notwithstanding, the writer goes on to place the onus of this alienation on Muslims themselves, for not "asserting their essential and primary Indian-ness, shouting it from the rooftops and from their guts," and for "[having] fallen into the trap of allowing themselves to be seen as a minority and as outsiders, accepting a primary identity defined by faith . . ." (Vassanji 2009, 83). In an interview with Gaurav Desai, Vassanji reasserts his apprehension that "[t]he problem with Muslims anywhere is that they often identify primarily as Muslims" (2011, 118). What can be garnered from *A Place Within* and from Desai's interview is Vassanji's advocacy of the cultural and national connection Indian Muslims have, or should have, with India.

In urging Indian Muslims to proclaim their contemporary nationalism as their primary identity, Vassanji's predilection is to look to the past as the vantage point from which this community should defend its national belonging. Ironically, it is the medieval period that Vassanji privileges as the salvifically ideal era, evoking the tradition of Kabir in "Life at the Margins" and the history of the Mughals in *The Book of Secrets* as I indicate later. Recall that it is the medieval era of Indian history that Chatterjee explains is designated historiographically as "the Muslim period" and one of "medieval darkness." Rather than contend with the problems of Islamophobic nationalism itself, Vassanji uses the very history that maligns Indian Muslims to urge them to express belonging to the ostensibly secular nation that others them.

If in Vassanji's novel the diasporic community is a national formation that reflects the land of its ancestry, then it too is tethered to "origin" by acts of imagination. This is also akin to Bhabha's interpretation of the deliberate narrativity that (in)forms nations, and is exemplified in *The Book of Secrets* where a bond with the homeland is inculcated at an early stage in the lives of Shamsis. In a school run by the community, Pius teaches his students world history, which includes lessons on the Indian heritage of the Mughals: "Humayun the Kind, Babur the Brave, Akber the Great . . ." (Vassanji 1994, 240). In being taught as Indian history, the inclusion of the Mughal legacy is precisely that rather than an underscoring of the dynasty's Muslim heritage. At the same time, such lessons allow the diasporic Shamsis to learn how their own Muslim heritage may be connected to Indian history; as a nationalist educational exercise, such instruction continues to link them to India while they live in East Africa. This nationalist pedagogy works as a form of what Anderson calls long distance ethno-nationalism (1992, 12). In Vassanji's inclusion of it, the history lessons are meant to transnationally connect the diaspora and homeland, but they cannot counter the already existing marginalization and vilification of minority Muslims by Indian nationalist historiography.

Vassanji's conviction that Indian Muslims should be more vocal about their Indianness to avoid being seen as foreigners is transplanted onto the diasporic setting of his novel where the Shamsi community takes pains to educate their children about their heritage. What is perceptible in projects like the school curriculum in *The Book of Secrets* is the diaspora's desire for connection with the homeland through a vision or narrative of belonging. In the reverse direction, envisioning a primordial origin also creates concord within the diasporic community itself. Joseph uses "the term *community* to refer to social practices that presume or attempt to enact and produce identity,

unity, communion, and purity . . .” (2002, xviii–xix). Concomitantly, Joseph adduces how communities construct their own image, which is not much different from the production of originary myths that are the basis of unity in nations. This similarity between homelands and diasporas in the creation of cohesion and an investment in communion through myth or narrative can also depend on exclusion and the maintenance of difference. Along these lines, even as the fictional Shamsis are shown to share the Hindu heritage of India as a diasporic community, Vassanji pointedly differentiates between Indian and non-Indian Muslims. Nevertheless, in *The Book of Secrets*, it is not other non-Indian Muslims the Shamsis are contrasted with but a Goan subject whose religious and ethnic identities are nationally incommensurable.

BORDERS WITHIN

In using Pius’s Christianity as an othered subjectivity to center the Shamsi community as a symbolic form of the nation in the diaspora, *The Book of Secrets* represents its characters’ ethnicities as being coterminous with their religious heritages. Because Pius, a Christian, appears to be the only Goan character in the novel, the Shamsis as a community of Hindu origin, become the default of Indianness in the text, relegating Goanness to national indeterminacy, especially because Goa was not part of British India as I indicate in time. In having Pius investigate, chronicle, and narrate the Shamsi community’s stories in East Africa, the Goan character is expected to be marginalized while he foregrounds the ethnic group he does not belong to.

Although the Shamsi community in East Africa continues to manifest its Indian subjectivity in cultural contiguity with the homeland, its long-distance relationship with India requires a more immediate point of reference in the diasporic setting for the purposes of self-definition. Though it is true that the colonial multiculturalism of their location already offers the racialized context for differentiation because of the presence of white Europeans and Black Africans, their interaction with other non-Shamsi Indians gives the community the opportunity to mark themselves ethnically against members of the same racial/national-origin group as themselves. Stated differently, while racialized differences may inform a culturally nationalist identity in the multicultural diaspora, self-identification can also occur as an effect of interethnic differentiation.

Fredrik Barth comments on the persistence of ethnic “boundaries . . .

whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership . . . [O]ne finds that stable, persisting, and often vitally important social relations are maintained . . . and are frequently based precisely on the dichotomized ethnic statuses” (1969, 9–10). What Barth points to here is the contradictory nature of interethnic affiliations where identity is informed by being separated from another group, but also by being affiliated with that very same group. It is as much the separation as it is the relationship that is useful to self-definition Barth notes, because “ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of social interaction and acceptance . . . Interaction in such a social system does not lead to its liquidation . . . ; cultural differences can persist despite inter-ethnic contact and interdependence” (1969, 10). This is seen to be the case in *The Book of Secrets* where the Shamsis hire emigrant South Asians who are not Shamsi to work in their community. Inasmuch as there are interactions between the Shamsis and others from the subcontinent, there are also clear distinctions between the two groups, particularly economic ones, which continue to reinforce the employing group’s Indian identity.

Pius relates how in 1950, he had responded to “[a]n advertisement from the colonial office [that] had appeared in the *Goan Times*, inviting applications for teachers in Kenya Colony, Uganda Protectorate, and Tanganyika Territory” (Vassanji 1994, 238). The Goan man is picked for Tanganyika “with two others, Steve Desouza⁵ and Kuldip Singh,” both also non-Shamsis (Vassanji 1994, 238). That a Goan person responds to an employment advertisement in a Goan newspaper and travels to East Africa with other South Asians who likely also responded to similar recruitment announcements in their own hometowns, figures the locale of Goa and its residents as being contiguous with the rest of recently decolonized British India. I will revisit the ahistoricity of this classification later; for now, suffice it to say that the novel marks Goa and Goans as being ethnically Indian.

Upon fulfilling their initial contract, Pius and Steve Desouza are hired by “the Shamsi Boys’ School or ‘Boyschool’” in the capital (Vassanji 1994, 240). The name of the school makes conspicuous the institution as being an ethnic-specific one in Dar-es-Salaam for the exclusive education of Shamsi male children. Similarly, a second location, “the Shamsi Girls’ School,” provides for the community’s female offspring (Vassanji 1994, 240). The branding of the schools highlights the community’s capacity to fund its own projects, signaling economic security. The hiring of staff from India not only confirms the community’s financial stability, but also expresses continued ties with the homeland.

As has been argued earlier, the educational institution facilitates a connection with India through the nationalist curriculum implemented at the school. Pius's involvement in this diasporic nationalist project is supposed to be one of an Indian person hired by the Shamsis to instruct their progeny about their patrimony, even as his employment excludes him from intimate community life. The lessons about the Mughal dynasty are added to with other world histories, but "above all English history with the Tudors and the Stuarts" (Vassanji 1994, 240).

The Goan teacher betrays his dissatisfaction with the history course he has been assigned when he complains that he "was not allowed to teach English literature—that was in the able hands of Richard Gregory," an Englishman (Vassanji 1994, 240). There is herein a racialized division of labor founded on cultural capital: the Shamsis employ an "Indian" person to teach an ethnocentric brand of Indian history along with, "above all," British history (which cannot be precluded from the development of Indian and diasporic nationalism as Chaterjee discerns), but it is a Briton who is employed to instruct English literature.

In feeling slighted, Pius draws attention to the elevated status of the discipline of English at the educational institution he is employed at, and also the prestige associated with teaching the subject. The requirement of English literature and history as disciplines at the school may speak to the educational imperatives of the colonial state, a matter in which the Shamsis may not have had a choice, but that Pius is upset because he was not chosen to teach English entails that the school's administration had a choice in whom to employ. The hiring of the Englishman over a South Asian to teach English continues to instance Pius's subordination.

The hiring of the white teacher also rearticulates the Shamsis' own ethnoracial presence in Africa. James Clifford declares that the borders of a diaspora are based "on what it defines itself against" (1997, 250). In this vein, racial difference is struck between the Indian community and the British colonial authority, not least because the Shamsis are able to hire a white man. So also, the hiring of non-Shamsi South Asians predicates difference because of the financial relationship between employer and employed. Even as there is a hierarchy among the teachers at the Shamsi school which hinges both on race and the disciplines they instruct, there is still an equation between Gregory and Pius—both are employees of the Shamsis. Another correlation that equates the two as outsiders to the Shamsi community is their shared Christianity. While Pius may share a faith with his English colleague, their

racial difference sets them apart and, at the same time, Pius's racial similarity to his employers does not make him an insider to their community for he is religiously and ethnically different from them.

The Shamsis' Indianness is set against the whiteness of their British employee, while it is equally reinstalled through and against the Goan who is an employee, too. Pius's marginalization as an Indian whose employment is dependent on the Shamsis is indicated when he recalls how "[s]ome of the Indian teachers were asked to teach at the Shamsi Girls' School in their free time. We did not ask why. It was understood that we were Indians and appreciated the need; and we had no choice, there were many more where we came from" (1994, 241). Two forms of Indianness are exposed here. One is of culturally belonging to a community of expatriate Indians. This is phrased by Pius as appreciating the need to fill a cultural vacuum in a diasporic location (even if at the expense of his own leisure). The other is an expression of the hierarchical relationship between a dominant Indian community and its employees.

This kind of "relational positioning," a notion advanced by Clifford, is what the theorist usefully disaggregates into the difference between "absolute othering" and "entangled tension" (1997, 250). While a process of othering does take place within the Shamsi community, it is also interlaced with necessary but strained interactions: Pius is Indian enough to work for the Shamsis and teach them their history, but ethnically an aberration who cannot belong to their community. As such, the division is also similar to Hindu caste boundaries, which attempt to mitigate the pollution of associating with those of different strata.⁶ In believing their past is Hindu, it is not inconceivable that the Shamsis might stand upon such restrictions. Pius himself muses upon this, which is a moment I will return to later.

Though all South Asians, the tension in the engagement of the preponderant community with the non-Shamsis is discernible in the expendability of individuals like Pius. This is attested to when the Goan teacher refers to the "many more where we came from." Once again, this elucidates the Shamsis' relationship with the homeland: India is a place from which the Shamsis can hire employees at will for their purposes in the diaspora, and it is also the threat that the diasporic community can use to keep its employees in check.

Although they are long-distance nationals in the diaspora, the Shamsis can continue to use their nationalist hegemony to manage labor within their community in a culturally manipulative fashion. Miranda Joseph aptly remarks "that rather than simply referring to an existing collectivity, invoca-

tions of community attempt to naturalize and mobilize such a collectivity . . . [C]ommunity is deployed to lower consciousness of difference, hierarchy, and oppression within the invoked group” (2002, xxiv). What Joseph determines of community formations is their ability to beget consensus by appealing to a sense of collectivity, thereby actually *creating* community.

When Pius feels obliged to do his duty to his community, he says that it is because, as an Indian, he “appreciated the need,” but he also admits to duress because “there were many more where [he] came from.” Pius’s inclusion in his national community in the diaspora is, therein, figured around the service he is able to provide. As Joseph interprets, inclusion occurs through the illusion of commonality—a facade of equality that obfuscates “difference, hierarchy, and oppression.” Again, it is important to register here the parallels between the use of the image of communion as the defining factor of national belonging and the replication of its use in the diasporic national community. Among the Shamsis, Indianness secures community for productive use and manages difference by deciding how and when those at the margins are to be included and excluded. Even more so, those who are othered, like Pius, may be made to feel like they belong for specific reasons, their membership within the community always peripheral, mutable, and tenuous.

THE INVISIBLE COMMUNITY

Despite the centrality of its Goan narrator, *The Book of Secrets* offers little to understand this figure’s origins, its focus being the Shamsis and their colonial presence in Africa. Pius only plays a role in relation to this Indian diasporic community, operating in their orbit. Even so, the novel is not entirely devoid of a Goan East African zeitgeist. Pius himself contemplates how “there have been Goans—Goanese [sic]⁷ as they were called—in Africa from earliest times” (Vassanji 1994, 238). Even as readers are made privy to such information, the presence of Goans in *The Book of Secrets* is decidedly phantasmic. Clifford J. Pereira is equally suspicious of the short shrift given to the representation of the Goan community in Vassanji’s writing. Pereira (2017) begins by expressing his interest in the location of Vassanji’s stories in East Africa “as an East African Asian [himself],” but then goes on to admit that “as a person of Goan origin, [he questions] some of the references made to Goans” by the author.

Concentrating mainly on Vassanji’s Kenya-set *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* (2003), Pereira (2017) wonders if “Vassanji was either unaware

or chose to exclude the presence of Goans in the Rift Valley dating back to 1899.” Pereira disbelieves that Vassanji’s ignorance of Goans is to be blamed for his non-inclusion of the community for there are a few instances in the novel where, much like in *The Book of Secrets*, Goan characters surface in isolation from their ethnic group. If anything, Pereira believes, Vassanji’s cursory treatment of Goans in *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* warrants a deeper look at the gulf between diasporic history and its fictional representation by Vassanji, a matter I shall come to discuss further. Akin to Pereira, in bringing to light the eclipsed presence of Goans in *The Book of Secrets*, I do so to query why this community is obscured and how their invisibility occurs. Primarily, as I have been discussing with regard to Pius, it is because the novel positions Goan subjectivity in relation to, and to embellish, the diasporic cultural nationalism of the Shamsis especially because of religious difference. Concurrently, it is also because the text’s historical alignment is almost solely with British coloniality.

At the same time as he expresses his involvement with the Indian community, Pius is painfully aware of his exclusion: “I was a complete outsider, without a common caste, religion, mother tongue, place of origin . . .,” the lonely Goan bemoans of his status (Vassanji 1994, 244). In denial of his own identity, the commonality Pius regrets not having are the elements of caste, religion, language, and origin that would make him Shamsi and, so, sufficiently Indian. That Pius identifies caste as one of the many things that separates him from his employers again establishes the Hindu hierarchy the Shamsis may have retained despite conversion, its exclusionary force marking their Indianness religiously and also in contrast to those it considers other. Here, it is Vassanji’s rendition of his own narrator that reveals the Goan’s isolation. Nevertheless, Pius’s exclusion from national belonging is part of the narrative fabric of the text, because the author does not adequately weave Goan history or diasporic community into *The Book of Secrets*.

To begin with, while Pius is made conspicuous as a Christian among the diasporic Shamsis, Vassanji does little to historically and culturally situate the Goan narrator and his distinct origin. This can also be enunciated as the divergence between being told that the Goan Catholic is different from the Shamsi Muslims, even as they are all racially South Asian, but not being provided the reasons for this distinction. Why is it, for instance, that Pius Fernandes, a man of South Asian raciality, has a Portuguese name? It would appear that Vassanji ignores Goa’s past, choosing instead to merge it into general—or British—Indian history. This lapse thus makes similar the experi-

ences of people from the former Portuguese colonial region with that of their counterparts in the rest of India, but is narratively unconvincing when Pius's ostracism based on ethnic, cultural, and religious difference is made repeatedly evident in the novel. The revelation of the Portuguese colonization of Goa would offer historical reference to contextualize the narrator's religious and ethnic identity but, like its title, *The Book of Secrets* leaves such information undisclosed.

Whereas *The Book of Secrets* masks its narrator's lusospheric heritage even as it relies upon it, *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*, Pereira charges, abstracts anticolonial history from the diasporic Goan community of its origins, according it to others. As I outline above, Pereira expresses skepticism that the reason for Vassanji's invisibilizing of Goans may have been his lack of awareness of the community, for

Nakuru [in the Rift Valley] had a very well organised Surati Gujarati community in the 1950s, and there was a connection between [them] and the Goans, in the form of Eddie Sadashiva Pereira, a Mombasa-born Goan who was educated in British India and returned to Africa in the 1930s as an Indian nationalist. Pereira became Secretary General of the Indian Association in Nakuru . . . [He] was imprisoned by the colonial authorities and despised by the settlers in the Rift Valley. In Vassanji's novel there are echoes of Eddie Sadashiva Pereira in the guise of Mahesh Uncle, the quarrelsome Indian-educated uncle who wore homespun "khadi" cotton pyjama. The similarities are obvious. Pereira and the fictional Mahesh Uncle had sympathies for the Land and Freedom Movement—the Mau Mau; both characters were detested by the white settlers. (2017)

Here, Clifford J. Pereira stops short of accusing Vassanji of disappearing Eddie Sadashiva Pereira's legacy by using the anticolonialist's story as the inspiration for Mahesh Uncle, but the congruences identified are telling. That there is also a Goan character in *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* named Eddie (discussed further down and made stark by there being minimal representation of Goans in the book) continues to drive the contention that Vassanji appropriated a community history without substantively including characters to embody that legacy.

Less veiled in his commentary, Goan diasporic novelist and literary critic Peter Nazareth avows that Vassanji (a fellow South Asian East African North American) is "guilty . . . [of taking] ideas from other[s] . . . to stimulate his

own writing” (Ferrão, “Interview,” 2021). Hinting that they had a falling out,⁸ in an interview, Nazareth reminisces, “Moyez Vassanji and I had a close relationship . . . I was initially upset by the fact that he used the same epigraph from TS Eliot in *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* as I did for *In a Brown Mantle*” (Ferrão, “Interview,” 2021). What can be gathered from the once-friendship between Nazareth and Vassanji, both of whom are multiply diasporic writers, is that the latter has undoubtedly had exposure to at least one person of Goan origin and his writing as well.

Vassanji helped found TSAR Publications (Toronto Metropolitan Public Library, “M. G. Vassanji,” nd), which published Nazareth’s novel *The General Is Up* (1991), but this was not the only interaction Vassanji was to have with Nazareth’s oeuvre. Nazareth makes this fact known in referring to Vassanji’s reaction to *In a Brown Mantle* (1972) as it appears in *And Home was Kariakoo: A Memoir of East Africa* (Vassanji 2014): “I do not think he really understood my novel . . . since he was not from Uganda. Vassanji is not a good literary critic” (Ferrão, “Interview,” 2021). Nazareth’s critique of Vassanji’s reading of *In a Brown Mantle* may be understood as the former defining the (fictionalized) specificities of Goan Ugandan life and the latter being careless in giving these nuances their due. In Nazareth’s view, these peculiarities escaped Vassanji as a non-Ugandan, or were panned by him out of indifference for another South Asian diasporic community.

Also set in formerly British East Africa, Nazareth’s novels, *In a Brown Mantle* and *The General Is Up* are about Goan communities; in both instances, the Portuguese colonialism of their homeland is seen to affect the lives of Goan characters in British post/colonial Africa. Although an extensive analysis of Nazareth’s novels is beyond the scope of this book, the significance of the writer’s contribution to Goan diasporic and African literatures is noteworthy. Peter Simatei takes cognizance of the political influence of Nazareth’s fiction by stressing the importance of *In a Brown Mantle* for its “[initiation of a] rethinking of the idea of the nation, [which enacts] a kind of diasporic disruption of its boundaries” (2024, 68). The disruptiveness Nazareth offers applies as a whole to the multicultural society he places his fictionalized Goan diasporic communities within; be they South Asian or Black, groups and individuals in these novels negotiate the meaning of nation intercommunally.⁹

In comparison, though Vassanji may also represent East African multiculturalism, his individualizing of Goan characters fails to offer a sense of intercommunal relations, especially because such figures are curiously community-less. Their personal and writerly differences aside, it is evident

that Vassanji's choice of such renditions of Goanness would have been made while he had more than an inkling of Goan community life in East Africa from his reading of Nazareth. Through Nazareth's fiction, Vassanji would have been exposed to the Goan East African community's lusospheric post/coloniality—an essential detail that Vassanji glaringly omits in those instances where he represents Goans.

Keen to call attention to Vassanji's possible knowledge of Goans in the face of their textual effacement as a community at the novelist's hands, Clifford J. Pereira may refrain from claiming that Vassanji lifted the details of Eddie Sadashiva Pereira's life but he does not constrain himself from listing several parallels between the real life Goan anticolonialist and the novelist's Mahesh Uncle in *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*:

[O]ne a Goan who identified as an Indian and Kenyan nationalist, and the other a fictional character, [both] lived in 1950s Nakuru and are ridiculed, and ostracised by their own communities . . . [The novelist] brings out the same community fears of indigenous nationalist movements experienced by the Goans in Kenya. Fears enforced by a well organised imperial propaganda campaign backed by the settlers and the British Army. Vassanji describes the community and family rifts that this exposes . . . [for] those for whom Kenya has become their only home even though they are assimilated into a hierarchical structure which is apartheid in every aspect but name . . . (2017)

Pereira appears to give Vassanji the benefit of the doubt, casting the novelist's creation of Mahesh Uncle within a larger ambit of Asian Kenyan anticolonial history, one that included Goans and non-Goans, such as "Eddie Sadashiva Pereira, Pio Gama Pinto, Joseph Murumbi and Makhan Singh. This was a community divided between those who knew only . . . what they had . . . [and] those who knew the possibilities of what [the world] could be and aspired for those ideals" (2017).

In so declaring, Pereira's lament is not so much for a loss of Goan representation in Vassanji's fiction as it is for a truer representation of diversity in Africa, especially when minority South Asian communities shared political histories in the face of colonial adversity. Instead, apart from potentially having coopted Goan diasporic anticolonial history, Vassanji also caricatures Goans, Pereira observes of *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*, as when the Nairobi railway station employee Eddie Carvalho (who strikingly shares his shortened forename with Eddie Sadashiva Pereira) is limned as

[o]ne who mimics the mannerisms of the colonial masters, even after they have been kicked out. Vassanji may have considered the English-speaking East African Goan as a post colonial Asian enigma—the South Asian who forgot who he was after four hundred and fifty years of [Portuguese] colonial rule. (2017)

Insufficiently Indian because of their non-British colonial past, Goans—limited (and ill-defined) as they are in their representation in Vassanji's fiction—are othered diasporically in comparison to those South Asians made legible by British post/colonial history across Africa and Asia. When they are to be seen, that Goan characters express a sympathetic affinity for a British colonial past in East Africa simultaneously places them only within an anglospheric context while also denying their participation in an anticolonial legacy alongside other South Asian and Black Africans.

The absence of the lusosphere with regard to Goan identity pervades much of Vassanji's writing, this being as true of *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* as it is of *The Book of Secrets*. Instead of a historically accurate representation of Pius's origins, Vassanji has his narrator reminisce about how when he had come to Kenya in 1950, it had just been "[t]hree years before, in Goa, [that he] had passed [his] BA in history and literature, upper second, University of London (external) . . ." (1994, 237). While the possibility exists that Pius could have been studying for a British degree externally, the strangeness of the situation is elicited because at the time of finishing his degree, the character would have been in Portuguese India and there were no British educational systems there in that period. The year Pius indicates as having been his graduation date is significant, for in 1947, formerly British India became independent of its colonizer. Goa, though, continued to be a Portuguese colony till 1961, and as Maria Aurora Couto recounts, "There was no higher education in English nor were there centres before 1950 for this final school examination of the English system within Portuguese Goa" (2004, 53).

Vassanji's extension of a British educational system onto Goa before its decolonization from the Portuguese is also made peculiar, because the lack of educational and occupational opportunities caused many to travel outside the colony, as Pius himself does to find work.¹⁰ What this suggests is that the peregrination Pius undertakes between Asia and Africa is far better explained by the historical transcolonial milieu of the novel's setting rather than the jarring fictionalized suggestion that all of the subcontinent was solely under the domain of a single colonial dispensation. As postnationals, Goans parlayed

their multiple and overlapping identities as Europeans and South Asians to navigate empires and colonialities. To define Pius's Goanness through the ability of such a figure to negotiate the limits of empire, colony, or continent because of Goa's Portuguese coloniality would not serve the nationalist agenda of *The Book of Secrets*. This is because Vassanji shapes the Indianness of his Shamsi characters as flowing across Asia and Africa due to British coloniality, a disposition that is portrayed as privileging their presence in the diaspora. In contrast, Pius's unexplored colonial origin is not one that fixes his national identity to (British) India. Rather than delve into Pius's Portuguese colonial identity, then, the novel uses his Christian identity as the principally defining difference between him and the other South Asians he encounters.

In *Colonialism, Migration and the International Catholic Goan Community*, Stella Mascarenhas-Keyes locates the roots of Goan migration within the period of "Portuguese colonialism, [when] the agrarian economy was severely disrupted," which caused "job security [to be] threatened" (2011, 142). Although "some new lucrative occupations arose" as Goa's economy changed from being one based primarily on agriculture, access to other kinds of employment were restricted by one's caste background, Mascarenhas-Keyes discerns (2011, 142). She concludes that the declining number of opportunities meant that several had "to look beyond Goa for employment . . ." which "was facilitated in the 19th century, and thereafter, by the emergence of a large number of jobs, fostered particularly by the development of British colonialism" within and beyond South Asia (2011, 142).

In this regard, it would have been far more likely that during the mid-century period Vassanji cites, Pius would have received an education outside his homeland, just as is the case with his migration for occupational reasons. These were precisely the conditions that made Goans postnationals in that they traversed the imperial boundaries within South Asia and then between continents, using their Portuguese citizenship to travel for better opportunities. Goan postnationalism must also be seen to have developed because of coloniality, the late period of Portuguese colonialism in Goa being one of impoverishment that caused Goans to seek prospects across the border in other colonies. Of course, as per Vassanji's narrative, having an English-medium and British education allows Pius to gain employment at the Shamsi school in British Africa, fitting the Goan teacher into the plot while paying no attention to the difference of his colonial heritage.

Except for one brief mention when Corbin records in his diary a strange anecdote his South Asian manservant Thomas tells him "about how a woman

from his people was once Queen of Mombasa for a very short period during Portuguese times" (Vassanji 1994, 23), no other reference is made to the Iberian colonial experience in Africa or Asia. What makes Vassanji's omission of Portuguese colonization in *The Book of Secrets* additionally noticeable is his allusion to it in his very first novel, *The Gunny Sack* (1989). In this work of fiction, which precedes *The Book of Secrets* but is also set in East Africa, Shamsi patriarch Dhanji Govindji is in the midst of his search for his son who has disassociated from the family, when he is told "by the captain of a dhow" that "he should see Mozambique" (Vassanji 1989, 31). He reports back to his wife Ji Bai on the colonial cartography of the land he has traveled: "We have the British to the north and east of us, the Germans are in our midst, and to the south, Bai, are the Portuguese" (Vassanji 1989, 31). Of his visit to the Portuguese colonial region, the Shamsi man conveys to his wife that "[t]he town is old like Mombasa, but with many churches and Portuguese soldiers and priests" (Vassanji 1989, 32).

What the traveler's account intimates is the association between Portuguese colonization and the presence of Christianity. If this is true of Mozambique and is detailed in *The Gunny Sack*, then it must also be true of Goa—a fact that is elided in *The Book of Secrets*. Another commonality shared by the novels is their inclusion of Goan figures. In *The Gunny Sack*, a character nicknamed Uncle Goa informs his Shamsi neighbor, Kulsum, of his impending departure, along with his family, from recently independent Tanganyika: "'The world has changed too rapidly for us,' he said . . . 'We have decided to go to Lourenço Marques'" (Vassanji 1989, 165).

While there could be many probable reasons why the Goan family may have chosen to move to the capital of Mozambique in Portuguese Africa, because they decide to leave decolonized British East Africa since it "has changed," their exit connotes a desire for an erstwhile familiarity. Tanganyika declared its independence from the British in 1961; meanwhile, Mozambique continued to be a Portuguese colony till 1975. The choice of a Portuguese colonial location as the consummation of their nostalgic aspiration can be surmised as having to do with the ability the Goan family possesses to travel there, and also because of Mozambique's shared lusospheric colonial network with, and similarity to, Goa. Goans, like the family in *The Gunny Sack* were able to travel across colonial polities as Portuguese nationals, which meant that their employment in other Portuguese colonies was commonplace.¹¹

Mascarenhas-Keyes clarifies the unique circumstances of diasporic Goans who, even as residents of British East Africa, "had Portuguese nation-

ality . . . ,” which assisted their transit between empires (2011, 210). The author also addresses the likenesses between “Portuguese East Africa and other Portuguese colonies . . . [in] the structure of education provision and curriculum . . . ” (Mascarenhas-Keyes 2011, 209). What can be deduced from Mascarenhas-Keyes’s observation is that there would have been additional social, cultural, and institutional similarities between Goa and parts of the Portuguese-colonized world, which would have aided the acculturation of Uncle Goa and his family in Mozambique as colonial-era Goans. This only amounts to a speculative understanding of the migratory motives of the Goan family in *The Gunny Sack*, because the novelist does not provide an adequate frame of historical and cultural reference for the non-Shamsi South Asians. To do so would not only indicate the diversity of the South Asian presence in colonial Africa but also the diversity of coloniality itself as it affected the colonized in multiple continents. In bringing awareness to Vassanji’s elision of Portuguese colonization in one of his novels, but his tangential inclusion of it in another, in relation to Goan characters, what one detects is how the author focuses on British colonization as a means of portraying Indianness in the diaspora. Because the history of Goa and Goans in the diaspora was influenced by two concurrent empires within the Indian subcontinent and Africa, it would not serve Vassanji’s narrative purpose to sufficiently develop their backgrounds and histories.

While Pius does state that Goans have lived “in Africa from earliest times” (Vassanji 1994, 238), it is the scant exposition of such characters as the “Goan girl who lived in Kichwele,” whom Pius is briefly engaged to (Vassanji 1994, 267), and another “nice Goan girl, a bank teller,” whom Steve Desouza courts (Vassanji 1994, 269), which forges the implication that there is no definable community for these scattered Goans to belong to. It is clear that the presence of Goan women in the narrative is made even more minimal in the absence of their being named. Even when characters are named, it is still not clear if they are actually Goans. Steve Desouza, Pius’s fellow-traveler and colleague from India, has a Portuguese name, but other than his engagement to the “nice Goan girl,” no definite indication is given that the man might be Goan. Although this fictional character’s Goan identity is made unclear because there is no explicit declaration of his ethnicity, a historical Goan figure in *The Book of Secrets* also remains undefined as being someone of that ethnic origin. In probing Corbin’s diary, Pius fills in the blanks by narrating how the colonial administrator made his employee, Mariamu, a young Shamsi woman, aware of Nairobi by showing her photographs of Kenya, which included one of “Dr. Ribeiro’s zebra-drawn buggy” (Vassanji 1994, 81).

In *Goans of Kenya*, Teresa Albuquerque describes the aforementioned Dr.

Rosendo Ayres Ribeiro as being a “product of the Goa Medical School” who, armed with his degree, arrived in Mombasa as a young man “[i]n December 1898” (1999, 35). The Goan doctor was etched into public memory because he used a zebra (sans buggy) as a means of transportation to see his patients (Albuquerque 1999, 36). In recording Ribeiro’s career, Albuquerque charts his “active role in community affairs,” which included his 1905 appointment as the “first Chairman of the Goan Institute of Nairobi . . . Prompted by concern for the educational advancement of his community, Dr. Ribeiro contributed generously towards a building to house the Goan school in Parklands, Nairobi. It was named after him” (Albuquerque 1999, 36).

There is some implausibility to be found in that Pius would not pronounce ethnic consanguinity with this famous Goan doctor whom he alludes to through his research of Corbin’s diary. It seems all the more unlikely that as a schoolteacher himself, Pius would make no mention of Ribeiro’s ethnicity, since the doctor was not only distinctive for his zebra-riding, but also distinctively supportive of the education of his community. Sighted in Kenya, British Africa, by Corbin, Ribeiro is unidentifiably South Asian in the novel because of his Portuguese name. Ribeiro’s Portuguese nationality as a Goan in British Africa is authenticated when, among Ribeiro’s accolades, Albuquerque also lists the position “he held . . . as Portuguese Vice-Consul in Nairobi,” but she also catalogues his bestowal with an award of the Order of the British Empire (Albuquerque 1999, 36). What this avouches is that even as Portuguese nationals, Goans were not excluded from the purview of British Africa.

Between Ribeiro’s historical contributions, the trace of him in Vassanji’s novel, Pius in the same tale, and Uncle Goa and his family in *The Gunny Sack*, there are several coincidences that are made substantive between Shamsis and Goans. Both communities existed across the empires of East Africa and both had enough of a population to merit the commissioning of schools. Of the two minority groups, albeit, it is only the Shamsis whose diasporic identity Vassanji develops extensively in connection with British colonization. Their African presence not cleanly attributable only to British coloniality, representations of Goans as a community are downplayed in the anglocentric colonial imaginary of *The Book of Secrets*.

MODERNITY AND HETEROPATRIARCHY, THE TRACKS ACROSS CONTINENTS

Having Portuguese citizenship meant that Goans were able to traverse between British and Portuguese Africa in search of opportunities. Selma



Figure 5: *Rosendo Ribeiro, MD Riding his Zebra* (c. 1890), Unattributed.

Carvalho records that one such prospect that attracted many Goans to move from Portuguese to British East Africa, was the building of railways (2010, 217). Other than just Goans, this colonial industry employed many South Asians in various parts of British East Africa (Prashad 2000b, 100), a fact that also finds mention in *The Gunny Sack*. Dhanji Govindji proclaims to Ji Bai, “The railway goes from Mombasa all the way to the lake in the interior, and everywhere the train stops there is an Indian settlement. The line was built by our Indians, every stationmaster is an Indian, and every conductor . . . Our people are doing well under the British, Bai” (Vassanji 1989, 30–31).

Despite the diversity of South Asians who would have worked on the railways, the Shamsi character does not make any differentiation in referring to the employees as “our people.” They are to be understood as being of the same national origin because they are made coherent as agents of British colonial progress in East Africa and owe their success to such employment. Like a railway track across continents, Vassanji makes Indian identity extant and plausible at multiple global sites by highlighting its connections to British colonialism. No room is left in Vassanji’s narrative to develop the trajectories of those South Asians, Goans conspicuously, whose histories are shaped by, or in circumvention of, other colonial processes.

Just as Chatterjee recognizes the involvement of the British in India’s nationalist quest for modernity, the progress of diasporic India in Vassanji’s novels is once again attributed to the involvement of the British. In being associated with British-sponsored modernity in East Africa, it is the Shamsi community whose authentic Indianness is corroborated, and made steadfast, in its promotion of cultural nationalism. This extends to the diaspora in Vassanji’s novel where nationalist values are configured as being masculinist and heteropatriarchal. In the reifying of Indian identity that connects homeland and diaspora in the establishment of modernity in British colonized East Africa, there is a likeness to be found with what Ashis Nandy judges to be “Europe’s post-medieval models of dominance” (1983, 4).

Nandy outlines the homology of power dynamics that the colonized in India took on from the colonizer by postulating that

[i]n the colonial culture, identification with the aggressor bound the rulers and the ruled in an unbreakable dyadic relationship. The Raj saw Indians as crypto-barbarians who needed to further civilize themselves. It saw British rule as an agent of progress and as a mission. Many Indians in turn saw their salvation in becoming more like the British, in friendship or in enmity. (1983, 7)

Like Chatterjee, Nandy probes how the advent of modernity in India is attached to the rationale of the British colonial project. In sharing the desire for progress, Nandy gathers that the disposition of colonial subjects was due to them casting their lot with their colonizers, taking on the mantle of civility and leadership. Coming to East Africa under the aegis of British colonialism, the Shamsi community in Vassanji's novel do so as subjects already ushered into modernity who then continue the project of civilizing and modernizing another continent.

There is a parallel to be found between progress in East Africa as represented by Vassanji and Chatterjee's description of how Indian nationalism claimed for itself "the project of modernity," the trajectory of which was historiographically deciphered by the British (1992, 141). The same proclivity toward modernity is traced in Vassanji's East Africa, where the railway system, built by the English, symbolizes prosperity and advancement for the Indian community and is a project that the diasporic community is involved with as Dhanji Govindji bears witness to in *The Gunny Sack*. In *The Book of Secrets*, modernity arrives in the town of Kikono when a British-administered Shamsi township springs up because of "a railway to the south" (Vassanji 1994, 27).

In the subcontinental sphere, colonial modernity derived from an emulation of the colonizer, resulting in "a cultural consensus in which political and socio-economic dominance symbolized the dominance of men and masculinity over women and femininity" (Nandy 1983, 4). By participating in British coloniality in East Africa, the Shamsi community similarly establishes itself as civilizing and modernizing at the same time as it privileges heteropatriarchy as community identity. As they navigate the multiculturalism of colonial Africa, establishing Indianness through heteropatriarchy becomes all the more necessary.

In Vassanji's novel, Kikono functions as a microcosm of colonial multiculturalism in East Africa. The township is administered by the English, through Corbin, only after it is settled by the Shamsis but, even at the outset, the first colonial family in Kikono is an interracial one. Jamali, the founder of the Shamsi community in Kikono, weds Khanoum, a Swahili woman resident at the Christian mission, who reconverts to Islam upon her marriage, but her presence in the Indian community ends in ignominy. Pius comes to know of Khanoum's plight from one of her mixed-race descendants while investigating Corbin's diary. The Goan narrator meets with Khanoum's grandson, Jamali, named after his grandfather, who tells him how his grandmother was disowned by the Shamsis, and thus made indigent upon her husband's passing.

Years after, Khanoum is approached by the Shamsis when they learn of her impoverishment. She rebuffs their offers of assistance, saying instead,

No . . . I shall not take charity . . . I am the wife of a mukhi . . . I, too, have been leader of the community, looked after its welfare, helped run its mosque, buried its dead, welcomed new arrivals, nursed and fed the sick, cooked for its festivals, and danced and wept with the rest. So why do you come to harass me now that this husband is dead? Does this black self lessen in value now that its brown partner is gone? Has my soul lost anything, or my honour? (Vassanji 1984, 197)

This diatribe is reported by Pius in the first person even though the text does not actually have Khanoum speak these words herself. Effectively, these words become Pius's, associating the predicament of the communally displaced with his own situation as a lone Goan within a larger community of Indians who do not see him as being one of their kind. When Pius speaks for Khanoum in his narrativization of her banishment, the Goan is feminized. Even Pius's recounting of how the African woman had been of use to the Indian community that no longer wanted her is a list of gendered tasks—services rendered. Likewise, this is a role Pius, as a Goan, places himself in throughout the text. In comparison to the Goan and African characters in the novel, then, the Shamsis are the masculine figures of modernity.

While Vassanji shows that Khanoum was once part of the Shamsi community with whom she shared a common faith, she is still not considered integral to the community due to her race. Like Pius, Khanoum was once a Christian and, like the Shamsis, she was also a Muslim who reconverts to Islam when she marries Jamali. Though Pius and Khanoum share, respectively, racial and religious similarities with the Shamsis, their presence is always at the borders of Shamsi identity due to an over-insistence on their difference. The Christian Goan and the once-Christian African are thus made the inassimilable other to the Indian nation in the diaspora. Even Khanoum's re-conversion is not enough to help her establish a continued place with the Shamsis. The death of Khanoum's husband, the Shamsi patriarch, effects her racialized distancing from the group.

Khanoum, like Kikono, bears witness to the genesis of the "Indian haven" near "the railway" built by the British as a marginal and female figure (Vassanji 1994, 26). The African interior is entered or crossed into at Kikono by the Shamsis, who participate in the British colonial scheme of modernity,

which is emblemized by the intrusive railway system. Jamali's marriage to Khanoum sets into motion the establishment of the Indian community, but the African woman is excluded once her usefulness is outlived. As representatives of the Indian nation in the diaspora, the Shamsis' progress occurs to the preclusion of the Africans, symbolized here by Khanoum and her mixed-race descendants, in whose land the migrants have made a home.

Anne McClintock notes that "the representation of the land as female is a traumatic trope, occurring almost invariably . . . in the aftermath of male boundary confusion, but [also] as a . . . strategy of containment" (1995, 24). In like manner, by casting out the African woman who is a reminder of their own foreignness, the Shamsis are able to reinscribe their ingress into African territory. Africa is retroactively remade as virgin territory when its natives are outcast or reduced to invisibility by the Shamsis whose possession of Kikono runs parallel to the onset of British colonial modernity.

Khanoum serves as the Shamsis' own contestatory other, at once the same as themselves in being equally colonized by the English, but then also a competitive element in the desire of the colonized to emulate the colonizer. When Khanoum is used and then discarded in and by the narrative, the Shamsis have a recognizable other against whom their own identity in a foreign land can be measured and differentiated. Vassanji marks the Indian community's presence in British Africa through, first, a partnering with an African bride and, then, their progress in the region through the rejection of the same Black, female body. By placing Khanoum outside the borders of the community, the Shamsis are able to redefine their own racialized identity as being purely Indian. It is also a heteropatriarchal reinscription of nationalist identity because it is bordered against the African woman.

QUEER, OR SOMETHING LIKE IT?

As Khanoum reappears in the novel it is through Pius's intervention. The Swahili woman represents the gendered border of racial identity in the text who is then disappeared from the narrative. It is Pius who recovers and tells her stories, himself a liminal figure in the Shamsi realm. As the purveyor of the feminized limits of a perverse multiculturalism in the novel, Pius's narration positions him as a gendered and marginal entity whose Goanness is consonant with the subjectivities he tries to resurface within and against the dominance of masculinist Shamsi identity. That the Goan character's sexual-

ity is also made dubious by Vassanji, both in the text and outside of it, queers the character and the author's intentions for this figure.

Pius's sexual ambiguity is a subject that comes up in Gaurav Desai's interview with Vassanji. Desai broaches the subject of sexuality in the author's work by saying,

I am reminded of the exchange between Rita and Pius in *The Book of Secrets* where the issue of Pius's knowledge of his own desires is brought into question. One of the things that I have found refreshing in your work is your willingness to engage with issues of homosexuality which have for long been considered taboo. (2011, 189–190)

The incident Desai refers to in his interview occurs when Rita, one of Pius's former students and someone he had been infatuated with, returns to East Africa from England as an adult. She reminds Pius of the desire he once had for her. "You'll never know" (Vassanji 1994, 296), she taunts, but then adds, "And there was Gregory, of course" (Vassanji 1994, 297). Taken aback, Pius asks her what she means and she challenges his feigned ignorance by revealing, "Well, your friendship with him was rather peculiar to us girls. Gregory was a homosexual, as you know. Gay, he would have been called today" (Vassanji 1994, 297).

Instead of engaging Desai's question about Pius's sexuality, Vassanji evades it by saying, "If I can be rash for a moment, I think ambiguity is the driving force or the nuclear reaction behind my creativity" (2011, 190). Desai counters this evasion by offering,

I would have said it is sexuality not ambiguity that seems to underwrite much of your work (ambiguous sexuality is certainly a part of it). In addition to same-sex desire, your fiction is also very concerned with voyeurism both as a sexual act and as a metaphor for seeking truths that are hidden from view. (2011, 190)

Vassanji responds tepidly, "I don't know. I don't think of these things when I write" (2011, 190). To clarify the author's stance, Desai probes deeper:

[I]n your earliest interviews, you came across as being a more deliberative writer, thinking quite consciously about the choices you made in your fiction and the potential consequences among the readership. Today, you sound

more distanced, more removed, as though the novels just write themselves without any conscious political, aesthetic, or even ethical choice on your part. (2011, 190)

What this exchange reveals is Vassanji's employment of ambiguity not just within his writing but as a masking of the very political stakes he claims not to have. Vassanji's political task, I have argued, is to center Indian Muslim identity as sufficiently nationalist but, in so doing, the author qualifies the minority group's claim to Indianness through a concomitance with British colonialism and Hindu nationalism while precluding other minority cultures.

In refusing to take on Desai's questions which goad the author to consider the contiguities between sexuality and ambiguity as ambiguous sexuality, what is uncovered is Vassanji's discomfort with the subject of sexuality even as his work is rife with it. When confronted with the various instances of sexuality in his writing, the author dismissively cites ambiguity rather than political intent as informing his creative process. Vassanji's own ambiguity about what the purpose of sexuality in his writing means, Pius's specifically, stages the Goan narrator as anything but reliable.

When it comes to his sexuality, Pius seems just as incapable of understanding it as his creator. For example, duly affronted by Rita's accusation, Pius blurts out, "Are you implying . . . ? I am astounded, to be the subject of this inference . . . but then what made me think I was free of this kind of speculation . . . 'I've had my share of women, if you have to know-' (Vassanji 1994, 297). Not done, Rita drives the point home by adding, "What was between you and Gregory . . . only you know that. If you do . . . And if you don't know these things about yourself . . ." (Vassanji 1994, 297). Pius's implied homosexuality, or failed Indian masculinity, is expected to function as the antithesis of heteropatriarchal/heterosexual reproductivity, which is equated with proper masculinity and the growth of the nation as the remit of the Shamsis following their partnering with the English. Unable to understand whether he might have been attracted to Gregory, Pius's dubious national identity is again underscored in his failure to relate even homosexually to an English colonial figure. Against the Goan's flawed subjectivity, Vassanji crafts Shamsi heteropatriarchy as a desire for fixity, eschewing the productive ambiguities of other inter/racializations, kinships, and sexualities. Despite his characterization as an unreliable narrator, what remains is that it is Pius who bears witness to all that falls out of the Shamsis' conception of acceptable Indianness.

Pius's role as an interpreter of sorts is one that has been ascribed to Goans

in cultural and literary tradition,¹² and is a standpoint that the East African-born Peter Nazareth sees himself occupying. In an interview with Charles Irby, Nazareth ruminates on how

Goans [have been called] “cultural brokers.” There may be some truth in that term because I am able to take something from one literature to another, to take strengths, perspectives, and energy because colonial rule means a loss of energy . . . I’ve come to the conclusion that a loss of psychic energy occurred over generations of colonial rule. How do you get it back? Ishmael Reed said in an interview I did with him that the highest form of multiculturalism is when you look at another culture in order to understand your own . . . So, paradoxically, my Goan identity gets affirmed. (1988, 98)

Nazareth’s positioning of himself as a Goan writer overlaps Pius’s findings in *The Book of Secrets* in that both recoup a better understanding of the multicultural complexities of colonial existence. Pius’s discoveries, as a consequence, contravene the desire of the project he has been given by his Shamsi student, which is to recover the community’s past.

What Pius finds is no clear indication that the Shamsis can claim a past that solely belongs to them alone as an Indian diasporic group, even as their communal identity is shaped against the aberrant presence of their Goan interlocutor. Certainly, the insularity Vassanji attempts to accord his Shamsis does not map onto the Indian Ocean cartographies the author’s oeuvre is reliant upon. As Asma Sayed testifies, one of the pedagogical uses of the writers’ novels, are their exposure of historical “Indian Ocean trade routes” (2024, 48). For Melissa Tandiwe Myambo, Vassanji’s writing lends itself to “investigat[ions of] the possibilities opened up and foreclosed . . . in relation to the Indian Ocean as a literary and theoretical space” (2007, 160).

Amid the Indian Ocean multiculturalism revealed by Vassanji in novels like *The Book of Secrets*, and even as Pius is Vassanji’s creation, the author is at odds with his own invention of the Goan as a participant in such formations. After all, if so uncertain about himself, how might Pius be able to say anything useful about anyone else, or even partake of the multiculturalism at whose periphery he exists (and precisely because he is cast) as observer? If the Goan narrator is meant to be a cultural broker, he is also expected to exist solely on the fringe of the larger Indian community whose past he chronicles, but even those observations are made doubtful by Vassanji’s ambiguities. This notwithstanding, although Pius’s masculinity, sexuality, and national identity

are left in doubt, the novel is unsuccessful in foreclosing the possibilities of Goan identity.

At the novel's conclusion, Pius's investigation into the diary ends with no definitive revelation of its possible secrets. Looking back upon his sleuthing Pius comments, "What better homage to the past than to acknowledge it . . . , rescue it and recreate it, without presumption of judgement, and as honestly, though perhaps as incompletely as we know ourselves, as part of the life of which we all are a part?" (Vassanji 1994, 332). This declaration is not about Shamsi history, but Pius's own homage to the past in all its ambiguities. Although the words are Vassanji's, read in Pius's rendition of them, they are a recognition of a history that has allowed for the kinships he has forged as a lone Goan, as well as those relationships that were not allowed to be in deference to Indian nationalism as a product of British modernity. What is not left out in Pius's recovery of the past is any sense that multiculturalism can occupy a smooth terrain. It is in the difficulties of jagged existences that do not break cleanly on lines of race, gender, class, or sexuality that difference becomes something to be reckoned with rather than simply reconciled.

CHAPTER 4

Neoliberalism's Everywhere and Nowhere

The Postnational Migrant in Roger King's *A Girl from Zanzibar*

Looking from a window above
It's like a story of love
Can you hear me?
Came back only yesterday
I'm moving further away
Want you near me
"Only You," Yazoo (1982)

The lyrics of a British synthpop song from the 1980s may seem like a strange place from which to begin discussing a novel about a Goan-Arab woman who finds herself having to flee across continents. Although I will return to the Yazoo song and its Thatcherite connection to Roger King's *A Girl from Zanzibar* (2002) later, for now, suffice it to say that these lyrics signal distance and loss—"Looking from a window above . . . Want you near me"—while the "Only You" of the song's title begs the question of who the mysterious figure it might be referring to is (Yazoo 1982). As with the other novels this book considers, place is a central concern here but, more so, placelessness. Certainly, distance is integral to *A Girl from Zanzibar*, its own title suggesting that the protagonist may be from the East African island but located elsewhere. A country whose name begins with the last letter of the English alphabet, Zanzibar (an Indian Ocean island seconded to Tanzania, the mainland it became attached to only postcolonially in 1964) is rendered other several times over by history. A similar fate seems to befall Marcella D'Souza, the novel's titular character, who is displaced repeatedly in a trajectory that takes her from East Africa to Britain, and finally the United States.

In King's novel, Marcella's Goan subjectivity is set into relief through her encounters with multicultural societies across three different continents, none of which become home. Her repeated exits suggest the externality of Goanness to the possibility of national belonging. This gives the impression of a sovereign personal existence that defies the laws of nations, or one that acts resistantly to those laws. While such an existence may appear to challenge the hegemony of nation-states as predicated upon citizenship, this chapter will argue otherwise. The novel's dis/placement of the protagonist in locations that are postcolonial, multicultural, neoliberal, and globalized, presents nation-states that continue exercising power in spite of, and even through, political and economic shifts, and often in alliance with one another.

Within this, the transnational Goan subject functions as a globalized element—what I name here as a postnational—whose very detachment from forms of specific national governance lends such subjectivity to projects of multiculturalism and neoliberalization that cohere rather than diminish national sovereignty. Thus, even as the movements of the Goan subject in King's novel may seem to subvert the norms of national limits in the era of globalization, it is neoliberalism that allows for and operationalizes her displacements across continents, reaffirming sovereignty and the character's precarity, especially due to her gender and race.

EVERYWHERE AND NOWHERE: DIS/PLACING THE POSTNATIONAL

Marcella's continually rootless presence in and transience through the many national boundaries mapped in King's novel is characterized by her deficient and, sometimes, altogether absent official status in each of these locations. As I will go on to examine in this chapter, these features of Marcella's subjectivity become just as apparent due to postcoloniality in the contemporary moment of the novel, as well as due to globalization which also assists in her transcontinental displacement(s). King's rendering of Marcella's transitoriness connotes a dearth of allegiance to any of the places of her residence and creates the notion that Marcella's subjectivity as a person of Goan descent is beyond national confinement. And while *A Girl from Zanzibar* centers around the uniqueness of Marcella, it is evidently her Goanness that allows for her characterization in the novel as a postnational migrant, a subjectivity in excess of any nation.

As Robert Miles and Victor Satzewich maintain,

Concomitant with the formation of the nation-state has been the creation of nationality as a legal concept and the creation and policing of national boundaries which constitute a political barrier to human spatial mobility because each human being has been attributed with a legal status “tying” him or her to that nation state. (2010, 557)

Therefore, to not have a legal status as defined by a nation, would seem to place an individual such as Marcella, who travels as an undocumented individual, at odds with what Miles and Satzewich refer to as the “[reproduction of] a social order, a process that entails both hegemonic practices and direct force,” because “[h]egemonic practices include the reproduction of national identity, . . . [as] a process of self-identification with the state itself” (2010, 557).

This explanation presumes some basis of commonality of nationals in order to construct hegemony as a coincidence of “national identity” and “self-identification” with nation. There is an adherence here to Benedict Anderson’s estimation of nations as delimited precisely because they must contrast themselves with “other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with [all] mankind” (2006, 7). Commonalities in the construction of national identities are generally derived from one of “two principles . . . [which] are *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis*—acquisition of nationality by birth in the territory of the State, and acquisition of nationality by descent [respectively] . . . ,” as Paul Weis explains (1979, 95). Both of these principles apply to Marcella most apparently as a resident of Zanzibar where she was born. But even so, her diasporic and racial identities in the novel are the source of slippage between these conceptions of nationality and the character’s own sense of being devoid of national belonging.

Marcella, although Goan, was not born in Goa. Her dislocation from Goa, the demise of her Goan father while she was a child, and her knowledge of her Arab mother late in life and only after the woman’s death, indicate the character’s already existent distance from her geographic and ethno-biological origins. In other words, her “national” associations on the basis of *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis* are rendered deficient by distance and familial loss. Raised as a Goan by a family of that background in Zanzibar, Marcella’s mixed-race ancestry bears little consequence to her sense of self, but race and racism still play a part in her transnational experiences.

Although born in Zanzibar, Marcella’s *jus soli* citizenship of that location is only made consequential in her impending departure from Zanzibar, because of which she has to acquire a passport. Once arrived in the United

Kingdom, Marcella chooses to remain in the country as an undocumented immigrant. Upon discovery of this fact, following an incident that lands Marcella in prison, she is to be deported back to East Africa, but she slips into the United States. In this the novel's final destination, the presentation of the United States as "a nation of migrants" and Marcella's place in it as "a migrant's migrant" continues to repeat the character's hypothetical lack of situatedness (King 2002, 265).

King crafts Marcella's own cultural ambivalence, borne of her multiethnic heritage, into the reason for her displacement. Describing Marcella as being "Goan Indian Portuguese Arab African of Catholic Moslem [sic] parentage," Geoffrey Sutton, a United Nations researcher¹ that she befriends while he is working in Zanzibar, also observes, "Of course, the Arabs here are mixed up with all sorts of African blood, and European and Asian, so really it's more complicated. You're from everywhere" (King 2002, 85–86). This deeply clashes with Marcella's feelings on the subject, for she responds, "Please stop, Geoffrey. I'm from nowhere" (King 2002, 86).

Between these descriptions of Marcella's identity, there is even more of an articulation of her impossibility of belonging—she is at once implausibly from everywhere and nowhere, a postnational. In Sutton's elaboration of Marcella's multicultural background, there are echoes of Zanzibar's liminality: Third World and traditional, a cartographic locus of many identities. As an island, it symbolically mirrors the insularity Marcella attempts to escape and, yet, ironically, it parallels the island she escapes to—England—First World and modern, once the imperial center of the world, and a vector of globalization. Juxtaposing the two places—one now decolonized and the other a former colonial power—as the polarities between which Marcella travels, King posits his character's postcolonial transit between the islands as a bridging of everywhere and nowhere. Yet, as I contend, in contrast to the novel's positioning of Marcella's Goan diasporic subjectivity as the cause for her lack of attachment to any nation, it is this very inability of belonging that makes the Goan character the ideal subject of the neoliberal and globalizing moment.

GOAN EVERYWHERE

At the same time as the novel uses Marcella's Goanness as the device through which she is able to inhabit and leave behind multiple countries transcontinentally, it is the nexus between postcolonialism, globalization, and neoliberal

eralism that makes the diasporic character's displacements feasible. As King's novel presents them, Marcella's movements are made possible because of her Goanness, a condition which, in the novel, appears to allow for transcultural and transcontinental adaptability due to its formation through colonial influences. As the novel constructs Goanness in depicting its protagonist, it essentializes such ethnic subjectivity. But as I aim to indicate, Goanness in its particularly diasporic manifestations is produced by specific conditions, many of which are socioeconomically and historically circumstantial, even as they coincide with how Marcella's identity is characterized by King.

In the multicontinental and epoch-spanning *Community, Memory, and Migration in a Globalizing World: The Goan Experience, c. 1890–1980*, Margret Frenz says of Catholic Goans that they “have been global citizens . . . for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, experiencing the opportunities but also the insecurities that this position brings” (2014, 2). For Frenz the temporal circumstances that affected the movements and displacements of Goans between continents are as worthy of consideration as “the characteristics of the different locations” these subjects found themselves in (2014, 9). Together, locational and historical conditions “shaped the construction of Goan identity” (Frenz 2008, 185) in this community of pluricontinental migrants, how they were regarded in their adoptive countries, and how they related to others.² For its part, *A Girl from Zanzibar* relies on histories of Goan displacement at the same time as it attempts to abstract its protagonist's experiences from these legacies.

Paying particular attention to Zanzibar, Frenz chronicles that during the mid-nineteenth century, the island was a popular destination for emigrating Catholic Goans (2008, 186–188). Zanzibar was “one of the principal trading centres in the western Indian Ocean,” circumstances that allowed Goans to become “the most prominent retailers [on the island] between the 1860s and 1900s” (Frenz 2008, 188). Stella Mascarenhas-Keyes locates the roots of Goan out-migration within the period of “Portuguese colonialism, [when] the agrarian economy was severely disrupted,” and which caused “job security [to be] threatened” in Goa (2011, 142).

Changes in the feudalistic traditional means of earning one's living triggered many to have “to look beyond Goa for employment . . .,” which “was facilitated in the 19th century, and thereafter, by the emergence of a large number of jobs, fostered particularly by the development of British colonialism” at multiple global sites (Mascarenhas-Keyes 2011, 142). As traditional economies were reconfigured in colonial polities, Goans grappled with

these changes by becoming postnationals. Finding themselves in positions of precarity, their movements across continents were informed by economic choices that caused them to traverse Portuguese and British empires, their national identities made malleable by colonial displacement.³

The Sultanate of Zanzibar became a British Protectorate in 1890 at a time when the influx of Goan migrants to the island was already at a high point. They were not the only South Asians to have made their way to East Africa in the late-nineteenth century, but among that racial group, Goans were accorded a separate “status as a distinct nationality” by the British, because they were “Portuguese nationals and Catholics,” Selma Carvalho points out (2010, 97). In King’s novel, Marcella’s aunt, a prominent entrepreneur who seemingly emulates the historical trajectory of earlier Goans who found success as businesspeople in Zanzibar, has much to say about Goan identity. Mrs. F—short for Fernandez⁴—declares, “we Goans [are] really Europeans in disguise” (King 2002, 9). The Goan businesswoman gives credence to this view because, as she postulates, “[Goans] have European names, some of us have European blood. We’ve been European for four hundred years. We eat beef. We drink alcohol. We ballroom dance. We’re European” (King 2002, 22). Mrs. F’s views may easily be construed as having been produced from internalized racism or a sense of undue cultural superiority. And while these are distinct possibilities given her characterization in the novel, her self-definition of Goanness as Europeanness derives as much from Goa’s nearly five centuries of history as a Portuguese overseas territory as it does from colonial East African racial management strategies—all factors that have shaped the national incommensurability (or postnationalness) of diasporic Goans.

The British colonial administration in East Africa parlayed Goanness into a useful administrative category as much as Goans partook of the special designation afforded to them in the fraught multicultural landscape of their adoptive countries. As Frenz notes:

In contrast to other South Asian migrant groups [in] . . . East Africa, Goans show up as different in particular ways. They were, for instance, comparatively well educated, with a functional knowledge of English that eased their way into work in various departments of the colonial administration. In both the colonial administration’s and their own view, their “Western” life-style and affiliation to Christianity provided them with an ideal *entree* to public employment, as they inspired “confidence” and “trust” in British administrative officers. (2014, 15–16)

Therein, while all South Asians may have been rendered distinct, racially and administratively, from Black and white people in East Africa, Goans were further set apart from—and, yet, in an interim category between—other South Asians and white Europeans. This was because “Goans possessed the right to Portuguese citizenship and thus to a legal status which was decidedly different from the status of British Indians—who were British subjects without the full rights accorded to a citizen” (Frenz 2014, 16). This profusion and overlapping of identification categories further molded diasporic Goanness as postnationalness: a part of and, yet, in excess of national categorization.

Given such distinctions, it is apparent that racialization was inherent to the project of multicultural citizenship in British-colonized East Africa, its hierarchy foundational upon an anti-Blackness that benefited non-Black subjects at the same time as it inculcated racial distinctions between various racialized groups. Inasmuch as their Portuguese citizenship gave Goans the status of model minority subjects in the colonial East African multicultural milieu, their South Asian Europeanness could never be devoid of racialization as well. While Goanness may have been distinct from Blackness, it was still not whiteness, even if it was a form of Europeanness. Like Mrs. F, then, Goans in colonial East Africa would have cherished and heralded their Europeanness, stepping into its slippages between racial and cultural designation as postnationals, because it afforded them rights and professional positions that, while not being on par with white people, were distinct from those of Black and other South Asian Africans.

Yet, while Goans may have been identified by the colonial East African administration as Europeans, their self-identification was far more complex, having evolved over the duration of the two centuries during which they, as a community, had called East Africa home. Not only were they simultaneously “East African, Zanzibari, Portuguese, British, and European” (Gupta 2016, 258), but some had also participated in the anti-colonial struggles of their adoptive countries which resulted in the end of European rule in Africa (Sequeira 2011 and Durrani 2018). This was evidence of a Goan identity that was as much local as it was transregional (Gupta 2016, 258). Goan postnationalness may have developed out of economic necessity, choice, and displacement, but it was an identity that could not be said to be devoid of political motivation. Nevertheless, as colonialism ended, Goans had to contend with the fracturing of their citizenship identities in multiple continents simultaneously.

THE FICKLENESS OF NATIONALISM

At the same time as Goans may have been simultaneously European, African, and Asian, it was this globalization of their identity as postnationals—with its contrapuntal lack of static (and statist) belonging—that rendered Goans incommensurate with the rise of local nationalisms inherent to the anticolonialism and postcolonialism of their African countries. With the tide of decolonization in East Africa in the 1960s came a change in views of regional multiculturalism that had once been capable of “look[ing] both outward to the deepening Indian Ocean, but also inward” (Gupta 2016, 275). Frenz characterizes the shift in political terms as a move from “an outward-looking nationalism, based on transimperial and, now transnational links and connections, to an inward-looking nationalism” (2014, 224).

The end of colonialism meant a renegotiation of power dynamics, the effects of which were felt greatly and repeatedly in germinal nations like the small island of Zanzibar. In particular, the revolution which curtailed the island’s fledgling independence is referenced at various moments in *A Girl from Zanzibar*, including as a possible explanation for the mysterious disappearance and possible death of Marcella’s father (King 2002, 53). Although the country became sovereign on December 10, 1963, the Sultanate of Zanzibar came to an abrupt end with a revolution the next month. In January 1964, the Sultan was deposed and, after three months, Zanzibar combined with Tanzania on the continent to become the Tanganyikan republic. Many were injured or killed in the 1964 upheaval, and even the small community of Zanzibari Goans were not exempt from this plight with “five Goans [dying] . . . on ‘bloody Sunday,’ the first day of the revolution” (Frenz 2014, 231). In this, the political history of the island coincides with Marcella’s family history, given the mystery surrounding her father (a matter the novel never resolves). The resulting changes brought on by the revolution were political and economic for, “[w]ith rare exceptions, government posts were ‘Africanised’. The economy took a dramatic downward turn . . . Consequently, many Goans fled the island. It appears that of all the East African locations, Zanzibar was to lose the most Goans” (Frenz 2008, 194).

Of course, as is to be surmised from the novel’s portrayal of the continued presence of Marcella and her family in Zanzibar in the 1980s, not all Goans departed from the island following the postcolonial problems of the 1960s. However, what the remaining Goans had to grapple with was the question of citizenship. Frenz contends that “a shift occurred from ‘nationalism in Africa’

to 'African nationalism', which by definition excluded individuals who had the same passport, but a different colour of skin" (2014, 224–225). What this indicates, then, is the mutable nature of citizenship, a condition less dependent upon the fixity of place of birth, residence, allegiance, patrimony, or ethnoracial descent, but one given to the fickleness of nationalism. Circumstances of this nature affecting the Goan community in Zanzibar and other locations in East Africa informed their increasing marginalization. In *A Girl from Zanzibar*, that Marcella seeks prospects elsewhere in the 1980s, demonstrates the continuing effects of the political changes on the island at the beginnings of the postcolonial period. Marcella's choices in the 1980s are again a reminder of the historical displacements faced by her ancestral Goan diasporic community due to political and economic changes in earlier periods.

Speaking to the inconstancy of national belonging due to political strife, S. J. Sindu—an ethnic minority in the country of her birth, one that underwent a civil war—says of citizenship that, in her experience, it is “ever-shifting” (2021). Her family forced to flee because of their minority status, Sindu is faced with the renouncement of the citizenship of her birth country upon becoming an immigrant to another nation, but it is not the last one she will live in. “Citizenship, for me, is a moving target . . . I was born in Sri Lanka, lived most of my life in the US, and currently reside in Canada,” Sindu reveals, adding that she thinks of citizenship as being incapable of stability, for it is given to the whims of “nationalism or patriotic pride,” the capriciousness of which is matched by the inconstancy of governments, “no matter their power” (2021).

In similar fashion, the conditions of citizenship for Goans in mid-twentieth-century East Africa were affected by the problems of postcolonialism, which included the ensuing political and economic uncertainty in the newly independent nations they had called home for generations, making them involuntary postnationals. While these were circumstances that might affect any community finding itself in such moments of instability, for Goans, the travails of postcolonial change were unique in that they were confronted by political evolutions across continents simultaneously, even ones that were not their places of residence.

BELONGING (NOWHERE) FROM AFAR

The future trajectories of many Goans, and the countries they would call home in time to come, would be decided by events occurring in their home-

land despite their being absent from it. Even as the decolonial moment affected the lives of Goans in Africa, it was simultaneously unfolding in Asia as well. While Frenz delineates how independence in East Africa in the 1960s resulted in the emergence of “nation-states with new international boundaries . . . [that] severely limit[ed] the mobility of Goans in the process” (2008, 194), at the same time in South Asia too, a political shift was occurring due to the annexation of Goa by India. These matters in the homeland would come to affect diasporic Goans in East Africa, who were already facing the challenges of political and economic shifts brought on by independence from colonial rule.

Frenz stresses how, for Goans,

[t]he issue of citizenship had become a crucial factor in the post-colonial East African setting. Holding the ‘right’ passport was imminent when it came to deciding whether to stay or to migrate again. The issue was further complicated . . . in 1961 by the inclusion of Goa into the Indian Union. Those who lived in East Africa and who had possessed a Portuguese passport up to that time were asked to surrender it to the Indian High Commissioner. They were obliged to make a decision on whether to apply for an Indian or a British protected passport. (2008, 196)

The multiplicity of identities that had once given diasporic Goans the ability to traverse continents and polities as postnationals during the colonial era was now met with the intransigence of new postcolonial nationalisms. That Goans could once claim to be simultaneously Asian, European, and African, a complex identity formation that allowed them global opportunities in the midst of colonialism, now came to be the basis of their postcolonial undoing. What had rendered them globalized subjects became the root of fracture and unbelonging.

Such was the case “[w]hen the countries of East Africa gained independence, [and] Goans once again found themselves confronted with a citizenship decision, this time whether to take up Tanzanian, Kenyan, or Ugandan citizenship and thus maintain their residential status and work permits in the respective country” (Frenz 2008, 196). As cross-border transit became limited by newly inscribed national demarcations, mobility across East Africa previously abetted by British colonialism became a thing of the past, but also had ramifications for the citizenship choices Goans would have to make with future plans in sight. While these were the result of developments in Africa

and Asia, the contingencies involved neither of those continents, for “[a] significant number of Goans opted for protected British status, thinking that this might open up job opportunities and present their children with the prospect of a sound education in the UK” (Frenz 2008, 196). And yet, this was not how things worked out.

The colonial-era UK passport holders’ “right to enter Britain was withdrawn in 1968,” Miles and Satzewich record, and they construe this as being due to the out-migrations from East Africa in the mid-1960s as a result of Africanization policies (2010, 544). Apparently laying the blame on postcolonial East African legislation, Miles and Satzewich’s reference to Africanization policies calls out the equation between Blackness and citizenship in the making of the political ethos of the new states as ostensibly discriminatory. Miles and Satzewich do not delve into the impoverishment of the colonies by the metropole, which continued to impact their economic policies in the postcolonial period. The authors are equally silent on the discrimination espoused by British statecraft in the transition to postcolonialism. The presumption conveyed is that Britain had to change its immigration policies only because it would be unable to deal with an onslaught of exiles from East Africa, Goans included.

BRITAINIZATION

As Britain delimited the entry of its former colonial subjects from Africa by instituting new immigration guidelines, it would have intimated the racialized motivations behind the changes if this form of protectionism were to be named Britainization. Had the non-existent categorization been deployed, the term Britainization would have made plain the unspoken equivalence between whiteness and the making of racially restrictive postcolonial immigration legislation. Even while 1968 was a watershed moment when those with colonially issued British passports were disbarred from entry, previous policies had already been enacted and put into practice to control who could come into Britain. By 1962, the Commonwealth Immigration Act had disaggregated types of British passports, classifying them “according to the place of issue. Holders of passports issued by the UK government were permitted free entry to the UK at any time, whereas entry was restricted for those with passports issued by colonial governments” (Frenz 2008, 196).

Even as Africanization—a racially loaded term—was equated with the

protection of Black indigenous communities, the non-naming of Britain's protectionism of its native-born subjects serves to obfuscate the potentially racialized privileges of entry to the country allowed for by holding a passport issued in Britain. In fact, the Immigration Act of 1971 all but ensured the racial delineation of British citizenship. As Frenz finds, the act, strategically "introduced just before the UK joined the European Union, took the racial element in British citizenship rights further, so that only those with links of 'patriality' or blood ties to those born in the UK, would be entitled to entry" (2014, 229).

What is noteworthy is the relationship between nationalisms across continents in the formulation of policy: the British empire's erstwhile East African colonies adopted Africanization by privileging the economic rights of their indigenous subjects while the postcolonial British nation underwent Britainization by favoring citizenship tied to geographic nativity and specificity. Common to both cases was the curtailment of the rights of South Asians, their economic opportunities, and transnational mobility. Dealing with citizenship controls nearly two decades after the end of colonialism, Marcella's quest to gain a Zanzibari passport so that she can travel to Europe are met with red tape, a situation that leads her to reflect upon this as "the natural course of a human life collid[ing] with the unnatural barriers of government to produce a perfect immobility" (King 2002, 5). Focused on the individuality of her situation, the implication here is that Marcella's tribulations are disconnected from the longer history of restrictions that affected the movements of Goans beyond the confines of East Africa.

Just as immigration and protectionism policies affected the lives of Goans, their own relationship to their once valued ability as postnationals to identify as African, European, and Asian changed. Frenz believes that "[a]fter the East African countries obtained independence, the 'policy' of negotiating between the different layers of identity—Portuguese, British, Indian, and African—no longer worked for Goans" (2014, 257). Or perhaps their ability to arbitrate this complex web of identities was altered with the policy changes on the various continents they were once historically affiliated with. This was the direct effect of laws enacted

in East Africa, India, and the UK [which] strongly influenced migration patterns in the 1960s and 1970s . . . Newly drawn boundaries restricted hitherto open routes of movement across the Indian Ocean . . . and beyond . . . Independence . . . [in] East Africa and the new immigration laws in the UK transformed local realities considerably. (Frenz 2008, 197)

If postcoloniality and immigration restrictions restructured the transcontinental and the related transcultural ties of Goan postnational migrants, it then also changed how Goans saw their place in the web of transglobal affiliations that had formerly ensconced them.

From the 1980s, Frenz argues, Goans in the diaspora began to turn away from these pluricontinental-spanning sources of identification, “their main arena of identity formation” emerging from individual interactions, more so than the community or the family (2008, 202). Leaving Zanzibar in the 1980s, Marcella’s choice to do so aligns with this trend. She wishes to disconnect from her family whom she considers overbearing, longs to leave the small island because of its lack of opportunity, and yearns to prove her own individuality. But at the same time as her sense of individual purpose may give itself to the promise of progress that seems to await in neoliberal England, Marcella’s transit is never just the product of personal gumption, for history and policy-making are the unseen forces that limn her movement.

THE NEOLIBERAL MIGRANT

While King’s novel suggests that its Goan-Arab protagonist makes her way across continents as a figure unaffected by history, I have been demonstrating otherwise. By connecting the legacy of Goan movements across continents to histories of coloniality and postcolonial nation-making, I have underscored how Goan identity contributed to such projects or was shaped by them. Although the era of neoliberalism, in which I locate *A Girl from Zanzibar*, may have originated decades into the postcolonial period, it was not entirely detached from the aftereffects of colonialism. For instance—and of particular import to the novel—immigration patterns in the neoliberal epoch were influenced heavily by the colonial past, allowing for a globalization that relied on, even as it remade, past transcontinental associations. In effect, yesterday’s colonial subject became the contemporary migrant of postcolonial globalization. This transition is what Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez conceptualizes as “the coloniality of migration” (2018, 18). It not only governs asylum-seeking, Rodríguez propounds, but also forges “the continuity between European colonialism and . . . migration” for the purposes of racially encoding and managing labor in the Western world (2018, 21).

While thinking about the past and its connection to the neoliberal present, in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Arjun Appadurai investigates “the role of the nation-state in the disjunctive global economy

of culture today” (1996, 39). Because of the transnational links they make possible, Appadurai also highlights the connection of diasporas to other elements of globalization, including “labour, finance, and technology” which are no longer anchored to specific places (1996, 41). Diasporic Goan subjectivity, as it is characterized in *A Girl from Zanzibar*, fits into this terrain for the Goan is portrayed as a postnational migrant who travels where opportunity exists, as Marcella’s movements attest. It is this lack of anchoring of various economy-dependent elements, such as a labor force, capital, and technical knowledge, that Anthony Hopkins incorporates into his definition of globalization as a “term for encompassing the multiplicity of supra-national forces that have imprinted themselves on the contemporary world” (2002, 1).

In globalization’s use of the supranational, distinctions between the international and the local are made unstable, and everywhere and nowhere are made contiguous through the transnational and transcontinental travels of diasporic figures. As exemplified by King’s novel, in the contemporary period of globalization, scale and distance are collapsed into a singular spatiotemporal cartography, as if it were one supranational body. Inscribed by globalization and coequally making it possible, diasporic characters such as Marcella metaphorically represent the supranationality of globalization even as their bodies are themselves made supranational. Literally, it is Marcella’s body—representative in its mixed-racality as the embodiment of past forms of globalization, as well as being a figure onto which the contemporaneous world has been mapped—that tries to locate itself, always knowing this to be an exercise in futility (Ferrão 2018). What this marks is a change in the agential possibility of postnational subjects. Goan postnationalism in the periods of colonialism and decolonialism was an expression of personal and community agency that allowed these diasporic and transnational figures to negotiate economic and political changes across continents and empires. This ceased to be the case in the era of neoliberalism, which repurposed postnationals like Marcella as instruments of labor and capital within the terrain of globalization, thereby limiting their autonomy.

This reduction in personal sovereignty derives from what Appadurai interprets as “the fertile ground of deterritorialization, in which money, commodities, and persons are involved in ceaselessly chasing each other around the world” (1996, 38). The neoliberal postnational, then, is never assured belonging, fixity of location giving way to the deterritoriality of globalization, capital, and labor, as is Marcella’s experience. The equivalence between the supranational Goan character’s body, and her pursuit of place, while gestur-

ing at extraterritoriality, also furnishes the scope to see the overlap of post-colonialism and globalization in the contest and contiguity between deterritorialization and reterritorialization. It is the unmooring of person and place that Appadurai points to as the coeval effects and conditions of a globalized political and cultural economy.

In *Guests and Aliens*, Saskia Sassen theorizes the source of labor migrations to Europe in “the last two centuries” and says that they are “highly modulated” and “[connect] specific places of origin with specific destinations over long periods of time . . . [signaling] the extent to which migrations were embedded in and shaped by specific systems” (1999, 134). Naming the processes that contribute to labor migration, Sassen includes “the colonial systems of several European countries,” which reinforces how a history of colonization complements globalization in postcolonial times (1999, 135).

Marcella's strong desire to escape Zanzibar in the novel may be seen as somehow separate from the conditions of postcolonialism and globalization. Her opportunistic personal involvement with Sutton, the English researcher whom she accompanies to the United Kingdom in 1983, presupposes an independent decision (King 2002, 4). Using the example of “post-1945 Western Europe,” Miles and Satzewich analyze “migration in terms of individual decision making” due to sociological “‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors” based on opportunity versus the

significance and dynamics of migration in the material and structural processes of capital accumulation and uneven development . . . Pressure to emigrate is regarded as an expression of inequality among nation states and between the centre and periphery of the world capitalist system. (2010, 540)

What this recommends is an understanding of migration within larger structural systems and the flows of global capital, which cannot be separated from the socio-economic factors underscoring personal choice.

From her role as a businesswoman in Tanzania, Marcella has an acute awareness of the economic and political conditions that are rife in the country (King 2002, 5). Her middle-class background and aspirations are built on economic opportunism, as is nakedly displayed in her declaration: “I was a taxi owner . . . Now I wanted a passport so I could go further” (King 2002, 5). The need for a passport makes it clear, in Marcella's assessment, that opportunity is not to be had in East Africa. Marcella's desire for financial betterment fits in with the push and pull of economic opportunism, which informs indi-

vidual deterritorialization from the country of residence, and reterritorialization elsewhere in a globalized capitalist framework.

The prime migrants in such movements are the detectably middle class—this is the model minority of South Asian origin that Vijay Prashad typifies as generally being a migrant “from the professionalized middle class” and “not [hailing] from families with vast wealth, so that most rely upon their skills and social capital to facilitate their station within the slowly emerging class of the technocrat” (2000b, 101). These migrants have the capability to be the purveyors of “labour, finance, and technology” to recall Appadurai’s inventory of the necessary features of a globalized economic system that feeds on disjunctures between person and place.

In *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages*, Sassen takes Appadurai’s theorization of disjunctures as being “internal to the global (and the national)” (2006, 280). This intimates a system that is a complex multipolarity of global players—including those at the peripheries and centers—that have varying degrees of economic and political power. It is a system that relies as much on economics and politics as it does on adapting to change. Part of this adaptability is in the relationships that can be forged between the multiple centers and peripheries, as is illustrated in the networks between a small island like Zanzibar and other global political players in King’s novel.

The political and economic fracturing in the East African island serves as the backdrop against which Marcella’s migration occurs; these factors are alluded to often in the novel to make it apparent that Zanzibar has had the attention of international actors during the era of the Cold War.⁵ For instance, Marcella mentions how in “nineteen eighty-three . . . [t]he government was broke and helpless. The east European communist advisors had abandoned the island . . .” (King 2002, 4). Relatedly, when Marcella declares of Zanzibar’s lacking commerce, “Geoffrey, there’s nothing to buy,” he opines that “[t]hat’s not Zanzibar’s fault. That’s the West punishing you for being socialist” (King 2002, 42).

Paul J. Kaiser indicates that in 1967, President Julius Nyerere “outlined . . . the Arusha Declaration” which was “a form of ‘African Socialism’ . . . proffered to bridge the gap between the needs of Tanzania’s predominantly rural peasantry and modern socialist statecraft” while at the same time eschewing foreign aid (1996, 229). Despite “self-imposed austerity measures . . . designed to stave off IMF/World Bank policy prescriptions,” Kaiser explains that Nyerere’s “successor, Ali Hassan Mwinyi, embraced political and liberal economic

policies in the hope of invigorating an economy that was billions of dollars in arrears . . ." (1996, 231).

In the wake of the economic downturn, other players step in including, as Sutton remarks, the International Monetary Fund which "puts pressure on the government in Dar, and Dar pressures Zanzibar. Very divisive. It creates the conditions for a liberation struggle and Western-sponsored repression" (King 2002, 106). Kaiser confirms that in 1986, "[a]fter almost six years of conflict between Nyerere and IMF/World Bank officials . . . Tanzania adopted an Economic Recovery Programme" under Mwinyi, which caused upheavals (1996, 232). Sutton's commentary restates how globalization functions through political and economic disjuncture and augments this claim by showing how globalization's notable participants, such as the International Monetary Fund, are themselves responsible for creating those instabilities.

Even as *A Girl from Zanzibar* demonstrates how the island is of interest to several global players, it also displays the center-periphery relationships—the everywheres and nowheres—which are key to the study and practice of globalization. Marcella's apprehension of and involvement with the people embedded in these global networks proves more evidently that her subjectivity is not extraneous to these processes; her own direct participation in these networks, as will be noted, reaffirms this assertion. The Goan character's postnational homelessness, as a product of Goan diasporic history, is symbolic of the disjunctures of globalization where everywhere and nowhere do not so much presage the impossibility of place, but the knowledge that displacement—borne of opportunity and political instability—can be parlayed to one's advantage. But only up to a point.

THE MUSIC OF NEOLIBERALISM

Place and a lack of attachment to it being central concerns of my consideration of *A Girl from Zanzibar*, I now turn to the novel's construction of belonging in imagining Marcella's relationship to multiple geographies. To do so, I refer to a specific song from the era of Marcella's residence in England. Explaining how music is comprised of "relations between people, sounds, images, artifacts and the material environment," Sara Cohen indicates how the sonic "is involved in the social, cultural and economic production of place" (1995, 438). This is because music operates in "simulating a sense of identity, in preserving and transmitting cultural memory and in the sensuous

production of place" (Cohen 1995, 444). Therein, not only does music create a sense of place, but also of a historical moment. In King's novel, that spatio-temporality is the early-1980s.

When Marcella arrives in England from Zanzibar she already has a vision of life to be. She dreams of "a young woman—myself—standing in . . . [the] upstairs room of a fashionable London house. There was a party . . . My dress . . . was expensive. I was smiling, chatting. Possibly I was the hostess . . . Oddly, . . . I was also the pensive, shadowy girl standing in the street below, looking up at the woman in the window" (King 2002, 4). Replete with the sensoriality of the city, this written description of a migrant's encounter with the developed world privileges the visual. Concurrently, it is a premonition of immigrant aspiration, a mirage of "making it" in the metropolis. Yet, this account of Marcella's dream conceals the unheard urban soundscape of modernity and its infrastructures: traffic, the electric buzz of streetlights, or even the music from the party.

Consider how Alison Moyet's opening lyrics in "Only You" aurally and intermedially echo Marcella's fantasy: "Looking from a window above / It's like a story of love / Can you hear me? / Came back only yesterday / I'm moving further away / Want you near me . . ." (Yazoo 1982). As I "hear" the song by the British band in the novel, it plays like the synthpop soundtrack to the fraught nature of infrastructural changes brought on by the Thatcherite government, the neoliberal regime in power at the time of Marcella's arrival in England. When heard alongside *A Girl from Zanzibar*, "Only You" lyrically and historically signals infrastructural change in the 1980s, while also striking a discordant note of resistance.

Relying on the sonic to amplify the effects of neoliberalism that are the *mise-en-scène* of King's novel also helps apprehend how broadcasting utilities in Britain were shorn of agency during Margaret Thatcher's tenure. Under her stewardship, the Conservative Party (de)regulated public television and radio services, influencing the cultural zeitgeist while also limiting free speech through the control of audiovisual media. The Prime Minister's "enduring impact on broadcasting . . . is strikingly apparent in . . . [how it affected the British Broadcasting Corporation's] institutional reputation, the type of coverage possible, and a gradual restructuring of the industry . . ." (Edgerton 1996, 124).

It also "[resulted] in a systematic reduction in the right of free expression" (Edgerton 1996, 124). Controls on what was permissible in public broadcasts were not only meant to limit what could be said but also to curtail the kind



Figure 6: *(Not) Only You* (2021), Maria Vanessa de Sa. (Image courtesy of the artist.)

of information that could be made available for public consumption. Accordingly, Thatcher's circumscription of acceptable public broadcasting influenced the cultural zeitgeist and the communal sensorium shared by a populace attuned to the same audiovisual programs, nationwide. The endgame, however, was the privatization of radio and television (Edgerton 1996, 126).

Thatcher's government lent its institutional support to the neoliberal imperative of making society and its needs beholden to the free market. In so doing, their aim was to step away from biopolitics, or governance focused on the management of life. Examining the relationship between biopolitics and neoliberalism, Michel Foucault identifies the evolution of a form of governmentality that "rationalize[s] the problems posed to government practice by phenomena characteristic of a set of living beings forming a population" (2008, 317) only so that the state can free itself of and transfer these responsibilities to the private sector.

For the Thatcher administration, shirking off its biopolitical role in creating and maintaining affordable housing was a hallmark of its neoliberal governmental strategy, not unlike its divestiture of public broadcasting. The dismantling of public housing schemes was also the Conservatives' economic plan, maintains Billy Bragg, for "by refusing to allow councils to build more stock, [the government] ultimately forced up [housing] prices as

demand rose" (2009). Seizing opportunity in the wake of the privatization of government properties, Marcella's involvement in real estate development is precisely how she achieves her immigrant dreams. But they do not last. Nor is the song silently playing in the pages of King's novel an amenable accompaniment.

Although an undocumented migrant from the impoverished periphery of the former colonial empire, Marcella's middle-class background, education, business experience, and knowledge of English give her an advantage; she becomes a model minority, as previously outlined, in the once-metropolitan imperial center. After an initially rocky start, seed investment from an acquaintance allows Marcella to become a businesswoman. She gets rich "because the Conservatives were selling off poor people's council homes" (King 2002, 245), which Marcella buys and turns into upmarket properties. Even her outsider status affords Marcella an advantage. She muses: "Asians trusted me because I am Asian, Middle-Easterners because I was Middle-Eastern, Africans because I was African. With the yuppies, I was a yuppie. Zanzibar's accumulated history had prepared me perfectly for being a . . . property consultant" (King 2002, 209). Suturing a colonial heritage to post-colonial neoliberalism, Marcella's model minority status is inflected by her interraciality which, when parlayed into a perversely purposeful Afro-Asiatic multiculturalism, is pressed into the service of the economy. Again, this validates how neoliberal globalization feeds off the colonial past and benefits from the colonality of migration (Rodríguez 2018, 18).

And yet, there is a hollowness to these efforts. Evidencing the picaresque nature of the novel, later in life when she is a resident in the United States, Marcella recalls the dream that simultaneously placed her in a luxurious flat and on the desolate street below, causing her to attest: "This was all I had for Europe, a luminous promise of vague happiness" (King 2002, 4). This reflection is self-referentially mirrored in the moment when the figures in both Yazoo's song and King's tale look out ponderously onto the world below from windows.⁶ Where Marcella admits that she sees herself in (and as) "the pensive, shadowy girl standing in the street below" (King 2002, 4), the "Only You" of the song's title suggests one person viewing another "moving further away" (Yazoo 1982). Nevertheless, as both protagonists report their sightings from the reflective surface of windows, what if they are actually gazing upon themselves in the (looking) glass? This self-perception, akin to the mirror-phase of child development, as Jacques Lacan holds, gives rise to the "*I . . . before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other*" (1968, 72).

In turn, Abdul R. JanMohamed classifies what he sees in “the colonialist cognitive framework and colonialist literary representation [as a] manichean allegory—a field of diverse yet interchangeable oppositions between . . . self and Other, subject and object” (1985, 63). What colonialism rents asunder, the postcolonial subject in *A Girl from Zanzibar* attempts to resolve by internalizing the other who is the distanced image of their self. “Only You” and the dreamscape in the novel overlap in their portrayal of a Manichean duality, where a subject sees herself and her own other as at once successful but also potentially indigent. The unnamed “you” in the song, imaginably a self-reflection of the narrator, is like the rich Marcella being watched by her houseless double at street-level whom she yearns to have near as if to protect this separated twin from harm.

For Marcella, her immigrant dream and source of profit—the housing market—is also the font of hypothetical loss (which becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy). Using the connections of her friend Kamara, a Sierra Leonean refugee who has a government job managing council homes that Thatcher has put on the market, Marcella quickly becomes successful (King 2002, 179). But just as her association with her fellow-African immigrant allows her to achieve prosperity, we will come to see that it is this very Afro-Asian pairing, in its racialization, that leads to Marcella’s undoing. Of course, it is not this friendship alone (and the racialization of it) that will contribute to the adversity Marcella will face.

Apart from being a subject from a former colony and an undocumented migrant, Marcella’s gender further contributes to the precarious position she unknowingly finds herself imbricated within. Rodríguez asserts that “[g]ender plays a significant role in the interplay of racialization and global capitalism, fundamentally shaping the coloniality of power within asylum and migration policies” (2018, 20). Deriving from “[t]he coloniality of gender . . . [,] the universalization of a European cisgender dichotomy,” as Rodríguez labels it (2018, 20), disadvantages women of color doubly at the intersection of gender and race as they navigate life as immigrants.

Her vision of living in England being a dichotomous dream of amplitude and a nightmare of privation, perhaps Marcella is always self-aware of the perilous nature of her existence at the intersection of race, gender, and the coloniality of migrancy. Leaving behind a former colony to live in the West as an undocumented woman of color, Marcella has enriched herself from the destitution of others in a country that has pulled back from its responsibilities of care for its residents. If the state can do this to its own, what qualms would

it have to dispossess and put out someone who had gained entry into the country illicitly? It is this infrastructural capriciousness that Marcella negotiates, even as she lives a privileged life, a duality of plenty and precarity sonically paralleled in “Only You.”

In addition to the dismantling of public broadcasting and housing enterprises, interference in labor and energy industries was another item on the neoliberal agenda in Thatcher's England. The Orwellian year 1984 saw the closure of coalpits in Yorkshire which resulted in union-led strikes by miners; however, in anticipation of such actions, Thatcher had stockpiled coal so as to undermine the protesting laborers (Jeavans 2004). The Conservatives' desire was to circumvent “a nationalised coal industry requiring massive subsidies [for it] was anathema to the Thatcher government's long term economic goals” (Jeavans 2004). The knock-on effect of sabotaging the coal industry was that it placed working class people in further biopolitical insecurity. As Bragg uncovers, “[w]ithout powerful unions to protect them, the wages of ordinary workers were held in check while the cost of housing began to spiral upwards” (2009). This made workers susceptible to another one of Thatcher's schemes: “a newly deregulated banking sector [that] began offering ever more ‘attractive’ loans” (Bragg 2009) that would cause even more financial problems down the road.

King fictionalizes the aforementioned events. Cocooned in wealthy Bayswater, Marcella admits to not knowing the “news from England” (2002, 228), as if falling into Thatcher's trap of an enfeebled national broadcasting service that would limit publicly available information (Edgerton 1996, 126–127). Disconnected from national goings on, Marcella is unaware that “[s]triking coal miners were . . . fighting with police in various remote places. The police were battling people in the cities too, mostly black people . . .” (King 2002, 229). With no need to be concerned about her livelihood in the way of the miners, it is also true that Marcella would have been the beneficiary of schemes put into place by the same administration that dispossessed those miners.

As a successful model minority, she is the antithesis of the “black people” who have taken to the streets to show their discontent. But in a twist, Marcella's undocumented status is revealed when she gets drawn into a racialized skirmish involving the previously mentioned Kamara, her Black friend, and “policemen [who] had just finished a spell in Yorkshire, battling striking miners. Earlier that same night they had been fighting a mainly black riot . . . against the police actions in London's Tottenham and apparently still had it in their heads when they surfaced . . . in cheerful multi-racial Bayswater” where

they levy a trumped-up charge against Kamara, which then also embroils Marcella and results in her incarceration (King 2002, 275).

In the face of nationwide unrest in 1984, mobile or “[f]lying pickets became a regular feature at [pit protests],” a tactic used to convince miners “to stay away from work” while others protested in their stead (Jeavans 2004). The Christmas prior, an a cappella version of “Only You” topped the UK charts and was said to be Thatcher’s favorite holiday record of 1983 (Webb 2012, 156). However, it was not Yazoo performing the song this time, but a band called The Flying Pickets, whose name was apropos to the political climate but came from the members’ involvement in a socialist theater production that portrayed the saga of the British miners’ strikes of the 1970s (The Flying Pickets 2021). The re-release of “Only You” on an album the next year (The Flying Pickets 1984) coincided with the 1984 strikes and, through the story behind The Flying Pickets’ name, telescoped the history of the 1970s’ miner protests into the political milieu of the 1980s, though the outcome was very different. The Conservatives quelled the movement.

Nevertheless, what remains is the ironic possibility that Thatcher may have heard her favorite holiday track on the very broadcasting service she was disassembling. One wonders what Thatcher made of the genesis of the band that sang the song she liked. While that question may remain unanswered, the query that persists is the one in the song’s lyrics: “Can you hear me?” (Yazoo 1982). A call to hear the song’s association with protest history, its reverberation in *A Girl from Zanzibar* also intones the limits of a neoliberal society that can make one the “Only You” in an echo chamber of immigrant aspirations muted to the instructive discordance “in the street below.” For Marcella, it is the unheard warning against the belief that neoliberalism could see her, only, as a successful capitalist citizen and not as a gendered and racialized undocumented migrant whose service to its cause could only ever be finite.

(NOT) FAR FROM HOME

In 1983, the same year that Marcella slipped into the United Kingdom as an undocumented East African migrant, Margaret Thatcher was visiting the fictional character’s ancestral homeland, Goa. The British Prime Minister made her way there following a November gathering that year in Delhi, the Indian capital. The event was the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting;

more popularly referred to simply as CHOGM, the acronym even lent itself to the street that was constructed (like much other new infrastructure) specifically for the visit by Thatcher and other dignitaries (Sayed 2020). While the Delhi segment was business, the trip to Goa was meant to be a leisurely retreat for the visiting heads of state. Thatcher's holiday would change Goa irrevocably.

As part of her Goan itinerary, Thatcher visited the little-known British Cemetery in Dona Paula, "the sole monument that stands testimony to the presence of British forces in Goa during the Napoleonic era," having been "[b]uilt for British garrisons that were stationed at Fort Aguada, Cabo and Mormugao between 1799 and 1813" (Monteiro 2016). The protection of their Asian territories against the rise of French power in the Indian Ocean arena was common cause for the British and the Portuguese. This alliance permitted the English to be temporarily situated in Portuguese India and also demonstrated the collusiveness between the imperial powers. However, it was not until Thatcher's visit to the obscure cemetery, that the historical events related to it were brought back into public memory, resulting in Goa becoming legible to British audiences as a tourism destination (TNN 2013 and ItsGoa 2016).

Just as Marcella's 1983 journey from Zanzibar to England emerged from the colonial connections between Africa and Europe, Thatcher's visit to Goa in the same year resuscitated historical links between British and Portuguese colonial pasts. Yet, Thatcher's itinerary between the capitals of once-British India and once-Portuguese India—her time in Delhi being for work, while that in Goa for a holiday—continued to perform the work of colonialism by marking Goa as a pleasure periphery (Rao 1996 and Routledge 2000). Seconded to India just as Zanzibar, itself a pleasure periphery, is seconded to Tanzania, post-Portuguese Goa—as Raghuraman Trichur determines in *Refiguring Goa: From Trading Post to Tourism Destination*—only came into the Indian political economic fold due to its viability as a tourism destination (2013, 106).

Trichur describes the Fort Aguada Beach Resort as Goa's "first capital-intensive beach resort . . . , a business venture of the Tata Group, an Indian-based global conglomerate" (2013, 106). Built in the 1970s within the ruins of a Portuguese-era fort (which served as one of the locations where the aforementioned British soldiers were stationed during the French incursions in the Indian Ocean), the resort was chosen as the site of the CHOGM retreat.

The high-profile vacation taken by Thatcher and her fellow heads of state required an expansion of the resort's facilities, "herald[ing] the overtaking

of Goan beaches by . . . [m]ultinational hotel chains . . . By the 1990s, Goan tourism found itself firmly within the grasp of the nation's neoliberal political economy" as the Indian economy itself decisively opened up to globalization in 1991 (Ferrão 2021, 14). Symbolically, Thatcher would become the herald of neoliberalism at multiple global sites. The British Prime Minister paved the way for neoliberalism to take hold in the West and made it possible to ensnare the potential of a postnational subject like Marcella in *A Girl from Zanzibar* (only to discard her once she was no longer required). It was also Thatcher's visit to Marcella's homeland, Goa, that would entrench the region in India's political economic designs as part of that country's own foray into neoliberal globalization.

Thatcher's policies and her diplomatic travels indicate how Marcella's identity as a postnational subject in *A Girl from Zanzibar* is not self-determined. Rather than being the product of personal choice, the character's identity arises from the molding of Goan subjectivity through transcontinental colonial history and, subsequently, the rise of postcolonial neoliberalism. European colonialism forged the flexible multiplicity of Goan identity, to riff off Aihwa Ong's influential term (1999). In reflecting on the movements of transnational subjects, Ong believes that "the shifting opportunity of global trade" alone cannot be held responsible, as these human displacements are also the result "of novel articulations between the regimes of the family, the state, and capital" (1999, 3). Therefore, personal choice alone cannot be said to determine what makes the movements of transnationals possible and, more importantly, advantageous to neoliberalism, governmental and economic policies, international ones included, also holding sway.

In the case of Goans, their once-ability to identify with and claim residence in multiple continents gave way to a dissonance between such multiplicity and the ironic limiting of their global citizenship by the regimes of globalization. But how can it be that the apparently ideal global subject is rendered incommensurate by globalization while, at the same time, functioning—as I have been arguing Marcella does—as the perfect conduit for the practices of neoliberalism in the time of globalization? Here, I posit the notion of the postnational to examine how Goanness abutted the rise of nationalism in the postcolonial period even as such postnational subjects found themselves woven into practices of globalization.

Goans once exercised movements globally based on personal preference or the desire to be part of a Goan diasporic community in a given location (or even multiple or transnational communities), their postnationality being

driven more by choice than the dictates of national affiliation. The end of colonialism saw the creation of the postcolonial nation-state, a political economic formation that required the fixity of its national subjects, a construction antithetical to the potentially roving Goan subject. And while this may have delimited the movements of globalized Goan subjects, it did not entirely remove their ability to be postnationals. What changed was how Goans could effect their globalized ability as postnationals to move about the world at will, personal choice giving way to how useful such movements could be to the neoliberal regime.

As utilitarian as such extensible identity was for the colonial project (and indeed Goans, too, as colonial subjects with transcontinental attachments), past colonial affiliations transformed into the creation of the diasporic migrant in the postcolonial, neoliberal period. Globalization accompanied the national formations of the Commonwealth era as imperialism faded. And yet, globalization was remaking an older form of itself, namely colonialism.

In an England repositioning itself postcolonially in a new world order, globalization may have been a burgeoning phenomenon of modernity, but it still took a cue from earlier forms of global networking, especially colonialism. What *A Girl from Zanzibar* evidences is how this newer globalization bridges the centers and peripheries, the everywhere and nowhere, through the flexibility of transnational subjects like Marcella. As Marcella's actions in King's novel indicate, her ability to deploy her familial colonial history and her multicultural background as a business asset capitalizes on Thatcherite neoliberal management of the economy. In consequence, for Marcella, London is more than just England, the capital functioning equally as a leading hub in the international market. If in Zanzibar Marcella felt misplaced, "[i]n London, instead of resisting attachment, . . . over the years place entered [her]. The Tube map was insinuated there along with nerves and circulation . . . There was no clear line where London ended and [she] began" (King 2002, 205–206). Yet, even as Marcella may have felt an affinity to the metropolitan center—a feeling of having found a forever home—this fantasy would come crashing down around her, revealing the promise of (neo)liberality to be anything but.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion—The Other Black Ocean

Indo-Portuguese Slavery and Africanness Elsewhere in Margaret Mascarenhas's *Skin*

Across Continents: Writing Goans, Making Worlds concludes with Margaret Mascarenhas's *Skin* (2001) to read back against the trajectories of diasporic movement in fiction that this book has been charting so far. Heretofore, the novels in the previous chapters have been about displacement across continents as they have centered on trajectories followed by characters whose lives unfold *away* from Goa. Of the novels studied here, *Skin* is unique in its employment of Goa as a diasporic destination, and especially because the displaced subjects the novel is about are Black or of mixed-race heritage.¹ By concluding with this novel, *Across Continents*, which is about Goan subjectivity as it is interpellated by multicontinental dislocation, seeks to recast Goan-ness itself. Through the analysis of *Skin* offered here, I posit Goan literary subjectivity as not just ethno-bio-geographical in origin, but as a multiplicity, of histories, of oceanic and transcontinental movements, and of otherness.

In *Skin*, Mascarenhas relies on the history of African slavery in Portuguese Goa, now a part of India since its 1961 annexation, to weave a complex tale of two families whose intermeshed lives traverse multiple continents over several centuries, beginning with events at the dawn of colonization. The de Miranda Floreses are an upper-caste Goan family whose wealth grows out of the Portuguese African slave trade among other enterprises; their counterparts are enslaved people descended from the Angolan prophetess Kimpa Vita, a historical figure whom the novel fictionalizes. By bridging the Portuguese colonies of Goa in Asia and Angola in Africa, *Skin* gives prominence to African slavery in the Indian Oceanic world, thus challenging and expanding entrenched notions of the geography and impact of the trade in

Black bodies, particularly beyond the Atlantic realm. Despite its global locations and portrayal of world histories, the novel was initially only published in India and, to date, never in the United States where the author was born and where significant parts of the story are set. Mascarenhas is of Goan and Euro-American origins but spent some of her childhood years in Venezuela.² *Skin*, the author's first novel, later appeared in French (2002) and Portuguese (2006) translations, with a fourth edition, in English, published by a Goan press (2010).³

UPON THE OCEAN

Though it would be possible to place *Skin* within the larger corpus of Goan, if not South Asian, diasporic literature, the very incongruence of Goan characters within national imaginaries depicted in fiction becomes evident for two reasons. The first is because of Goa's Portuguese colonization, a historical anomaly in comparison to the mostly British colonization of what is now India, a nation-state that upon its own decolonization annexed Goa, and the second is the vast spread of Goans in places outside of India, which includes East Africa from where a significant body of literature about and by Goans is extant.⁴ By invoking multiple cultural traditions and racial identities that converge in, but do not settle on, the idea of "the Goan," *Skin* amply demonstrates how such subjectivity disturbs hermetic constructions of national(ist) identity, because Goan history exists within and outside that of the Indian nation-state. As Mascarenhas's novel chronicles, Goa's history connects it to the worlds of the Indian Ocean, the Portuguese empire in Africa, as also to African slavery and the Black Atlantic.

My thoughts here follow trends in Indian Ocean scholarship that aim to identify networks that pre-date and extend beyond the contemporary notion of the nation-state, while at the same time examining the complexities of identity formations born of such histories. For example, in "Universalizing the Indian Ocean," Isabel Hofmeyr inquires into how the normativity of the Atlantic in scholarship about slavery and diaspora has overshadowed phenomena in Indian Ocean contexts where racial lines blur, thus "[complicating] binaries, [and] moving us away from the simplicities of the resistant local and the dominating global and toward a historically deep archive of competing universalisms" (2010, 722). Along these lines, in *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire*, Sugata Bose queries how colonial



Figure 7: *Going Home* (2011), Karishma D'Souza. D'Souza's painting derives from suppressed and unknown family histories of Blackness in Goa and is inspired by Mascarenhas's novel, *Skin*. (Image courtesy of the artist.)

boundaries have limited the study of “links across regions,” in turn undermining the “interregional arena” of the Indian Ocean which arose, in part, due to the presence of the Portuguese and the Dutch (2006, 7).

In “The Black Atlantic Meets the Indian Ocean,” Hofmeyr suggests a move away from north-south transnationalism, instead highlighting the possibilities of “transnationalism within the south . . .” (2007, 3) wherein

Goans serve as an example of such inclinations because of their movements between South Asia and Africa, and also because of Goa's divergent history from the rest of India (2007, 16). Concentrating on trade and economic histories, S. Arasaratnam's "Recent Trends in the Historiography of the Indian Ocean, 1500 to 1800" makes the case that early modern commerce in the Indian Ocean system needs to be studied more in relation "to the evolving capitalist system centered in the North Atlantic," primarily because intra-Asian trade far exceeded exchanges between Asia and Europe (1990, 243–244). What makes this important is Arasaratnam's observation that despite the initially destructive effects of Portuguese domination on Asian trade, a rebound transpired because of the role played by Asians themselves as they partnered with Europeans (1990, 241–242). Collaborations of this nature are typified in *Skin*, where Goan actors work with the Portuguese to profit off the trade in enslaved African people.

UNDER THE SKIN

By marking the bodies of women as an archive of historical violence on a global scale, *Skin* explores racialized and gendered dominance as the contiguities of imperial and native patriarchies. However, even in their suppression, the very presence of counter-narratives that lie below the surface, or beneath the skin as the novel's title implies, threaten patriarchal hegemonies and their power that constitute the state. In her diary, Saudade recalls that when she left to do missionary work in Africa, Esperança—Kimpa Vita's descendant and a maid in the de Miranda Flores household—had said in parting, "Our mothers live under our skin" (Mascarenhas 2001, 236). Her mother's farewell words are to remind Saudade of the women in her family who have endured violence because of the color of their skin in the homelands they were absented from or made invisible in, including Angola and Goa. These words are also meant to assure Saudade that she will always be a part of her daughter Pagan, who was forcibly taken from her by Gabriela de Miranda Flores in a contemporary moment in the novel that re-enacts slavery's past and its renting apart of families.

The characters' remembrances of marginalization and loss function not only to reveal genealogies of slavery and Africanness in the oceanic world on the other side of the Atlantic, but also to bring gendered nuance to such recognition by centering the stories of relationships between mothers and their

daughters. Allowing for the complexities of loss, renewal, and resistance, *Skin* centers the matrilineal as an archive—a “place” of knowledge unrestricted by time or space as each successive generation of women continues to bear witness to the past and survives in spite of the suppressive forces of the patriarchal state.

Even as Africa, site of their origin, recedes into the background of the familial history of those descended from the enslaved, African legacies continue to manifest and transform culturally in the new locations in which the women find themselves. In *Skin*, Africanness is seen to develop culturally in an Asiatic setting, informed by a colonial lusosphere. In happening outside of the slavery-based Anglo-American circuit that Paul Gilroy focuses on in *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993), Africanness in *Skin* parallels and intersects with Atlantic slavery. Yet, as part of the same historical moment as that of Atlantic slavery, the novel also broadens the diasporic remit of Black identities outside Africa.

Though removed from their African homeland, Kimpa Vita's descendants retain and develop Angolan culture in contexts that are alien to them. Simultaneously, with each subsequent generation, this Africanness also becomes Goan, a hybridity representative of a colonial culture that develops over time. Even as multiple traditions intertwine, the fact of Blackness is neither erased culturally nor physically. If, for Gilroy, Blackness is Anglo-Americanness, and happens to the exclusion of Africa, then *Skin* recalls not just a far more convoluted and interlinked terrain of Africanness, but also Africa's “belonging” in the Indian Ocean world.

While outside the scope of this present chapter, it can be successfully argued that Africa itself symbolizes a powerful, perhaps even sentimental, image of political possibility in the novel. As previously mentioned, Saudade “returns” to Angola as a missionary, the irony of which is undercut by the political nature of her later involvement, through the same mission, with the aboriginal tribal people of India's Andaman islands. Casting the identity of the Andamanese as being of prehistoric African origin, the novel highlights how minorities are marginalized culturally and politically by the Indian nation-state. This parallels Goa's own association with India, not least because the region has a different history from most of the rest of the once British-colonized country. As part of the Portuguese empire, even Goa's inclusion within the Indian union came about, in part, due to Luso-Africa. At the time that India became independent in 1947, Goa was still under the Portuguese, as were nations in Africa, such as Angola and Mozambique.

Divesting Goa from Portuguese rule would give impetus to the freedom struggles in Portuguese Africa, it was believed, causing African leaders to pressure India to decolonize Goa. However, in “liberating” Goa on December 19, 1961, India gave short shrift to the indigenous and diasporic efforts of Goans toward their own political emancipation. That some of these Goan efforts for decolonization took root in Africa itself, where prominent Goans were additionally involved in local independence movements, speaks to Africa’s place in the Goan historical imaginary, and as *Skin* captures it, as a desire for and recall of other political possibilities curtailed by the region’s absorption into the Indian postcolonial state, and away from its other networks within the Indian Ocean and the transcontinental lusosphere. Africa and Africanness, then, as represented by Kimpa Vita’s Goan descendants is a reach for “other” cultural and political histories that have been limited by Indian nationalism in its various gendered and ethnocentric forms.⁵

As if in recollection of these convergences with other worlds, the skin of each generation of the inter-connected families in Mascarenhas’s novel functions as an archive, recounting a history of violence, but also survival. Within this archive of the body, blood, time, and space, held together by skin but also transformed within it, lies what Ann Stoler refers to in *Race and the Education of Desire* as the “[disassembling of] neat divisions that . . . imagine a European history and its unified collectivities apart from the externalized Others on whom it was founded and which it produced” (1995, 5). Stoler thereby renders imperialism complicit in processes of subjugation, but also points to the inability of European history to extricate itself from an entanglement with the other who has not disappeared. Similarly, Gilroy speaks of “the reflexive cultures and consciousness of the European settlers and those of the Africans they enslaved, the ‘Indians’ they slaughtered, and the Asians they indentured [who] were not, even in situations of the most extreme brutality, sealed hermetically from each other . . .” (1993, 2).

Gilroy’s observation is of embroiled cultures and consciousnesses, but also of the violence that characterizes these experiences as the basis of empire. Brutality notwithstanding, the inability to seal hermetically the racialized categories of colonizer and colonized from one another, and the persistent presence of the other despite enslavement, slaughter, and indenture, gives rise to the inescapability of an ongoing reflexivity. Nevertheless, Gilroy appears to delimit this reflexivity as being solely within the purview of colonizer and colonized, and not between the colonized groups he mentions. In *Skin*, the presence of these reflexivities is undeniable, and is the focus of this chapter.

Exploring the novel's treatment of slavery and Africanness in the realm of the Indian Ocean critically expands upon the conceptual parameters of diasporic identities created by Gilroy's Black Atlantic model. By evoking genealogies of race and the afterlives of slavery in the Indian Ocean, as well as its intersecting paradigms with the Black Atlantic, *Skin* traces the ongoing evolution of Africanness in a wider, yet connected, global spectrum.

WHAT THE BODY KNOWS

In employing the matrilineal as both the record of patriarchal authoritarian violence and the survival of that record through the bodies of generations of interracial women, *Skin* suggests the coexistence of multiple racialized consciousnesses. In the novel, the past re-emerges as dreams and stories that become known to Pagan—heir to the once slave-owning family's legacy—when she is forced to journey from California, where she lives, to see her dying grandmother, the formidable Gabriela de Miranda Flores, in Goa. In time, the young woman learns of her family's part in the slave trade, instances of interraciality in her family over the generations, the legend of Kimpa Vita, and the machinations of her grandmother to keep the truth of Pagan's birth secret.

The revelations of the past indiscretions of Pagan's ancestors that have resulted in racial mixing operate as an ontological exploration of what Michel Foucault depicts in *The History of Sexuality* as the "deployments of power [that] are directly connected to the body . . . [and] that take life as their objective" (1979, 151–152). Central to Foucault's insistence that the body be made visible as the site where the biological and the historical are made palpable is the role played by sexuality within designs of power (1979, 152). Not only does this express sexuality's concomitance with power, but it also apprehends how the exercise of power through the deployment of sexuality cannot efface the bodies it seeks to control and, in fact, needs them. This is the calculated use of life which Foucault influentially names "*bio-power*" (1979, 142).

In attending to how ethnography intervenes in and develops upon Foucault's ideas of power so as to make apparent "the localized, quotidian practices of people who authorized and resisted European authority . . ." (1995, 2), Stoler finds equally important the colonial ordering "of the sexual practices of colonizer and colonized . . ." (1995, 4). In so saying, Stoler extends Foucault's interest in "the modern technologies of power that take life as their objective" (Foucault 1979, 152) by involving imperial practices and "the colonial order of

things” (Stoler 1995, 4) as the racialized and sexualized practice of power in which the colonized also played their part, collusively and in resistance. *Skin* examines these contradictory relations as not only the contact between colonizer and colonized, but also between various colonized bodies, and with a particular exposition of the effects of imperial and other forms of patriarchal power on the lives of its female characters.

It is Esperança who educates Pagan about the origins of her family’s wealth. Starting with Afonso de Miranda in 1685, Esperança explains, the family continued to build its fortune when de Miranda’s grandson, “Dom Bernardo, the man who would later establish the house and line of Miranda Flores through a fortuitous marriage with Maria Flores, . . . [realized] that it was less work and more lucrative to trade predominantly in humans . . .” (Mascarenhas 2001, 94). So, he “set up his pombeiros—gangs of slave-catchers—in the port cities of Luanda, Benguela and Mombassa [sic], who made deals with the Ashanti.⁶ In exchange for firearms, the Ashanti agreed to help . . . capture men and women from other tribes” (Mascarenhas 2001, 94). Looking back from the contemporary moment of her own existence, Esperança recapitulates for Pagan, who is unaware of the intertwined history between her family and the maid’s, the story of how her people were brought to the Indies from Africa as part of the colonial enterprise.

It is a chronicle that connects the postcolonial moment of Pagan and Esperança’s lives in post-Portuguese Goa with Gilroy’s evocation of how the enslavement of Black people, rather than being associated with “antiquity and precapitalist systems of production and domination” is more the realm of capitalism, making it “internal to modernity and intrinsically modern” (1993, 220). Gilroy focalizes the Atlantic as the space “of the emphatic modernness of western black experience in slavery,” because “the concentrated intensity of the slave experience is something that marked out blacks as the first truly modern people, handling in the nineteenth century dilemmas and difficulties which would only become the substance of everyday life in Europe a century later” (1993, 221).

However, *Skin* expands the Black experience of slavery across space and time as one on the cusp of, if not, as modernity itself. Gilroy “[settles] on the image of ships in motion across the spaces between Europe . . . [and] Africa,” just as Mascarenhas’s novel does; furthermore, where *The Black Atlantic* adds the spaces of America and the Caribbean to portray ships as “living, micro-cultural, micro-political system[s] in motion” (1993, 4), *Skin*, through Esperança’s voice, cites the ships that used Goa as an entrepôt, “piled high with

things the Europeans wanted from India and Africa, and things they had taught the Indians and Africans to want from them” (Mascarenhas 2001, 93). Gesturing at capitalism, Esperança underscores the onset of early modernity that made the colonized culpable within the practices of empire. This is exemplified by Bernardo de Miranda Flores’s greed and the involvement of “[t]he Ashanti [who] were especially helpful to the slavers” in acquiring enslaved people from other African tribes (Mascarenhas 2001, 94). So, as *Skin* mirrors the Black experience of the Atlantic in the gamut of the Indian Ocean, it also amplifies Gilroy’s recognition of modernity as the imperial force that involved the colonized themselves in the exercise of subjugation within protracted hierarchies of power. What is also common to both oceanic arenas is the use of violence as an inherent scheme of modernity.

In *Skin*, legacies of violence are conveyed generationally both through oral history and through embodiment itself. The image of the ship and the violence meted out on its cargo echoes in Esperança’s story of how her ancestor Nzinga-Nganga, the granddaughter of Kimpa Vita—known also as Dona Beatrice—arrived in colonial Goa as an enslaved person who once “[had] held a respected place among the Mbundo before she was captured by Bernardo’s grandfather, Afonso, in 1732 and shipped . . . to Goa” at the age of twelve (Mascarenhas 2001, 95–96). Held in reverence by her people for the Goddess had chosen her, in Goa, Nzinga-Nganga “became nothing, no one—visible only to herself. And a few years later, her body was violated on a drunken night by young Dom Bernardo himself” (Mascarenhas 2001, 96). When she gave birth, Nzinga-Nganga “[prepared] to sacrifice this unbidden hybrid to the Mother Goddess . . . [but] she could not kill the child . . . Instead, she vowed to cleanse the child’s spirit of any traces it may have acquired of Dom Bernardo’s evil nature . . .” (Mascarenhas 2001, 96). Nzinga-Nganga named her daughter “Perpetua, in the Christian way, and was relieved that . . . [she] was not recognizable as being of mixed parentage,” Esperança tells Pagan (Mascarenhas 2001, 97).

Perpetua’s birth is representative not only of the mixture of the Goan blood of the Saraswat Brahmin-convert de Miranda Floreses with that of a descendant of the African prophetess Kimpa Vita, but also the product of a violent sexual union between a master and an enslaved person. This sexually violent expression of patriarchal power, exacted upon the body of a woman, cannot be separated from the trade in bodies which is the centerpiece of the emerging colonial modernity that links Asia, Africa, and Europe. Foucault’s acknowledgment of sexuality as “an instrument of power’s design” (1979, 152),

conjoins in the engagement of violence as a method of racialized and gendered domination, as epitomized in Nzinga-Nganga's enslavement and rape.

In bringing racialized nuance to "Foucault's history of European sexuality," Stoler argues that "[t]he sexual discourse of empire and of the biopolitical state in Europe were mutually constitutive . . ." (1995, 7). Though, in adducing that "Europe's eighteenth-century discourses on sexuality can—indeed must be—traced along a more *circuitous imperial route*" (1995, 7), Stoler insinuates a far more convoluted historical and spatiotemporal terrain for an exploration of racialized biopower and the making of modern identities as they related to empire. There is a similarity here with the wider oceanic field of Black displacement and the violence attendant to such movement that is gestured at, and can be connected with, Gilroy's examination of the rise of modernity in the Atlantic. Stoler's "circuitous imperial route" and an augmentation of Gilroy's oceanic modernity overlap in the history of Portuguese colonization.

BETWEEN OCEANS

Drawing on baptismal and other records, Goan historian Teotónio de Souza registers how during the period of the Inquisition (1560–1812), "modern Portuguese society" was tangibly capitalist in that "[t]he American market reduced the number of slaves brought to Portugal . . ." (2008, 171).⁷ María Elena Martínez, in her research on Mexico, concurs that Portugal was "Spanish America's main supplier of slaves until the mid-seventeenth century" (2004, 488). Given the Iberian connection to early modern economic trends in the Atlantic, it might also be ventured, then, that there was an equivalent decline of the presence of the enslaved in Portugal's Asian colonies. In *Skin*, this shift is signified in the de Miranda Floreses "[deciding] to concentrate on the slave trade between Angola and Brazil" (Mascarenhas 2001, 95), itself a reminder of Portugal's connection to colonization in the Americas. Nonetheless, it is the existence of the enslaved in different locations of empire which is of import for, as de Souza contends, it is necessary "to comprehend the slave treatment in the Portuguese metropolitan society in order to comprehend the Goan scenario" (2008, 170). This is not least because of the similarity of the multicultural power relations that emerged within these circuits.

The discussion de Souza initiates of Portugal's supply of enslaved people to the Americas, exposes a larger network of trade at the dawn of Euro-American modernity than just the Atlantic. Gilroy advises that "cultural

historians could take the Atlantic as one single, complex unit of analysis in their discussions of the modern world and use it to produce an explicitly transnational and intercultural perspective” (1993, 15). The author offers this as a corrective to “the narrow nationalism of so much English historiography” (Gilroy 1993, 12), but also “[s]imilar problems [which] appear in rather different form in African-American letters where an equally volkish popular cultural nationalism is featured . . .” (1993, 15). Even as Gilroy challenges the nationalisms across the Atlantic in a call for a more discursive reflexivity in relation to modern identity, he already imposes an Anglo-American limitation upon such understanding of modernity. Because the Portuguese empire, which included parts of Asia and Africa, was concurrently involved in the slave trade that came to encompass the Atlantic, the impact of slavery on the rise of modernity cannot be restricted to the West alone. At the same time, it is important to identify the differences that existed in colonial multiculturalities regardless of commonalities with other imperial locations.

In reference to the Portuguese empire, the existence of the enslaved in the imperial center concordantly impacted identity and power relations in colonial Goa. As de Souza highlights, the role played by the Portuguese Inquisition was crucial in “[reinforcing] the institution of slavery . . .” (2008, 170), especially because of its policing of morality. Of the Black people accused, despite the low numbers of that population in Portugal during the period of the Inquisition, two-thirds were women, and because they “represent[ed] a threat of seduction to the White men,” they were dealt more severe punishments (de Souza 2008, 170–171). This displacement of the threatening power of sexuality from white men, who were the dominant figures in Portuguese imperial society, onto Black women who were enslaved, resonates with Foucault’s argument that “repression of the sex of the classes to be exploited” is not as fundamentally a concern as is “the body, vigor, longevity, progeniture, and descent of the classes that ‘ruled’” (1979, 123).

Foucault’s purpose in making this claim is to demonstrate how sexuality was deployed to buttress “the self-affirmation of one class rather than the enslavement of another . . .” (1979, 123). It would seem that Portuguese imperial society displays exactly what Foucault described. Their protection of pedigree and power was not necessarily “seen” as a stigmatization of the sexuality of the enslaved populace—Black women essentially—but an expression of authority to limit presumed sexuality as power. Yet, Foucault’s consideration of the relationship between class and slavery is too glib as the two are imbricated, particularly given the hierarchies forged in slave and serf economies.

The Portuguese empire was not just multicultural, but also constituted by overlapping discourses of religion, commerce, gender, and sexuality. The shadow of this multi-inflected colonial authority also fell on Goa which, synchronously, had its own Inquisition as is reflected in Esperança's assertion that Bernardo de Miranda Flores grew richer by colluding with that instrument of institutional power. The fear induced by his association with the Inquisition increased the slave-owner's authority, making "[p]eople . . . eager to be in his good graces because it was rumoured that those who were not would end up in the Inquisitor's palace and Dom Bernardo would acquire their lands" (Mascarenhas 2001, 100). Much misunderstood, the primary function of the Inquisition was to maintain the Catholic faith; in Goa, popular lore continues to hold that its target was Hindus when, instead, it sought out converts who may have "[backslid] into the practice of their previous faith" (Ferrão 2024, 83). Still, Esperança's oral account of the history of the Inquisition, alongside de Souza's, shows how this instrument of faith, used across the Portuguese empire, was the arbiter of all things authoritarian, decreeing against sexuality and heresy coequally, but always to the benefit of patriarchal power. Where de Souza informs of how the protection afforded by the Portuguese Inquisition was supposedly to uphold the chastity of white men, Esperança's story about Nzinga-Nganga's rape by Bernardo de Miranda Flores more acutely queries the façade of such moral posturing and its defense of the male right to property in the form of land, wealth, and women's bodies.

Notably, de Souza determines a historical change in Christian values to accommodate Europe's encounter with the world at large:

Early Christianity fitted itself into the existing social institutions, including the institution of slavery. The letters of St. Paul confirm this adjustment. Christian monasteries used slaves in medieval Europe and the practice continued in the monasteries elsewhere in the world where Europe expanded its power since the 16th century. One of the papal bulls, *Dum diversas* of 1452 authorized the Portuguese to conquer and enslave the Saracens, pagans and other unbelievers inimical to Christ. Soon after their takeover of Goa and establishment of a State-controlled trading system, there were Portuguese who sought private trade and this gave rise to the so-called "*grande soltura*" (the great freedom) soon after the death of Afonso de Albuquerque. (2008, 169)

These changes in Christian thought, alongside the growth of trade, reveal how Church and State colluded to manifest a modern domain of economic power

that relied heavily on the subjugation of othered bodies for profit with Goa coming to play an important part in the fortunes of the Portuguese empire. Ironically, what to the Portuguese is “the great freedom” of trade in Goa upon the demise of de Albuquerque, who founded the Iberian empire in the Indies, was to become the end of freedom for others.

If de Souza leaves off at pinning the early modern beginnings of colonial state-sponsored trade upon a reimagining of Christian values, which made room for the ownership of racialized bodies, then Stoler takes up the contention “that Europe’s eighteenth- and nineteenth-century discourses on sexuality, like other cultural, political, or economic assertions, cannot be charted in Europe alone” (1995, 7). Stoler aligns bourgeois culture, which in the imperial center can be traced to trade and slavery in colonial enterprise, with “marginal members of the body politic, [that] have mapped the moral parameters of European nations” (1995, 7). In this allusion to a larger “body politic” than just the colonizing nation, Stoler includes the colonial periphery and “deeply sedimented discourses on sexual morality” as being analogously important to an understanding of “national communities, frontiers that were secured through—and sometimes in collision with—the boundaries of race” (1995, 7–8). As much as this coincides with Gilroy’s rereading of Atlantic reflexivity against bounded nationalisms on either side of the oceanic divide, it also signals the possibility of understanding the rise of modernity through a more globally interwoven archive of sexuality, commerce, morality, and race.

FAMILIAR FOREIGN GODDESSES

In illustrating the Inquisition in Goa as a method through which the de Miranda Floreses, as colonial subjects, could operate as agents of colonization themselves because of the presence of enslaved Black women’s bodies, *Skin* constitutes the Indian Ocean as another theater of racialized biopower that shaped the modern identities of colonizer and colonized. Stoler dwells on the “[i]mperial discourses that divided . . . bourgeois colonizers from their subaltern compatriots . . .,” which “in turn defined the hidden fault lines—both fixed and fluid—along which gendered assessments of class and racial membership were drawn” (1995, 8).

Within a multicultural setting like colonial Goa, as Mascarenhas’s novel aims to represent it, not only was there the kind of racialized identificatory reflexivity between the metropole and the colony, but a doubling of authori-

tarian power. It allowed the “subaltern compatriot” to stand in for the colonial patriarch, by mirroring and reproducing the gendered and classed distinctions along raced “fault lines” within the colony. Perpetua’s birth is proof, in the colony, of what Stoler attributes to the metropole where “the ideal family milieu, [was] often transgressed by . . . contaminations,” giving rise to “discourses on self-mastery . . . productive of racial distinctions, [and] of clarified notions of ‘whiteness’ . . . These discourses provided the working categories in which an imperial division of labour was clarified, legitimated, and—when under threat—restored” (1995, 8). It is no surprise, then, that Nzinga-Nganga is pleased that her daughter “was not recognizable as being of mixed parentage” (Mascarenhas 2001, 97), for this would endanger Perpetua’s life. It is evident here that if Perpetua were visible attestation of a sexual transgression, it would be against the racialization of the ideally colonial de Miranda Floreses and thus their authority.

Though Perpetua’s skin does not disclose the full truth of her parentage, Nzinga-Nganga’s raising of her daughter still evokes the wariness she has of the institutionalized power dynamics under which the birth of her daughter has occurred. That Nzinga-Nganga named, or baptized, her daughter “in the Christian way” (Mascarenhas 2001, 97), submits that this practice was a result of conversion, yet was deployed in the baby’s naming so as to act as a decoy, leaving the covert practice of African native and religious customs untouched in the colonial Goa recreated in *Skin*. The worship of the Mother Goddess carried on by Kimpa Vita’s descendants, continues in Nzinga-Nganga’s instruction of her daughter Perpetua “in secret,” along with “the art of healing” and “the art of the curse” which she “cautioned her never to use” (Mascarenhas 2001, 97), but which Perpetua does eventually find reason to do. The dual religious practices also imply that there was a separation rather than a syncretism between the faith carried over to Asia from Africa and Christianity, the official religion of European Goa. There is an aligning of the worship of the Mother Goddess with the racialized gendering of Kimpa Vita’s kin, who have been enslaved in Goa, in opposition to the masculine state as represented by the de Miranda Floreses who additionally have the sponsorship of the Church through the instrument of the Inquisition.

The lack of syncretism between Christianity and the Mother Goddess-centric religion in Mascarenhas’s novel parallels the findings of anthropologist Robert Newman’s studies of Goa, where he maintains that “Roman Catholicism came to India as a zealous, exclusive religion that saw all others as false. Over centuries, Catholicism, like Islam before it, has been tempered.

A process of Indianisation and adaption began without believers giving up faith in their beliefs” (2001, 211). To illustrate this, Newman uses the example of how “the Virgin Mary has been absorbed into the older, Indian mother goddess tradition . . .” (2001, 211), a tradition he enumerates as being

widespread around the world, even if the Semitic tradition of religion inherited by much of the modern world does not indicate it. Although modern Europe has only pale memories of Greek, Scandinavian, and Celtic goddesses behind their patriarch-dominated religion imported from the Middle East, it was not always so. (2001, 201)

Newman prominently demarcates the gendered difference between Semitic religious traditions, such as Christianity, and their counterparts which tend to revere a Mother Goddess figure in addition to, and sometimes over, a paternal icon. In this, there is a similarity between the religion that makes its way to Goa from Angola in *Skin*, along with the enslaved, and the process by which Christianity melded with local elements over time in South Asia.

This fusion happened due to a convergence of “old symbols associated with the old goddesses” that “became attached to Mary, [and] were given new life and value. Many sites that had been sacred to the worship of goddesses or bound to them in some way were re-sacralized by making them important to the Virgin Mary,” Newman propounds (2001, 201–202). Such a process is reminiscent of the manner in which “religious practices involving the water spirit Mami Wata,” revered in West African and Black Atlantic cultures, “take exotic images and ideas, interpret them according to indigenous precepts . . . and then re-create and re-present them in new and dynamic ways to serve their own aesthetic, devotional, and social needs,” as Henry Drewal comments based on his research of the tradition (1988, 160). Drewal documents that “European lore and imagery,” such as the likeness of the mermaid (1988, 162), has been incorporated into the African conception of Mami Wata, her watery form “[mediating] between Africans and those from overseas and [representing] Africans’ attempts at understanding or constructing meaning from their encounters with overseas strangers” (1988, 160).

In the Indian Ocean context, a similar repurposing of the Virgin Mary as a Mother Goddess figure occurs with the arrival and growth of colonial Christianity. Even so, Newman establishes that the role of an Asianized divine female icon is not in keeping with the patriarchal structure of the European variation of the religion, because “[t]he Indian goddess, in any of her forms,

is not an intercessor, like the Virgin Mary, between people and a masculine deity, but a power in her own right" (2001, 117). In her Asianization, Mary, like the Mother Goddess venerated by Kimpa Vita's descendants in *Skin*, is a deity unto herself—an independent manifestation of female divinity. The commonalities between the novel's African Mother Goddess and South Asian female deities combine in Esperança's view that the dark-hued Indian goddess Kali—a name which literally means black—has African origins (Mascarenhas 2001, 149). Again, there is a concurrence between a goddess tradition hewn of many identities in the Indian Ocean and the African Atlantic's Mami Wata, whose representation Drewal describes as also being informed by South Asian iconography (1988, 169).

Skin's fictionalized idea of the African genesis of the Indian divine figure Kali correlates with anthropological theories about the origins of South Asian people themselves.⁸ In *Dravidian India*, T. R. Sesha Iyengar declares that the Dravidians were believed to have come to the South Asian region, according to "[g]eological research . . ." by way of the now "submerged continent, sometimes called Lemuria, [which] originally extended from Madagascar to Malay Archipelago, connecting South India with Africa and Australia" (1925 [repr. 2001], 24–25). Coincidentally, Newman puts forward a tenably Dravidian origin of the Mother Goddess whom "Goans [revered] . . . long before the Portuguese arrived. Santeri or Shantarupi Devi is perhaps of Dravidian origin" (2001, 79).

Likewise, Pagan gleans from Moses, the de Miranda Floreses's chauffeur, that "[t]he Goddess Chamunda is one of the many incarnations of the Mother-Goddess . . . But she is not someone you want to exasperate, because she can turn into Kali, the goddess of death" (Mascarenhas 2001, 148–149). Newman reiterates that the mother goddess takes many forms in India, including "Kali, Durga, Lakshmi, Sitala, and Saraswati to name a few. In Goa, she is known as Shanta Durga . . . [Further,] Mother Goddess and Virgin are intimately linked in Goa and may well be manifestations of the same deity" (2001, 117–118). Between these connections of African and South Asian Mother Goddess forms, and even the subsuming of the Virgin Mary within a tradition where her divine power as a female icon is untethered from the European tradition of seeing her mainly as the Mother of Christ, an alternative world view of gender surfaces—it is one where to be female is to be exalted. This clashes against the primacy of patriarchy in colonial Christianity and the statist authority it spawns, which expresses its masculinist power as the denigration of and violence against women's bodies, as in *Skin*.

SEX AND THE SEA

The religious archive of female divinity that is transported in Mascarenhas's novel from Africa to South Asia, through the bodies of her characters who become interracialized in each subsequent generation, is also a record of violence and trade that heralds the dawn of modernity. Bodies moved forcibly between continents, and the sexual violation that ensues, give rise to expressions of fluid religious commonality and racial mixing, both through female subjectivity. This uncomfortable juxtaposing of the maternal and the sexual in the violation of an enslaved woman is what Anne McClintock, in *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, comparatively accords to the way that "the uncertain continents—Africa, the Americas, Asia—were figured in European lore . . ." (1995, 22). In illustration of her argument, McClintock provides the example of a quintessential world traveler—Christopher Columbus—who

[i]n 1492, . . . blundering about the Caribbean in search of India, wrote home to say that the ancient mariners had erred in thinking the earth was round. Rather, he said, it was shaped like a woman's breast, with a protuberance . . . in the unmistakable shape of a nipple—toward which he was slowly sailing. (1995, 21)

Whereas Columbus boldly sets himself apart in that moment of early modernity as being more knowledgeable than his "ancient" counterparts, what McClintock deciphers is his sense of fear which causes him to "[feminize] the earth" as a protective mother whose "Edenic nipple" he longs for, even as he "dreams of pepper and pearls . . ." in the vast unknown (1995, 22). McClintock analyzes the European encounter with the "New World" as one replete with a coeval anxiety of the loss of and desire for the female body, which is at once maternal and sexual.

Such incestuousness is compounded by the desire for "pepper and pearls," and is reminiscent of the quest for spices and converts by Columbus's contemporary, Vasco da Gama, the Portuguese explorer who found the sea route to India in 1498, leading to Goa's conquest.⁹ Perhaps part of Columbus's exploratory anxiety, which McClintock takes as the mapping of his disorientation between the maternal and the sexual upon geography unknown to Europeans, was also the confusion of how the Occident was to reconcile lustful greed with evangelization. As previously noted, de Souza evinces that Christian

morality coexisted with commercial aspirations, and the two were even reconciled ecclesiastically to institutionalize slavery from medieval times.

McClintock stresses that trade was the impetus “[d]uring the Renaissance, as the ‘fabulous geography’ of ancient travel gave way to the ‘militant geography’ of mercantile imperialism . . .” (1995, 23). Taking the Enlightenment to task as well, McClintock interprets that the “logic of private property and possessive individualism” undergirded exploratory fantasies where the feminized unknown was ripe for the taking (1995, 23). If, as has been deliberated, Christianity itself is patriarchal, then exploratory mercantilism and the spread of the faith coalesce in the male domination of the feminized other.

In *Skin*, the patriarchal desire for dominion, as it is accented by commerce, makes the Goan de Miranda Flores clan co-agents of Portuguese colonization. Such partnering exemplifies the ability of the colonized to participate in the imperial project as “subaltern compatriot[s],” to use Stoler’s characterization of this relationship (1995, 8). Differentiated by class in their own right, even before their complicity with the Portuguese, the de Miranda Floreses also garner race privilege in comparison to another other in multi-racial colonial Goa—their enslaved Africans. This inter-colonial difference is inhered in deploying sexuality as power, as evidenced in the rape of Nzinga-Nganga. It is through the violation of her body that the desirous anxiety for a maternal figure that McClintock perceives in Columbus’s “breast fantasy . . . as an erotics of ravishment” (1995, 22), is re-enacted in Mascarenhas’s novel as re-productivity. Though Nzinga-Nganga is glad that her daughter does not appear to be mixed race, Perpetua is still Bernardo de Miranda Flores’s child, and also his enslaved property. When Perpetua herself has a child with Antonio, an enslaved African man, Consolação’s birth is celebrated by “Dom Bernardo, [who] gave an order to increase their food rations—pleased, no doubt, that he had obtained another slave for free” (Mascarenhas 2001, 98). That unbeknownst to him Consolação is his granddaughter, is inconsequential, as I will come to explain.

Slavery and sexual violence are evidently conjoined in *Skin*’s Portuguese India, and more so for the possibility of productive gain. Stoler observes of desire within coloniality that it was always assessed “in relationship to [its] reproductive consequences . . .” (1995, 48). Rila Mukherjee debates that for the Portuguese the slave trade was a precarious enterprise because they were “dealing with a perishable commodity” in the shape of “human life . . . whose supply had to be renewed constantly . . .” (2006, 360). Because the potential of the slave trade was limited by geography and travel, the rather

problematically termed “perishable commodity” of enslaved bodies would always be in short supply necessitating, thereupon, that reproduction occur in the Indies itself.

This required that the sexuality of the enslaved population be pressed into service—that it be bio-*empowered*, to alter and re-emphasize Foucault’s terminology. Consequently, rape transformed the colonial desire for the maternal into a reproductive sexuality; it violently sexualized a commerce dependent on bodies. McClintock situates the conjoining of sexuality and imperial mercantilism at the inception of the Age of Discovery when she reflects on Columbus’s likening of the cartography of the unknown to a breast. What this mapping also signified and foreshadowed was a landscape pregnant with possibility and ripe for the taking. Equivalently, for Bernardo de Miranda Flores, rape imbued the enslavement of African women like Nzinga-Nganga with generative profitability, for it produced mothers and, hence, more enslavable property.

Their involvement in the slave trade between Africa and Goa positions the de Miranda Flores family as being colonially bourgeois. Even as they were not white, their position in the hierarchy is gauged against the presence of Black bodies in the colonial milieu. The racialized setting of Portuguese India necessitated a self-making that mirrored mid-eighteenth century European identity in native contexts while eschewing native identity itself. But as Stoler notes, in questioning Foucault’s “Europe-bound account,” the European bourgeois themselves were always “racially and relationally coded” (1995, 53). In other words, the racialization of sexuality in colonial environments occurs alongside the class privilege that emerges from colonial multiculturalism. While Foucault’s declaration of bourgeois endogamy may seem to circumscribe interraciality, in much the same way that Stoler’s attribution of class difference in the hyper-racialized settings of the colonies does too, both provide insights that sustain the opposite possibility.

(RE)PRODUCING DIFFERENCE

Racial and class differences set the stage for colonial authority. Hence, as Foucault proposes, power arises not through “a central point,” but “a grid of intelligibility,” dependent upon “inequality” (1979, 93). Stoler racially inflects Foucault’s scrutiny of the instability of power, and its production through unequal relations, by postulating that “[i]f race already makes up a part of

[the] 'grid of intelligibility' through which the bourgeoisie came to define themselves, then we need to locate its coordinates in a grid carved through the . . . 'unfreedoms' that imperial labour systems enforced" (Stoler 1995, 53). As is witnessed in *Skin*, the sexualized commerce of slavery, which continues to reproduce inequality through rape also creates interracial progeny. Although the existence of mixed-race children undercuts what Foucault pegs as the project of "bourgeois hegemony" (1995, 125), it is in the condition of "unfreedom," as Stoler names it, that equality is severely curtailed. Unfreedom also perpetuates and reifies the power differential, despite the existence of interraciality, by reproducing that hybridity in gendered and racialized terms. As a consequence, Perpetua and Consolação may have bourgeois Goan blood, but they are only rendered intelligible as enslaved Black women. Bourgeois Goan identity, as a set of power relations, is reiterated against these hybrid bodies through their ownership by a class of a higher echelon.

What cannot be supposed, even in the Black women's captivity, is that there was no resistance. Perpetua reacts to the impending death of her child's father, brought upon by a beating when "Dom Bernardo's foreman, Costa, accused Antonio of stealing rice," by "[entreating] the vengeful spirit of Kizuu . . ." (Mascarenhas 2001, 99). She curses her father, and condemns him to a death worse than that of Antonio's. "Slowly and steadily, the words of the vile curse streamed from her lips as she beat upon her breast seven times to seal it" (Mascarenhas 2001, 99). In damning her father, Perpetua reveals that despite her captivity and conversion, she has not been Christianized. Her vengeance, invested with cultural and religious difference—the traditions acquired from her mother's instruction—are an affront to the power of the State and Church that have allowed the de Miranda Floreses to profit from the disenfranchisement of others. The beating of her breast, to seal the curse, emphasizes Perpetua's gender and the maternal reproductivity that the bourgeois family has sexualized and used for profit.

In punishment for her insubordination and to put back into balance the power relations between master and enslaved person that she has attempted to disrupt, "Dom Bernardo had [Perpetua] bound to her dying husband and had them both thrown into a deep rubbish pit covered by an iron grill" (Mascarenhas 2001, 99). Upon her demise, and before her "burial, Costa cut off one of her breasts to be . . . used later as a coin purse" (Mascarenhas 2001, 99). Whereas for scholars of colonial discourse like McClintock, breast imagery signals Western desire for the colonies-to-be as "a porno-tropics," in the macabre posthumous cutting of Perpetua's breast, there is a related but different pornographic element.

As Carmine Sarracino and Kevin M. Scott delineate in relation to film, “[v]iolent, sexual murder becomes the language of domination and power, an assertion of self that requires the utter denial of the humanity of the other” (2008, 164). Calling the use of surgery in cinema “vivisection porn,” they show that the cutting open of the body of a hypersexualized woman, is not only about anger and hatred, it is also a “literal deconstruction of female allure . . . [A] beautiful woman’s body, after all, is blood . . . [and] organs” (Sarracino and Scott 2008, 164–165).

Along similar lines, the final act of desecration against Perpetua retributively reduces the woman to her organs and their functions. It repossesses her sexuality and retroactively denies the enslaved woman the sexual agency with which she had made Antonio her lover of choice, and because of which “Perpetua gave birth . . .,” making the enslaved a family that “were happy—as happy as people can be in captivity” (Mascarenhas 2001, 98). In the fashioning of Perpetua’s breast into a purse, colonial patriarchal power is reinscribed as the ownership of racialized and gendered bodies for profitability. The breast, a reminder of colonial and patriarchal desire, but also symbolic of women’s ability to nurture life and transform their sexual power into maternity, is truncated into a capitalistic emblem of masculine greed and possessiveness.

This is an effort to rescind that there ever was a bourgeois desire for the other by culling and objectifying the mixed-race body, which functions, at the same time, as a cautionary tale about the place of women in colonial society. For example, on seeing “the one-breasted flaccid carcass of a grotesque beast . . .” who was once Perpetua, Nzinga-Nganga protests, “This is not my daughter . . . She was determined that nothing like this would ever befall Consolação . . .” (Mascarenhas 2001, 100). Because of the fear Perpetua’s death had caused, the onus of policing the remaining proof of interraciality against discovery falls upon the enslaved themselves. What persists, undeterred by the punitive patriarchal violence, is the mixed-race body as archival evidence of the past. Even as the enslaved women are meant to be controlled by fear, the commercial desire for their bodies retains them in service, antithetically preserving their lives as embodied legacy.

CLOSE TO THE BREAST

Insofar as the bodies of the female, and some male, characters in *Skin* act as an archive of the histories of their ancestors, it is significant that Consolação’s twins, Piedade and Eusebio, are each born with “only one nipple” (Mascar-

enhas 2001, 141). Interestingly, it is their father Bosco Rodrigues, nicknamed Gor-Gor, who is distinguished as also having “only one nipple” (Mascarenhas 2001, 117). In the twins’ acquisition of the trait, there is a magically real slippage between heredity and history. Is the missing nipple attributable to the children’s father, or their grandmother Perpetua, who was dismembered? This confusion between matrilineal and patrilineal possibilities, as connoted by a missing body part that is usually gendered as a biologically feminine and maternal organ, resounds in Gor-Gor’s own doubts about his progeny.

Working on the de Miranda Floreses’s Daman estate, Gor-Gor the field worker—a Goan *manducar/mundcar* or serf-like tenant—becomes acquainted with Consolação who is also stationed there and, “[a]lthough he preferred his women to be of lighter complexion, . . . in the darkness of night, what difference did the colour of her skin make?” (Mascarenhas 2001, 118). Though desirous of lighter-complected bodies, Gor-Gor is baffled when Consolação gives birth “to light-skinned twins” (Mascarenhas 2001, 121). He reacts to what he believes to be Consolação’s infidelity by “[hitting] her with such tremendous force . . . that she fell over [a] burning cauldron, severely scalding her breasts” (Mascarenhas 2001, 122). Separated from Gor-Gor and taking up residence on the estate because of the insistence of Bernardo de Miranda Flores’s widow, Maria, Consolação weeps “at the thought that she had been forever deprived of the joy of suckling her babies at her own breast” (Mascarenhas 2001, 123).

The breast is again the site here of multiple traumas. In not being able to breastfeed her children, the loss Consolação expresses is also for Perpetua, who was herself de-breasted and snuffed out of her daughter’s life. Perpetua is the mother “Consolação could not remember . . .” (Mascarenhas 2001, 114). Correspondingly, Consolação, “[t]hroughout her pregnancy,” also dreamed of “her unclaimed grandfather, Dom Bernardo, . . . his arms outstretched beseechingly” (Mascarenhas 2001, 121). These remembrances of maternal loss, and belated paternal guilt, meet in Consolação’s inability to suckle her own children and in the lightness of their skin—the hereditary marker of the bourgeois blood that runs in their veins.

When Gor-Gor causes the injury to Consolação’s breasts, it metaphorically challenges her sexuality in also questioning the source of her maternity. It spotlights Gor-Gor’s own sense of emasculation and economic disenfranchisement. For as long as in the social order of Portuguese India there was a Black female presence lower in status than himself, Gor-Gor the field worker—also beholden to the de Miranda Floreses—could deflect his own

diminished class standing in some limited degree of racialized patriarchal domination. Gor-Gor enunciates his feelings about how little the de Miranda Floreses must think of him, in musing: “*Um manducar mais, um manducar menos*, [one tenant more, one tenant less,] what did it matter to them?” (Mascarenhas 2001, 137).¹⁰ In doubting that the children are his, Gor-Gor’s retribution against Consolação is not only for her perceived adultery which undermines his petty dominion, but also for the classed and racialized privilege he thinks her sexuality might afford her through her light-skinned children. When he abducts the twins, Gor-Gor keeps them alive believing that “[o]nly the children of a Portuguese or of an Indian fidalgo of Saraswat origin could have this colour . . . [H]e would hold the babies for ransom and . . . free passage . . .” (Mascarenhas 2001, 136).

Gor-Gor is partially right in believing that the babies have “Saraswat origin,” but in interpreting the color of his children’s skin as a sign of Consolação’s sexual duplicity, he miscalculates this racialized and classed knowledge by not seeing himself as the twins’ father. “The bourgeoisie’s ‘blood’ was its sex,” Foucault touts in explaining the social class’s cultivation of its “caste” (1979, 124). Stoler traces the transition from what the legitimacy of “blood had [been] for the nobility” to the bourgeoisie’s advantaging of their own sexuality, which reproductively made “legitimate its moral high ground, [and] its claims to supremacy . . .” (1995, 53).

Gor-Gor’s presumption about the twins’ interraciality could fracture the Goan de Miranda Flores’s “claims to supremacy” if it were to be revealed that their bourgeois blood/sex/power now ran through the veins of their enslaved employees. It could subvert their moral hegemony in demonstrating that the Goan bourgeois family had not managed to maintain what Foucault mandates as “the controllable effects of sex” (1979, 148). But in discounting his own parentage of the twins, Gor-Gor’s masculinist displacement of the discontent borne of his unprivileged life onto Consolação’s racialized and gendered body, keeps him from exposing the de Miranda Floreses and what Stoler designates as the “precarious vulnerabilities” of colonial bourgeois identity (1995, 97). These vulnerabilities arose from bourgeois identity in colonial settings being so heavily reliant upon the maintenance of difference, making the possibility of destabilization ever prevalent.

When Gor-Gor ponders that the color of his children’s skin might have come from a Portuguese or high caste Indian father, the equation created between the two racial possibilities rehearses the desire of the Goan bourgeoisie to be like the colonizer in class and color. In as much as Portuguese

identities were themselves racially recast in Goa, Goan bourgeois identities like that of the de Miranda Floreses were honed in comparison to the white Portuguese elite, but in contrast to Goans of lower-class backgrounds, such as the enslaved Africans and *mundcars* like Gor-Gor.

It is no coincidence, as Pagan is told by her aunt Livia, that Afonso de Miranda “befriended an enormously rich Portuguese patrician of minor title . . .” who was named godfather to Bernardo upon his birth (Mascarenhas 2001, 22). Not only did de Miranda’s grandson inherit the bachelor nobleman’s money when he died, but also his estate and title (Mascarenhas 2001, 23). Livia’s version of the de Miranda Flores family history, delivered in markedly different quality from the “brackishness in Esperança’s tone” when relaying the family saga to Pagan (Mascarenhas 2001, 94), transfers Portuguese aristocratic title, or the insignia of noble blood, to the product of bourgeois sex: the fruit of Afonso Miranda’s loins. The convergence of these patriarchies—the elite colonial and the bourgeois colonized—are cemented through wealth and civility.

The veneer of this colonial civility in *Skin* relies upon the precarious difference between the bourgeois and their other Goan counterparts, the underclass of enslaved people and serfs. As Stoler warrants, “[c]olonialism was not a secure bourgeois project. It was not only about the importation of middle-class sensibilities to the colonies, but about the *making* of them” (1995, 99). Despite the desire to emulate the Portuguese elite, the colonized bourgeois would always still not be white, making the need for civility as the division between them and “other” Goans mandatory. Accordingly, the colonial bourgeoisie of Mascarenhas’s novel count on, and promulgate difference, based on the Goans they are unlike—they are made bourgeois by dissimilitude.

With the policing of their sexuality, as the delimitation of identity, also functioning as civility, the divulgence of his twins’ genealogy would cause Gor-Gor to unbalance the de Miranda Floreses’s social standing in two ways. First, in being intermixed in his children’s bodies, it would show that bourgeois blood was no different from his own, a man of common origins who is also Goan; second, it would pull away the curtain of civility around bourgeois sexuality in showing it to have spread its blood through the violent rape of an enslaved Black woman. None of this happens because Gor-Gor, rather than seeing the commonality of oppression he shares with Consolação pursues, instead, a desire for dominance that would counter the emasculation he blames the mother of his children for.

When Gor-Gor does realize the children are definitely his, it is too late.

Becoming “Zamba Ndoki who takes the form of her choosing” (Mascarenhas 2001, 135), Consolação like her maternal African ancestor “Dona Beatrice, who could change herself into a black leopard” (Mascarenhas 2001, 241), takes the ferocious feline form to track down Gor-Gor who has absconded with her children into the thickets beyond the estate. In the seconds before his death,

Gor-Gor’s eyes were wide, like someone seeing for the first time, and in fact he *was* seeing for the first time . . . [T]he babies . . . each had only one nipple . . . [T]he scream that exploded from the gaping rent in his throat turned abruptly to a gurgle before the black leopard dragged him into the bush. (Mascarenhas 2001, 141)

Consolação’s conjuration of the Mother Goddess tradition is not simply an act of maternal repossession expressed as an animalistic instinct. This would only re-enact the tropes of masculinist violence that she and her foremothers experienced. The transformation is a calling forth of difference. It is not a valorization of the past, for in being situated contemporaneously with colonial modernity, which had violently wrenched Consolação’s ancestors from Africa for capitalist profit, it foregrounds what has been decimated but not lost. In reanimating the Mother Goddess tradition to rescue her children, Consolação regrounds an African presence outside Angola and as part of her mixed-race Goan subjectivity. It disrupts the patriarchal colonial nation’s proscriptions of gendered and racialized identity in being another reminder of a tradition and a way of life that envisions women as powerful life-givers and defenders.

In the moment when Gor-Gor sees the single-nippled children as his own, he cannot escape his own failure in not having trusted the woman who sought to have a life with him in spite of his status. The recognition of the missing nipple as symbolic of his fatherhood makes Gor-Gor realize his own engendering as the kind of man he turned out to be, even if society and economics played their part. The nipple, an organ of maternal sustenance that is “missing” in mammary function in the male physique, is a reminder of paternal redundancy in the post-procreative nurturing of children. As a vestige, the missing nipple raises the question of, as does Rhacel Parreñas in another context of gendered childcare, “whether fathers . . . are able to provide . . . ‘maternal love’” (2001, 147). Parreñas’s query destabilizes the gender roles associated with raising offspring and puts fathers in the position of needing

to be in their children's lives not because of a biological connection, but an affective one at the same level of responsibility as mothers.

FATHER/LESS

The missing nipple on the twins' bodies is their father's and also the cut breast of their grandmother Perpetua. So also their light skin is that of Bernardo de Miranda Flores, their great grandfather, who submitted his illegitimate daughter to the defilement she underwent in, and after, her death. In the resurgence of this missing breast, attribute of the maternal and life-giving, but also representative of Columbus's rendering of the cartography of the unknown and acquisitive male desire, there is a constant remembering of violence upon bodies in *Skin*. These vestiges of violence memorialize the shaping of modernity, but it is not only the bodies of women that bear these scars. The scarred familial connections, that in the novel transcend class and race lines, call into question bourgeois hegemony that itself makes patrilineally contiguous the imperial and colonial states of Portugal, Portuguese Africa, and Portuguese India, as also the Indian and Atlantic Ocean worlds via the slave trade. Foucault cautions that he "[does] not mean to say that a substitution of sex for blood [is] by itself responsible for all the transformations that marked the threshold of our modernity" (1979, 148), which connotes the multitude of other histories that are not of the hegemonic record, but still do not fall out of it.

Collaterally, what is also imputed is the impossibility of the purity of bloodlines, but how powerfully such a fallacy operates to its own delusion. Though her father's greed brought her mother to Goa and his sexual violence contributed to her birth, Perpetua's missing breast is not the only (dis)embodied registration of these traumas. Her curse causes Bernardo de Miranda Flores to "[develop] a huge tumour the size of a coconut on his sex . . ." (Mascarenhas 2001, 101–102). This impediment to her father's phallic power, "after he had been responsible for the death of his own daughter, [which] in the dreaming part of his brain, he must have known . . . prevented him from siring any more children," Esperança decodes for Pagan (Mascarenhas 2001, 102–103).

Perpetua, the enslaved Black daughter, turns her father's sexual and patriarchal power against itself. She remains the only biological child of Bernardo de Miranda Flores, for Alma is the product of the affair his wife Maria has

with a Castilian priest (Mascarenhas 2001, 105).¹¹ “[P]retending to be the father of the green-eyed child [Alma]” (Mascarenhas 2001, 106), the de Miranda Flores patriarch, upholder of the family name and its connotations of state-favored bourgeois blood/sex/power, is reduced to the fate of those he has uprooted and attempted to reduce to nothingness. While the descendants of those he enslaved live on to tell their side of the story, the slave-owner becomes non-existent in his own familial bloodline.

The erasure of the de Miranda Flores patriarch from his own family lineage unsettles a dominant history and surfaces other legacies. Those once suppressed strands of identity, commingled but not lost, are the histories that Pagan learns about by engaging with the difficult complexities of the past. Mascarenhas’s novel posits Goanness as a spatiotemporal and embodied landscape that interweaves difference without seeking to subsume it. This Goan subjectivity stakes its claim to knowing a troubled past that is also representative of the subjugation of other others at many global sites—nationless oceanic worlds connected by colonization, slavery, and diaspora. Therein, the afterlives of colonization and slavery are remembered as much for their complexities in interracial skins that are at once Asian, Black, and European, but also in the human geographies symbolized by those integumentary histories.

The oceanic past, stretched like a skin between continents, evokes networks that twinned the Indian and Atlantic Oceans far before the globalization of the current moment. By twinning those oceans through the history of forcibly removed Black bodies, *Skin* brings to bear on the present by reminding us that Africanness can take many forms in many places, Goa included, even as it is remade and renewed. Though displacement and loss inform the present, it is the engagement with the past and the contemporary moment that critically assesses cultural legacies of race, class, caste, and gender privileges; in so doing, it vigilantly allows for difference as transgressive existence that ruptures hegemonies of singularity.

NOTES

CHAPTER 1

1. In an essay about the search for my grandmother's grave, I deliberate on the event as a metaphor for postcolonial diasporic identity predicated on the notion of irreparable loss, but also as a way to memorialize the past differently in its connection to our present. Our quest in the cemetery was brought on by a family reunion; several relatives had journeyed back to Kenya for the first time since they had immigrated to the West from the 1960s onward. Their lament was for a nation forever changed with the end of colonialism, a sentiment tinged with anti-Blackness. Their nostalgia I found to be "beguiling in memory but embittering in its post-dated influence. For the [diasporic] Goans of East Africa . . . , this millenium's Africa is another place—one that changed forever when they left" (Ferrão 2008, 81). Inasmuch as they were mourning the loss of the continent that they once called home, perhaps what they were also contending with was their severance from that other continent of their ethnic origins, one that had been known only to their ancestors. The cemetery symbolically united these histories in being the place of final rest of one of those forebears. The eventual discovery of the grave offered closure and a different way to look upon our relationship to Kenya. Decades upon her passing, that my grandmother's headstone had not disappeared was a testament to more than history alone; the continuity of this marker of our past in our own absence was a reminder that we were still tethered to this place. At the essay's conclusion I ponder how "[w]ithout the help of [the Kenyan] caretakers, we would never have found [Felicidade's] last resting place. She had left Goa as a young woman . . . To be able to pay [our] respects at her grave was to also do so to our history in the land that adopted my family" (Ferrão 2008, 86).

2. This may also be said of how Goan writing in Marathi encapsulates the vicissitudes faced by bahun communities negotiating caste hierarchies and overlapping colonialities in early-twentieth-century Goa and its diaspora as Anjali Arondekar investigates in *Abundance: Sexuality's History* (2023). Goa has multiple linguistic-literary traditions, which is a remarkable fact for a region so small. While this book's motivation is the scrutiny of anglophone fiction with pluricontinental settings, it may still be useful

to those studying Marathi, Konkani, and Portuguese texts related to Goa and its diaspora (and may even be applicable to studies about other multi-locale diasporas more generally). In *Colonial and Post-colonial Goan Literature in Portuguese: Woven Palms*, editor Paul Melo e Castro (2019, 5) finds that the discontinuation of the widespread use of Portuguese in Goa has led to literature in that language being understudied, yet he avers the need for scholarly efforts that situate themselves within an ecosystem of Goan literatures that include the region's "other major bodies of writing in Konkani, Marathi and English." Where Arondekar shows how Marathi literature in marginalized Goan communities is expressive of political subject-formation, Melo e Castro contends that even scholarship on Goan writing in Portuguese may benefit from taking cognizance of its relationship to the region's other linguistic cultural expressions. As such scholars substantiate, post/colonial literary representations of Goan subjectivity require further inquiry because of the complexities they encode and for their diverse modes of expression (and interrelation).

3. To name only a few authors and the languages they have written in about Goan displacement, one may cite Damodar Mauzo in Konkani, Mia Couto in Portuguese, Laxmanrao Sardesai in Marathi and Portuguese, and Gopalakrishna Pai in Kannada.

4. Nidhi Mahajan demonstrates that older ideas of an Indian Ocean coastal "nationalism" unbounded by postcolonial mapping may not entirely be a thing of the past; citing "the resurgence of . . . *mwambao* [a Swahili concept,] that enshrined notions of Indian Ocean belonging" (2023, 94), Mahajan charts contemporary movements in popular Kenyan activism that challenge the state's neoliberal extractivist agenda by harking to an oceanic past that was more attuned to the environment.

5. H. Morse Stephens (2000, 24) explains that "[i]n April, 1498, [Vasco da Gama] reached Melinda [Malindi, Kenya] . . . where . . . [t]he passage across the Indian Ocean was well known . . . [T]rade conducted between the two localities . . . was almost entirely controlled by Muhammadans. At Melinda, Vasco da Gama was able to obtain experienced pilots . . ."

6. The first recorded performance of *tiatr* was that of Lucasinho Ribeiro's *Italian Bhurgo* in Bombay in 1892. *Italian Boy*, the translation in English of the title of Ribeiro's play, was adapted from an Italian opera of the same name, thus also paying homage to the genesis of the Konkani theatrical form. See Cardozo (2021).

7. Goan writers like Francisco Luís Gomes (1829–1869) have been rather self-aware in grappling with the politicized positioning of Goan subjectivity between British and Portuguese colonialities. Published in 1866, Gomes's *Os Brahmanes* (translated into English as *The Brahmans* [1971]) is the first novel by an author of Goan origin. A parliamentarian who represented his native Goa in Portugal, Gomes, despite having written his novel in Portuguese, set it in British India sans any mention of Goa and Goans. Still, the novel is inescapably relatable to Portuguese colonialism. At a time when colonialism was beginning to be challenged internationally, the politician-author wanted to create a text that "is allegorical in its critique of [British] colonialism . . . [while serving] as a

cautionary tale to the Portuguese” (Ferrão 2024, 84). Strikingly, this is because Gomes was partial to what he reckoned were the redemptive possibilities of Portuguese colonialism because of its alleged championing of equality through Catholicism, as critic Everton Machado points out (2019, 43–44). Machado (2019, 50) then extrapolates from Gomes’s rejection of British colonialism, in favor of a more enlightened Portuguese version, that the writer must identify as Portuguese (which is to say the same as his colonizer). Anand Patil, while also seeing in Gomes a desire to perpetuate colonialism, misconstrues the intent of the novel’s British Indian setting as the work of a sycophant wanting to please British colonizers (1995, 91). This is a curious position, for why would “a book in Portuguese [be] meant for readership by the English” (Ferrão 2013)? Between these critiques, each standing in for the colonial polarities that affected Goans, little is to be gleaned about Goan subjectivity itself, and even less still about Gomes’s attempt to mirror colonial subjectivity back onto the idea of Portugueseness. Gomes’s allegorical representation of what the Portuguese might stand to lose were they to continue down the same path as the British in the mid-nineteenth century (around the time of the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny), urges Goa’s colonizers to see themselves in the people whose souls they saved through Catholicism. Given the shifting nature of identity in the diasporic encounter of Goans interacting with multiple colonialities in multiple geographies, for Goans like Gomes, the inherent making of colonial Portuguese identities in a disjointed empire could not simply be understood as having a single geographic origin. Thereupon, at the same time as colonial identities in the fractured Portuguese empire were simultaneously themselves *and* multiple forms of Portugueseness, Portuguese identity beyond the metropole, like Goanness in diaspora, functioned not as colonial imitation but in multiplicity.

8. For more on this subject, see Leo Lawrence’s *Nehru Seizes Goa* (1963).

9. For Dias Lannoy, the problem of the denial of Goan self-emancipation did not exist in a vacuum, for she “was also vocal about the Israeli occupation of Palestine, no doubt seeing in it the predicament of her own Goan compatriots” (Ferrão 2024, 86).

CHAPTER 2

1. Details about the life and legend of St. Catherine of Alexandria find much repetition. See “Catherine (Katharine) of Alexandria” in David Hugh Farmer’s *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (2004, 95–96); Jill Kamil’s *Christianity in the Land of the Pharaohs: The Coptic Orthodox Church* (2002, 121–122); and the entry for “Catherine of Alexandria, Saint” in Leslie Ross’s *Medieval Art: A Topical Dictionary* (1996, 44).

2. For more on the popularity of Saint Catherine and the cult that surrounded her, see Christine Walsh, *The Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in Early Medieval Europe (Church, Faith and Culture in the Medieval West)* (2007).

3. Further details about the Moorish conquest of Iberia can be found, for example, in David James, “Ṭariq ibn Zīyād Invades Al-Andalus,” in *Early Islamic Spain: The History of Ibn al Qūṭīya* (2009, 49–58).

4. H. Morse Stephens states, “The Portuguese nation had grown strong and war-like from its constant conflict with the Moors in the Peninsula, and the country attained its European limits in 1263” (2000, 18).

5. Felicity Gee traces magical realism (or more accurately *Magischer Realismus*/magic realism) to the initial identification of the genre within German art criticism of the 1920s (2023, 78). Thereupon, Richard van Leeuwen links the literary development of the genre, as a politicized “counter-discourse,” to the era of postcolonialism, as is to be seen “especially [in] Latin America, Africa, and India” (2018, 408).

6. Among others, there are Alice, who is Mary Pereira’s sister (Rushdie 1991b, 116) and Joseph D’Costa, Mary’s love interest (Rushdie 1991b, 115). In *Taj Mahal Foxtrot: The Story of Bombay’s Jazz Age*, Naresh Fernandes (2012, 175) makes note of how *Midnight’s Children* mentions the real-life Bombay-resident Goan musician, Braz Gonsalves.

7. In being non-Catholic, Rushdie’s Jesuses represent a peculiarity of South Asian adaptations of Christianity for, as Felix Wilfred (2005, 507) asserts, “Christ is not the monopoly of the Christian community, and hence it is not surprising to see that people of other faiths have interpreted Jesus through their own religious experience, and from their particular backgrounds. In South Asia there is what could be described as the ‘Christology of non-Christians.’”

8. Angelo da Fonseca’s artistic endeavours and their revelation of caste issues find a nexus with a larger anti-Brahmanical decolonial movement in South Asian Christianity. Unlike in Latin America, Wilfred interprets, “the terminology of liberation theology was not used, [but] it has been happening in South Asia . . .,” not only with regard to “the issues of economy and religion, but also a very specific social reality of caste stratification” (2005, 508–509). Wilfred’s exploration of South Asian liberation theology critically reassesses the historical and cultural Eurocentrism of the Christian religion, with particular bearing on post/colonialism. Through the lens of liberation theology, the writer places South Asia alongside Latin America, both of which were colonized and Christianized by Europeans. By interrelating liberation, culture, and theology, Wilfred not only decenters European biases within specific locations, but also opens up ways of thinking about how geographically discrete locations with similar religious and colonial histories may be compared and connected. One may thus locate da Fonseca’s art within a more global context of religious decoloniality that is critical of the marginalization of the racialized, gendered, and classed.

9. See Jeevichirikkunnavarkku Vendiyulla Oppees: *Requiem for the Living* (2013), Johny Miranda’s novella about Kerala’s marginalized Portuguese-descended community, the Parankis. As I note elsewhere, “Miranda’s novella is instructive . . . [in] show[ing] how, like Goa’s, Kerala’s encounters with non-British colonialisms necessitate a look beyond postcolonial studies . . . that privilege [South Asia’s] British contexts. In other words, . . . minority literatures can offer alternative perspectives about the subcontinent’s margins” (Ferrão 2024, 84). For the political trajectory of Goa after its annexation by India, see Parag D. Parobo’s *India’s First Democratic Revolution: Dayanand Bandodkar and the Rise of Bahujan in Goa* (2015) and Jason Keith Fernandes’s *Citizenship in a Caste Polity: Religion, Language and Belonging in Goa* (2020).

10. By aligning Mary Pereira more firmly with British Bombay rather than Portuguese India, Rushdie effects a shift away from the lusospheric, Indian Oceanic, Afro-Asiatic “hemisphere” in order to create the singularity of the Indian-nation-to-be in the novel. Identifying a similar trend in how literature about early America culls the new (which is to say non-Indigenous) country from its extant commercial and ecological ties to the “tropics” as they extended between “Bahia, Brazil . . . [and] Virginia,” Anna Brickhouse contends that English settlements such as the one in Jamestown were “imbued . . . with varying degrees of political and cultural capital within a changing national narrative, . . . [a] narrative . . . always in tension with a less visible but nonetheless informing hemispheric story” (2007, 19).

11. Walsh notes that “Katherine was removed from the liturgical calendar in 1969 on the grounds that she was unlikely ever to have existed” (2007, 1). Reservations about the saint’s historical existence arose because of the similarity her story bore to pagan legends, including that of Hypatia of Alexandria. For more on the connection between the two figures, see Maria Dzielska, *Hypatia of Alexandria* (1995). The saint was reinstated in 2002 but only, Dennis O’Neill argues, because “there was such hue and cry raised up among the faithful concerning the loss . . .” (2010, xiv).

CHAPTER 3

1. While most Goan Catholics in East Africa would refer to themselves exactly as such, that Vassanji labels Pius “Christian” rather than Catholic also circumscribes the character’s community identity.

2. Vassanji says of the Shamsis, a fictitious community who occur across his oeuvre, that he fashioned them after “the Ismailis but they are not identical with them. I guess they would be called the Khoja Ismailis . . .” (Rhodes 1997, 116).

3. See Vassanji’s memoir, *A Place Within: Rediscovering India* (2009, xiii) and his interview with Gaurav Desai (2011, 197).

4. Bhaskar Sarkar contends that India’s politically manipulative, right-wing, Hindu majoritarian nationalism defines itself against the Muslim minority who are deemed other through the constant and antihistorical recalling of their foreignness. The Muslim other is coincidentally made foreign not only as an alien residing in India, but also as a non-Indian whose religious identity connects the community with such “Muslim nations” as Pakistan and Afghanistan. Sarkar goes on to note that the foreignness of Muslims in India is often conjured up for political uses through “a tendentious form of antihistory” where “marauding Muslim invaders a millennium ago [become] one with . . . the Taliban in Afghanistan” and “[m]emories of Partition, [are] taken to be the ultimate instance of Muslim betrayal . . . woven into a threatening and cautionary discourse about Islamic duplicity and aggression” (2009, 13–14).

5. A common surname in the South Asian lusosphere, Vassanji’s naming of his character as “Desouza” seems to be a carelessly erroneous rendition of the more usual de Souza or D’Souza.

6. Clifford J. Pereira (2017) ponders Vassanji’s choice in describing the Goan character Tembo in *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* (2003) in heavily racialized terms,

ascribing the portrayal to “Vassanji’s own colour consciousness, based within the Indian sub-continent’s attitudes to colour and caste, [more] than . . . with artistic licence.” In effect, Vassanji’s characterization of Goans across his oeuvre seems to embody a hierarchical caste consciousness.

7. The etymology of this erroneous term is taken up by Goan writer Maria Aurora Couto who believes it was “[t]he English . . . [who] created a word by adding two suffixes when one is the normative method. ‘Goanese’ was born despite the absence of logic or involvement of Goan people in this description of themselves. Why is the Indian not called Indianese, the Chinese Chinanese and the American Americanese . . . [?]” (2004, 89–90). Further, because Goans were colonized by the only European national group to have an -ese suffix in the naming of its people, it is conceivable that “Goanese” is a conflation of “Goan” and “Portuguese.”

8. In a short story titled “Elvis, Raja,” Vassanji (2005) once again seems to use the biographical details of a Goan person to create fiction while making Goanness itself absent. The story centers around an eccentric Indian diasporic Elvis Presley memorabilia collector and aficionado. That Peter Nazareth is himself a scholar of Presley (see Bukenya 2021) makes for too much of a coincidence in explaining who Vassanji based his character on in “Elvis, Raja,” especially given the rift between the two writers.

9. It is not commonplace that representations of Goan diasporic life in East Africa, both in works of fiction and nonfiction, include depictions of intercommunality. As an example, the documentary *O Clube* (de Sousa 2021), which commemorates the one hundredth anniversary of a Goan club in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, does well to chart the highs and lows of Goan community history in colonial and postcolonial times. Nevertheless, the chronicle may have been strengthened by the inclusion of interviews with Black Tanzanians, the absence of whose perspectives makes for a limited view of the multicultural society the Goan community has been part of for more than a century.

10. This point has previously been made in the introductory chapter. In addition, Couto refers to “a steady flow of Goan students who had to cross the border [into British India] to appear for the matriculation exam” (2004, 53).

11. See Selma Carvalho, *Into the Diaspora Wilderness* (2010, 217).

12. For example, see Peter Nazareth, ed., *Pivoting on the Point of Return—Modern Goan Literature* (2010).

CHAPTER 4

1. Sutton’s characterization appears to draw from the author Roger King’s own past. King’s website mentions the writer’s employment “on behalf of UN agencies and international NGOs,” his career in international development work taking him to “many African countries” and various other parts of the world (rogerking.org).

2. Despite the formative impact of Zanzibar on the Goan diasporic self-imaginary, not many creative works by or about Goans reference the Indian Ocean island’s influence on the self-making of this community. Some creative nonfiction pieces fill this

void, as is the case with a few personal narratives in *Goa Masala: An Anthology of Stories by Canadian Goans* (Antao 2010). Although a register of the biographical stories of immigrants of Goan origin to Canada, the anthology includes memories, by some contributors, of Zanzibar. In a review of the book, Edith Melo Furtado says of the island and other parts of East Africa, as they appear in these recollections, that these lands are “evoked with much longing by some of the writers . . . , their yearning crossing several registers from individual reminisces of family to cultural ones, and affective exchanges with other non-Goan communities” (2018, 353). As also seen in *A Girl from Zanzibar*, the memory of the Afro-Asiatic multiculturalism of Zanzibar, imbued as it was and is with colonial segregation, continues to saturate the life of Goan diasporic figures even beyond their Indian Ocean existences.

3. Of course, it was not only Goans of humble origins who traversed the Indian Ocean in search of new opportunities; as borne witness to in Fatima M. Noronha’s short story “A Tale of Two Islands” (2013), even those from upper-caste backgrounds sought prospects in Zanzibar. The title of the story twins the islands of Divar in North Goa and Zanzibar in East Africa as the poles between which its characters make their privileged lives.

4. The naming of this character is incongruous given that her surname is spelled in Spanish rather than Portuguese fashion; in the latter form, she would be “Fernandes.”

5. For more of this econo-political history, see *The Union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar: Product of the Cold War?* (Mwakikagile 2008).

6. This telling “upstairs, downstairs” spatiality, symbolic of class and rank divisions, resounds even in the title of the album “Only You” appears on: *Upstairs at Eric’s*.

CHAPTER 5

1. *Skin* is not the only novel about African slavery in Goa. Vatsala Mendonça’s *Shadow of the Palm Tree* (2018) is also about this period in Goa’s history. While Mendonça’s novel firmly roots its Black and mixed-race women characters in Goa, it differs from *Skin* in its disconnection of these figures from Portuguese and postcolonial Africa and other parts of the world.

2. Mascarenhas died in 2019, but the exact date of her birth is not publicly known. For more on the author, visit her website: <http://mmascgoa.tripod.com/>

3. The French edition is titled *La Couleur de la Peau* (2002); in Portuguese, the novel appears as *A Côr da Pele* (2006); and the fourth edition, in English, bears its original title with some minor revisions to the text (2010).

4. For a comprehensive work on Goan diasporic literature, particularly in reference to the East African diaspora, see Peter Nazareth (ed.), *Pivoting on the Point of Return—Modern Goan Literature* (2010). An example of literature about Goan Portuguese Africa is Suneeta Peres da Costa’s *Saudade* (2018), a novella set in Angola as the end of Portuguese colonialism looms. The coming-of-age story of a Goan female pro-

tagonist, *Saudade's* Maria-Cristina's familial and personal tribulations transpire in tandem with the troubled goings on in the country. Scholarship on fiction and nonfiction about Goan Portuguese Africa continues to develop; an example of work of this nature is "Goans on the Move," a special issue of the *InterDISCIPLINARY Journal of Portuguese Diaspora Studies* (2018).

5. For more on the independence movements in Portuguese Africa and its impact on India and Goa see, for instance, Raghuraman S. Trichur, "Tourism and Nation-Building: (Re)Locating Goa in Postcolonial India" (2007). To read more on the history of Goan involvement in African freedom struggles as well as the growth of Goan diasporic decolonization efforts, see Selma Carvalho, *Into the Diaspora Wilderness* (2010).

6. While the Ashanti were, indeed, involved in the slave trade, their gamut would not have included what is present-day Angola. The novelist appears to conflate several disparate strands of African slavery here, and does so erroneously or, perhaps, with writerly license. For more on the Ashanti and slavery see, for example, Frank A. Salamone, "The Ashanti" (1997).

7. Other studies on slavery in the Portuguese empire as it involved, or had an effect on, Goa, include the work of Goan historians Celsa Pinto, *Trade and Finance in Portuguese India* (1994) and Fatima da Silva Gracias, *Kaleidoscope of Women in Goa* (1996), among others.

8. This is not to imply that such theories are unproblematic. As Vijay Prashad strives to differentiate in "Afro-Dalits of the Earth, Unite!" (2000a), Blackness of skin as a biological determinant of shared Afro-Asiatic identities need not equate with the reality of history, politics, lived experience, or even oppression.

9. For more on Vasco da Gama's pursuit of spices, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Career and Legend of Vasco da Gama* (1997). The Christianizing mission ran alongside the Portuguese desire for commerce, and da Gama's legendary part in this is fictionalized in a novel by Keki Daruwalla, *For Pepper and Christ* (2009).

10. Translation from Portuguese, mine.

11. A similar incident occurs in Jessica Faleiro's Inquisition-era-set short story "The Beginning" (2012). In it, an upper-caste Goan woman named Clarinda, who is in an abusive marriage, embarks upon a furtive affair with Raoul, a Portuguese priest stationed in colonial-era Goa. That priests play the role of illicit lovers in Faleiro and Mascarenhas's writing is strategic, allowing the women involved in these affairs to rely upon the veneer of celibacy attached to these clerics' profession. Ensured secrecy because of the priests' line of work, when the affairs lead to the birth of children in both works of fiction, and the husbands are oblivious to the paternity of these offspring, the women covertly undermine the oppressive heteropatriarchal familial structure they live within by subversively employing the power of yet another institution—the Church.

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