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SENIOR THESIS IN GENDER AND WOMEN'S STUDIES

Seeking Justice: Mobilizing the South Asian Community in the Face of Sexual Violence

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Pomona College

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To every survivor—you are a miracle, a wonder, and so loved. We are powerful beyond belief!

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Abstract

My thesis looks at how the rule of law fails to achieve justice for South Asian American survivors of domestic violence in a multitude of ways, corresponding to class and religious positionality, as well as documentation status, and how the South Asian community mobilizes in response to these failures by creating alternative modes of justice for survivors. Historically, these alternatives have taken form as direct service organizations, providing culturally and linguistically accessible services to survivors. I contend that these are helpful on an individual level, working to interrupt cycles of violence, but not at the collective level – stopping these cycles altogether. Given the systemic nature of sexual violence, working from transformative justice principles is an ideal modality of organizing, but not feasible given the structure of South Asian American communities today. In the interim between present post-violence work and future integration of transformative justice, I argue that pre-violence educational models are the most effective way to see tangible, generational, systemic change. Modes of resistance through educational initiatives aimed towards South Asian youth (ages 10 to 18) against rape culture will more effectively deter the cycles of intra-community violence from occurring, specifically when oriented from sites of religious worship and/or cultural centers – spaces that create a sense of South Asian identity. These educational spaces currently do not exist as an intra-community effort, so I analyze various feminist pedagogies as well as examples of this work being done within other communities to extend these praxes back to the South Asian community.

Chapter I
Introduction

Hope is an ontological need. Hopelessness is but hope that has lost its bearings, and become a distortion of that ontological need.
Paulo Freire

CW: sexual assault, rape, rape culture, misogyny, sexism

I have struggled within academia. I struggle with theorizing the lived experiences of my loved ones. I struggle with not comprehending word after word after word on a page, and by the end of the chapter coming to realize that each word was actually describing a piece of my experiences but how was I supposed to know? I struggle with the ever-present feeling of incompetence. Especially when I know that I *know* what we are analyzing better than most. Is it considered arrogance if it is entirely cloaked in self-doubt and perpetual-foreigner-anxieties? Maybe. Just maybe. I struggled finding and creating space in this discipline. Gender and Women's Studies. Vague, yet uncompromising.

A fitting place for a womyn[1] coming into herself, surpassing ambiguity for sharp understandings. Piecing together patriarchy with control and misogyny with power gave me the tools to name injustices that infected my life[2] and opened the floodgates to more questions than I had answers to. I don't know why members of my community didn't stop the violence enacted upon me. I do know that silence contributes to rape culture, and rape culture upholds systems of domination. The individual fits inside the systemic, but that does not make it any better. The greater explanation is bullshit if doesn't offer a way out, an alternative, a new future.

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[1] Womyn. Always womyn. To adamantly avoid inserting 'men' into ourselves moreso than they already are
[2] Sexual assault, emotional abuse, gaslighting

This is where I[3] step in. This is where I struggle to fill in the space I carved out for myself. This is my intervention.

1. Subject Position

In this thesis, I write from Standpoint Theory, privileging my positionality as an Indian-American survivor and second generation immigrant as a form of knowledge that better understands social realities than the perspectives generated by those in other social positions. Sandra Harding's theory describes unprivileged social positions as "less partial and less distorted" with a sense of "strong objectivity," the idea that marginalized perspectives are able to create more objective understandings of the world.[4] I claim my experiences as a body of evidence, calling on Betsy Lucal's theorizing of gender. She describes her daily experiences as "a testament to the rigidity of gender in our society, to the real implications of "two and only two" when it comes to sex and gender categories."[5] Lucal embodies the theory of "gender bending," and uses her experiences to reflect on the social construction of gender and how this system has deep personal consequences on her life.[6] Using this framework, I will draw on my experiential knowledge as a survivor of dating violence, a survivor of intra-community violence as theory that informs my arguments throughout this thesis.

Invoking Leanne Simpson's explanation of theory as "simply an explanation for why we do the things we do," my knowledge production is a form of storytelling and narrative imagination that attempts to "vision other existences outside of the current one by critiquing and

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[3] I: Sagarika, Academic, Survivor
[4] Sandra Harding, *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?: Thinking from Women's Lives* (Cornell University Press, 1991), http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt1hhfnmg.
[5] Betsy Lucal, "What It Means to Be Gendered Me: On the Boundaries of a Dichotomous Gender System," *Gender & Society* 13, no. 6 (1999): 781–97.
[6] Lucal.

analyzing the current state of affairs, but also by dreaming and visioning other realities."[7] I seek to disrupt the cycle of sexual violence within the Indian-American community by visioning new ways to find justice outside of the prison industrial complex.

2. Definitions

I locate my work within the US, focusing specifically on the Indian-American community (an incredibly vast community in itself) to cast a feasible scope for the purpose of this thesis, wanting to do my community justice. Though my case study in Chapter I is of an organization that supports all South Asian survivors, my analysis throughout Chapters II and III focuses on survivors within the Indian-American[8] community. I employ Creative Interventions' (CI) definition of community as the "networks of people with whom we may live, play, work, learn, organize, worship and connect to each other as community."[9] Community is key in my analysis because interpersonal violence generally occurs in community spaces between community members. Seven out of ten rapes are committed by someone known to the survivor.[10] Like CI, I believe that systems of violence can best be dismantled in community spaces where there is a deep investment by the people who are most affected and best understand the culture and dynamics of the space, who know both the survivor and perpetrator, and have the most at stake.

3. Background

There are specific barriers that encumber the Indian-American community from addressing sexual violence. This community straddles multiple rape cultures and patriarchies

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[7] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Pub., 2011).
[8] Going forward, I interchangeably use 'Indian-American' and 'Indian' to refer to the community
[9] "Creative Interventions Toolkit: A Practical Guide to Stop Interpersonal Violence." (Creative Interventions, n.d.), www.creative-interventions.org.
[10] "Perpetrators of Sexual Violence: Statistics | RAINN," accessed April 10, 2018, https://www.rainn.org/statistics/perpetrators-sexual-violence.

while entangled within the the Model Minority Myth. Dominant representations of Indians in America paint a picture of wealthy, highly educated, Indian professionals, invisiblizing all Indian immigrants who do not fit this singular image and erasing the complex history of Indian immigration to the US from mass memory. This immigration story began in the early 1900s, fraught with discrimination, racism, xenophobia, and exploitation. US immigration policy towards Asians at the time was largely shaped by labor needs, in other words shaped by extracting cheap labor out of colonized countries to bolster its settler nation-building.[11] Indian migrant workers did farm labor alongside other Asian communities; their arrival was labeled by the 1911 US Immigration Commission, identifying Indians as the "least desirable race of immigrants thus far admitted to the US."[12] From here, the California Alien Land Law of 1913 was passed, which prohibited "aliens ineligible for citizenship" from owning agricultural land or possessing long-term leases of land. This law was targeted at Japanese immigrants, but affected Chinese, Indian, and Korean immigrant farmers as well. The following Immigration Act of 1917 created the Asiatic Barred Zone, restricting peoples from Asia and the Pacific Islands entrance into the US.

As US labor needs changed post-World War II and during the Cold War, the Immigration Act of 1965 emerged to shift American racializations of black and brown bodies. This Act overturned the national-origins quota and supposedly opened up the channels of immigration, but in actuality created a structure that operated on a visa system that privileged and prioritized immigrants with specialized skills in science, technology, and medicine--otherwise known as the "brain drain." Conveniently enacted during the Civil Rights Movement, this Act heightened tensions between black and latinx community and Asian communities. Asians were (and

[11] Erika Lee, "Legacies of the 1965 Immigration Act," Text, South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA), October 1, 2015, https://www.saada.org/tides/article/20151001-4458.
[12] Lee.

continue to be) used by the State as a racial wedge between communities of color. The perceived collective success of Asian immigrants was (is) employed to minimize the role of racism in systematically disenfranchising other racial minority groups.[13] This immigration history to key to understanding the relationship of sexual violence and US law to Indian populations.

Honing in on the effects of rape culture paired with the Model Minority Myth, I suggest that any recognition of domestic violence by Model Minority communities can crack through the representation of being a perfectly assimilated immigrant group, reinscribing silence and complicity coming from within these communities. I posit that Indian-Americans do not report or address instances of sexual violence within the community both in an attempt to maintain Model Minority status and to continue upholding Indian forms of patriarchy. Annanya Bhattacharjee analyzes this relationship in her chapter, "The Public/Private Mirage: Mapping Homes and Undomesticating Violence Work in the Indian Immigrant Community," that is particularly helpful in setting the stage for my analysis of the Indian community's need to take accountability for sexual violence,

> I argued that the ideological force of the nation plays a dominant role in this immigrant community's construction of its identity. I found this to be consistent with the fact that the community members, who have the resources to construct actively this identity, belong predominantly to the male bourgeoisie, the creator of nations. The bourgeoisie in the Indian community, upon displacement from the nation of its origin, finds itself represented in the form of an immigrant community in a foreign nation. Where once it had posited itself through a hegemonic process as the universal norm in the nation of its origin, it now perceives itself to be in a position defined by difference and subordination. The immigrant bourgeoisie's desire to overcome this condition and regain its power of self-universalization manifests itself in its projection of itself as the leader of the community, guarding and propagating the essence of national culture. It aligns itself with a nationalist spirit which involves learning Western technology and participating successfully in the U.S. economy while, at the same time, protecting the cultural and

[13] "'Model Minority' Myth Again Used As A Racial Wedge Between Asians And Blacks," NPR.org, accessed April 11, 2018, https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2017/04/19/524571669/model-minority-myth-again-used-as-a-racial-wedge-between-asians-and-blacks.

> spiritual essence of the East. In the essay, I also noted that U.S. institutions describe Asian immigrants as the "model minority," and their encouragement of this community's economic success is based on their satisfaction with a group of people who are perceived to be conciliatory and motivated to succeed according to U.S. standards of success. A competitive relationship between different minorities, who vie with one another for "model" status, is thus set up, at the same time as they are seen to be distinct from the majority. Such a relationship impacts directly on the community's understanding of race relations in the U.S.[14]

These specific barriers add to existing arguments that the legal system fails to achieve justice for survivors, especially for minorities within the Indian community who do not fit the bill of the Model Minority. This includes Muslim Indians, low-income Indians, undocumented Indians, low caste Indians, Christian Indians—populations that are erased from the American imaginary, and as a result by the rule of law. The law was written by and for white men, reproducing injustice and oppression.

The law lends itself to people with various privileges who are empowered by the State to use it as a means to seek justice. A prolific Critical Legal Studies scholar, Patricia Hill Collins, explains that "one's sense of empowerment defines one's relation to the law, in terms of trust/distrust, formality/informality, or rights/no-rights ("needs")."[15] Those empowered by the Model Minority Myth within the Indian community have the best chance of receiving justice via the rule of law. But even this speculation is questionable. Dean Spade, a trans activist and legal scholar, highlights the Model Minority mentality in law reform as well, noting that "some of the people, the most enfranchised in a particular group, will be somewhat better off through law reforms, because they have a lot of other kinds of wealth or privilege in terms of the overall

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[14] M. Jacqui. Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, Thinking Gender; Thinking Gender. (New York: Routledge, 1997).
[15] Patricia J. Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991).

system. Oftentimes, in that way law reform stabilizes a status quo; it stabilizes the existing field of maldistribution."[16]

Those who do not fit the stereotype of Indian-American are not afforded the rights that come with law reform and will be further marginalized by the system. Spade traces the impact of the law: on one hand legal reform is ineffective and on the other many equitable laws fought for by activists and visionaries are not enforced or implemented. This can be seen through legislation that declares race and disability discrimination illegal and yet has not " solved concentrated joblessness, poverty, homelessness, or criminalization of people with disability and people of color."[17] Marxist sociologist Nicos Poulantzas reveals that in the capitalist state, "everyone is free and equal before the law [based on bourgeois juridical axiom] on condition that he is or becomes a bourgeois. And that, of course, the law at once allows and forbids."[18] Rather than investing time in offering reform strategies to the law, I take on Spade's challenge to "work to build alternatives to violent state systems," to "work to educate ourselves about racism, ableism, transphobia, sexism," and to "actually look at what's going on in our actual communities and work with other people directly to change things that concern us."[19]

4. Structure of thesis

In Chapter II, I conduct a case study of Sakhi for South Asian Women informed by ethnographic research done by Margaret Abraham and Monisha Das Gupta. Beginning with an analysis of Transformative Justice, I set the stage to offer historical context that explains Sakhi's radical roots and initial goal to both offer direct survivor support and organize against systems of domination. Outlining various modes of organizing as the organization grew, the tensions

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[16] "Trans-Formative Change," Guernica, March 1, 2011, https://www.guernicamag.com/spade_3_1_11/.
[17] "Trans-Formative Change."
[18] Alexander and Mohanty, *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*.
[19] "Trans-Formative Change."

between upper and lower class South Asians slowly become evident, building towards Sakhi's decision to formalize as a NGO and focus only on survivor support. I argue that this organization, and ones like it, can only interrupt and do not disrupt cycles of violence. They do the crucial work of supporting survivors which breaks cultural silence and stigma, but cannot simultaneously and cohesively address pre-violence intervention.

In Chapter III, I suggest radical education as an alternative that specifically targets pre-violence intervention. I draw from radical scholarship to outline critical pedagogy and highlight the importance of love and trust in an anti-violence curriculum. Using critical pedagogy as a foundation, I then imagine a set of principles to inform a culturally-relevant anti-rape culture curriculum to take the a step towards transformative justice. I analyze WISE, an organization that conducts anti-rape culture lessons with middle and high school youth, as my proof of concept. I bring these pedagogies back to the Indian community, conceptualizing a way in which this information can be disseminated to Indian youth, stopping the pattern of violence.

In Chapter IV, I bring radical pedagogies back to the Indian community, conceptualizing a culturally-relevant anti-rape culture curriculum to disseminate this information to Indian youth to stop the pattern of violence. I first examine specificities of rape culture found in Indian culture and analyze the role and function of religious spaces that I will address through the curriculum. Envisioning seven themes to discuss with middle and high school youth, I create seven sample lesson plans that employ the principles created in Chapter II. This curriculum traces the development of critical understandings of systemic violence and challenges Indian patriarchy at each step.

Moving beyond legal structures as a means to find justice, I advocate for a shift towards community accountability to push the Indian community to support survivors and disrupt this

cycle of violence. Through collective action that prioritizes survivor support and safety we can begin to approach justice and healing. This being said, it is important to establish where the community is positioned and not romanticize our collective capacity. With this project I want to inspire and lift up the Indian community to do more and do better in deconstructing the systems that enable sexual violence. I want to build upon the incredible, radical work already being done by womyn of color in my community. Honoring that labor, I direct my work towards education and empowerment. Joining a long line of feminists and radical scholars along the way.

Chapter II
Sakhi for South Asian Women: A Case Study

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I analyze Sakhi for South Asian Women to examine existing, institutionalized anti-violence work begun by South Asian activists in the 1980s that specifically addresses intra-community domestic violence and provides forms of support to survivors that the legal system does not. To find alternatives to the system, Sakhi's original mission was to both directly support survivors and address the systemic conditions that enable instances of sexual violence to occur through organizing tactics. As one of the first South Asian Women's Organizations, this was not possible. To establish themselves and gain legitimacy within the South Asian community, Sakhi had to relinquish its hope to radically disrupt the cycle of violence through transformative justice. Factors like fundraising, donor support, NGOization, and class politics barred them from achieving this goal. I contend that before combating both the systemic and individual levels of violence, a foundation of easily accessible direct service organizations must first be established, followed by community recognition of and action against rape culture, both of which can then lead to transformative justice-based interventions.

I suggest that direct service work serves to interrupt instances of violence, but it cannot deter the repetitive cycles of violence. Its individualistic approach is necessary, but impedes greater systemic change. Though Sakhi sought to intervene on both the systemic and individual levels, they were unable to do so because of the social positioning of the South Asian community as a relatively new immigrant population. Radical interventions necessitate community coalitions, difficult to create when establishing cultural roots in the diaspora while navigating newly hyphenated identities and a new geographic plane.

Despite its limitations, Sakhi's work empowers and uplifts thousands of survivors "to attain…the right to determine one's choices in life, to achieve self reliance, to free oneself from any form of coercion or violence, to reject the existing structures that discriminate on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, and class, and to influence the direction of social change."[20] By mid 1998, over 1,500 women had contacted the organization,[21] and in 2014, Arthur Pais in *India Abroad* described Sakhi as, "not only an organization but also a significant movement, with an annual budget of $7 million and inspiring over two dozen similar organizations across North America."[22] Among South Asians who adamantly silence sexual violence Sakhi challenges the systematic oppression of women by pushing conversation about sexual violence to the forefront and giving visibility to sexual and gendered violence in the South Asian community, a foundational step to dismantling the foundations of hegemonic, entrenched systems of oppression.[23] Their vocal presence alone is a radical act, and the sheer number of women who reached out in its first decade is indicative of the need for a survivor support organization serving the South Asian community.

Though not attained, Sakhi's initial goal was an early example of working from a Transformative Justice (TJ) praxis. Working from the ground up, TJ utilizes collective action and collective action requires collective change, ultimately pushing to unsettle the quotidian. It is a holistic approach that meets the immediate needs of the survivor while also working to create generational change through collective healing, accountability, and resiliency, all outside formal

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[20] Margaret Abraham, *Speaking the Unspeakable: Marital Violence among South Asian Immigrants in the United States*, 1 online resource (xvii, 234 pages) : illustrations vols. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000).
[21] Abraham.
[22] Arthur J. Pais, "An Organization That Became a Movement," *India Abroad; New York, N.Y.*, June 6, 2014, sec. COMMUNITY.
[23] Alexander and Mohanty, *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*.

legal procedures and systems to prevent future violence.[24] Sakhi did not have capacity, people power, or adequate community support to both meet the needs of survivors while working from the ideological standpoint of TJ. Today Sakhi stands solely as a direct service provider, addressing the effects of sexual violence on an individual basis.[25]

In this chapter, I give a brief explanation of TJ, emphasizing that it is currently not a feasible mode of justice and accountability within immigrant communities. My analysis explicates the need for a multitude of organizations, both institutionalized and not, to work in conjunction to stop the cyclical nature of sexual violence. Realistically when considering capacity and the effects of institutionalizatoin, it is impossible to expect Sakhi to combat both systemic conditions of violence and the violence itself, though the founders strove to do so. To explain the changing the course of Sakhi's work, I first offer an organizational history, analyzing its primary programming, its tangible impact on the South Asian community, and its subsequent move towards NGOization. I describe the internal dynamics between the volunteers and founders and chart how rising tensions came to a breaking point with the Domestic Workers Collective. To compare its onset with how Sakhi exists today, I lastly analyze its current work and acclaim within the community.

Sources examined for this chapter include two ethnographies done by South Asian women about Sakhi, several periodicals that cover events from 1996 to the present day, and a first-hand account by Anannya Bhattacharjee, one of Sakhi's founders.

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[24] "Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective." Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective. Accessed November 12, 2017. https://batjc.wordpress.com/.

[25] The purpose of a direct service organization is to provide survivor-specific services post-violence, whether it is emotional support, finding shelter, filing for legal sanctions, child custody, etc.

2. Transformative Justice

Transformative Justice (TJ) proposes an alternative mode of resistance to address both conditions and instances of violence without relying on the law, as the criminal justice system will not lead to a violence-free community.[26] As described by Generation Five, an organization that seeks to end the sexual abuse of children in five generations, TJ:

> …seeks to provide people who experience violence with immediate safety and long-term healing and reparations while holding people who commit violence accountable within and by their communities. This accountability includes stopping immediate abuse, making a commitment to not engage in future abuse, and offering reparations for past abuse. Such accountability requires community responsibility and access to on-going support and transformative healing for people who sexually abuse.
>
> In addition, Transformative Justice also seeks to transform inequity and power abuses within communities. Through building the capacity of communities to increase justice internally, Transformative Justice seeks to support collective action toward addressing larger issues of injustice and oppression.

TJ disrupts violent instances through conversation and concrete action, and dismantles the conditions that allow this kind of violence to occur by using community-based interventions to chip away at systemic oppression via generational change. It exists completely outside the layers of individual, state-sanctioned, and systemic forms of oppression that continually reinforce one another, and instead works to create new spaces for marginalized people, women and non-binary folks especially, to live in a violence-free society.

Sakhi's original mission gestures towards TJ through its assertion that fighting abuse from an individualized and privatized perspective is not enough, the South Asian community must deconstruct the perpetuation of violence collectively. Anannya Bhattacharjee, one of Sakhi's founders, describes that for immigrant women,

> it is not enough to fight the abuse in the family home alone. It is also necessary to fight the violence inherent in the community's use of the figure of the woman to construct its

[26] See Angela Y. Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?*, 2003.

> identity, and in its summoning up of essentialized and elitist national culture. It is important to fight the way definitions of the immigrant family, the immigrant community, and the immigrants' national heritage conveniently work toward creating a privatized U.S. nation-state based on oppression.[27]

Bhattacharjee talks about fighting state-constructed definitions that employ language as signifiers and mechanisms of violence and control. Imposed western definitions of womanhood help to construct a singular 'Brown Woman'. The subsequent lack of contextual understanding from well-meaning institutions, whether that be domestic violence shelters or the family court, collapse all brown women into a singular category, constraining which resources and rights South Asian immigrant women can access in the US. As one of the first culturally-specific direct service providers for the South Asian community, Sakhi sought to empower survivors *and* combat the systemic perpetuation of violence to fill the large gaps in understanding that the founders witnessed and experienced as immigrant women of color.

But, the impeding lack of access to resources, whether that be legal services or health care, presented a slew of additional barriers that had to be effectively addressed by Sakhi to reach survivor populations, an endeavor that requires people power and commitment from the community, and also continually challenges power structures in the US that "create and maintain the "oppressive differences" that exacerbate domestic violence."[28] Responses to domestic violence from within the South Asian community are thus inherently a deeply political project. However given capacity and positioning of the community, can only operate on one level in this political moment as TJ hinges on people power, commitment from the community to acknowledge the many forms of violence occurring, a willingness to work side-by-side to end the cycle of violence, and the resources to do so.

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[27] Alexander and Mohanty, *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*.
[28] Abraham, *Speaking the Unspeakable*.

This being said, I assert that TJ as an organizing tactic is not plausible in this political moment given the barriers to its sustainability and practicality in a time where violence is constantly reproduced yet is forcefully silenced, regardless of which community it is coming from. TJ is a time-intensive process, as the transformation of a perpetrator is neither linear nor measurable. The lack of tangibility here (given that reform, rehabilitation, and restoration are not necessarily evident to the human eye) contradicts the capitalist structure we live in today. Without a promise of timely success, the imagined future that TJ offers is irrelevant. And thus, though a powerful means towards change, TJ is not a feasible undertaking for any community—particularly the South Asian community, a relatively new immigrant population that straddles multiple patriarchies and rape cultures. This paired with the Model Minority Myth leaves little to no room for subverting capitalist notions of time.

I argue that direct service work and systemic change work can only work hand-in-hand if direct services are normalized, replete, and accessible throughout the community. Survivors in the community need to have proper support structures before restorative work with perpetrators and rape apologists can be done. In lieu of TJ, Sakhi works to provide some of these needed services for South Asian survivors: offering emotional support, connections to legal aid, assistance in navigating New York City's social service programs, and job training to list a few. Given the depth and intensity of their work, it exhausts what community volunteers can offer. Because there is only space to focus on short-term change before the work of systemic change can be taken seriously, inciting TJ processes can occur when community-specific direct services are established and well known. Only after there is a distinct space where survivors will be centered and have their needs met can the community even begin to engage in the tenuous process of TJ.

3. Historical Context

Several cultural and religious-based South Asian organizations emerged in the 1980s; these organizations created spaces for particular groups of South Asian immigrants, mainly Indian/Hindu folks, to find community and make cultural connections within the US, to coalesce but in a non-threatening, often assimilatory fashion. Little to no race, gender, sexuality, or class and caste-based resistance work was being done by these organizations, to the extent that "the gendered division of labor was reinforced within the institution of the family and the social and religious organizations of the South Asian community."[29] The limited scope of these India-centric, apolitical organizations is what Monisha Das Gupta defines as "place-taking politics."[30] The "place-takers," are organizations that "will continue to conserve and consolidate its constituencies' privileges," the privileges of elitist and upper class Indian Model Minority immigrants.[31] Das Gupta confronts place-taking politics with her analysis of organizations bent towards social change, organizations operating out of "space-making politics."[32] These organizations are ones that, "will seek to transform the conditions that exploit them," ones that recognize intersectionality[33] and work to deconstruct and reimagine existing systems.[34]

South Asian American activists engaged in space-making work through the broader Asian American movement and other feminist movements before the creation of radical South Asian-specific organizations, not directly addressing the South Asian cultural nuances within

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[29] Abraham.
[30] Monisha Das Gupta, *Unruly Immigrants: Rights, Activism, and Transnational South Asian Politics in the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).
[31] Das Gupta.
[32] Das Gupta.
[33] Intersectionality is a term coined by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw and articulated by black feminists for decades that gives an understanding of how the experiences of women of color the product of intersecting patterns of racism, sexism, classism, ableism, xenophobia, and other systems of domination.
[34] Das Gupta, *Unruly Immigrants*.

sexual violence. In doing this work outside of the South Asian American community, the gap in awareness and consciousness-raising regarding intra-community sexual violence, only deepened. Though community activists brought the importance of South Asian cultural nuances to the bigger AAPI movement, the political movement worked to destabilize unjust structures, not to create community-based change about sexual violence. Working from within the community can amplify survivor voices and needs, acknowledging the immensity and diversity of survivor experiences. Statistics show that generally in America, 33% of women experience sexual violence in their lifetime and 25% of women experience sexual violence and/or severe physical violence by an intimate partner.[35] When put in contrast with statistics about the South Asian-American community, 40.8% women report being physically and/or sexually abused by their male partners and 65% of women who reported physical abuse also reported sexual abuse.[36]

The deliberate silence around marital rape and domestic violence was (is) palpable within the South Asian community, and the existing, predominantly white, direct service women's organizations focused on helping survivors of domestic violence did (do) not have the cultural or linguistic understandings needed to offer comprehensive support. Yet these organizations, branching off mainstream second-wave feminist work, approached domestic violence as an isolated issue, without grounding the gender violence in cultural, societal, or structural norms. These organizations did not have a cultural and/or race-conscious approach, ultimately lacking intersectionality and unable to provide survivors with a trauma-informed approach.[37] Looking

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[35] Smith, S.G., J. Chen, K.C. Basile, L.K. Gilbert, M.T. Merrick, N. Patel, M. Walling, and A. Jain. "The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010-2012 State Report." Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.

[36] Raj, A, and J Silverman. "Intimate Partner Violence against South-Asian Women in Greater Boston." *Journal of the American Medical Women's Association*, 2002, 57(2): 111-114.

[37] Trauma-informed services are not specifically designed to treat symptoms or syndromes related to sexual violence, but they are informed about and sensitive to trauma-related issues present in survivors… A trauma-informed approach also integrates an understanding of a survivor's history and the entire

specifically at rape crisis centers, Kimberlé Crenshaw identifies a particular shelter politic in which women's subordination is only located in the psychological effects of male domination, "overlooking the socioeconomic factors that often disempower women of color."[38] Focusing on gender alone neglects the significant role of other axes of power in instances of sexual violence and survivor support. An immigrant survivor who is dependent on their spouse for documentation, for example, may not be able to leave their abusive home or call the police for help, yet both are common suggestions given by mainstream shelters to meet a survivor's immediate safety needs. Similarly for survivors with language barriers, mainstream direct service organizations and shelters are not accessible, at both face value and considering the difficulty in communicating private, intimate violence in one's second or third language.

4. The Emergence of Sakhi

The late 80s and early 90s ushered in the creation of several South Asian Women's Organizations (SAWO) that followed the lead of the Asian American movement in the 1960s. The Asian American movement itself was inspired by the civil rights movement and anti-Vietnam War movements, linking these movements together in a fight towards anti-racist, anti-sexist, and anti-imperialist justice. SAWO built on work done from the margins by black feminists[39] and women of color collectives,[40] whose feminisms challenged one-dimensional approaches in their efficacy and reach, organizing with both race and gender in mind, as the two

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context of their experience. The model below represents how each individual's reaction to a traumatic event is influenced by the circumstances surrounding the event and the individual's lived experiences. The attributes of the community to which the survivor belongs also can influence how a survivor is affected by trauma. The individual, the event, and the environmental factors can shape a survivor's reaction to trauma and the healing process. ("Building Cultures of Care")

[38] Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241–99, https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039.

[39]See Barbara Smith, *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2000).

[40] See Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, Fourth edition. (Albany: State University of New York (SUNY) Press, 2015).

are inseparable. SAWO emerged to focus on how racism, patriarchy, and imperialism overlap to create a multiplicity of identities and experiences that cannot be contained within the monolith of 'South Asia.' The inception of SAWO were also a part of second-wave feminism, adding to Asian American feminisms, and bolstering Becky Thompson's argument that the feminist movement in the US was a multiracial initiative, not just instigated by white women.[41]

Sakhi is a pioneering SAWO that was founded in 1989 and continues its work to combat and respond to domestic violence within the South Asian community today. Five first generation South Asian women came together to create Sakhi – Anannya Bhattacharjee, Malika Dutt, Tula Goenka, Geetanjali Misra, and Romita Shetty. Their subject positions greatly influence their approach to domestic violence work, though coming from different class backgrounds in South Asia, all five were middle to upper class, professional, and college-educated at the time of creating Sakhi. One founder reflects that "[we] carried with us ideas of success and habits of professionalism arising out of our training and education in fields such as law, science, finance, and film," indicating self-criticality and deep reflection.[42] Malika, a feminist organizer, explains Sakhi's collective intention in focusing on domestic violence organization opposed to other forms of gendered violence,

> …we decided that we needed a mechanism through which we do the consciousness raising work and to do the organizing work. Domestic violence seemed to be one of those issues, which allowed women to come together across class, across race, across sexual preference. I mean violence against women is generally an issue around which women come together I think most easily. Also there was a huge need. I mean we kept hearing horror story after horror story of battered women in the community and you know nobody knew where to go, nobody knew what to do. So that was the motivation behind having a focus on domestic violence because we didn't think that we could be all things

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[41] Becky Thompson, "Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism," *Feminist Studies* 28, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 337.

[42] Sonia. Shah, *Dragon Ladies : Asian American Feminists Breathe Fire* (Boston : South End Press, 1997).

> to everybody. But I think the idea was that domestic violence would be the hook through which we raised larger issues about women. That it wouldn't end at domestic violence. We also didn't want to be a service organization. I mean, we were very clear that we were a political group. I mean that we did have a political consciousness.[43]

From the onset, this vision of collectively engaging folks coming in with different politics of location and positionalities created space to foster radicality. Given the vast and varied nature of the South Asian diaspora, unification and solidarity across many lines is difficult to attain, let alone conceptualize.

Though Sakhi serves South Asian women from several class, religious, nationality, and educational backgrounds, a majority come from low-income homes and/or are low-wage workers while most of the volunteers are middle to upper class young professional women, an important aspect of its organizational structure when considering whose voices are heard and prioritized. Through my analysis, I believe that even with this discrepancy, the founders of Sakhi acknowledged the unbalanced power dynamic and actively sought to counteract it with objectives to "integrate survivors who call Sakhi during crises into Sakhi's decision-making membership."[44] Though Sakhi's organizational structure consists of a formal board, paid staff, and volunteers, the founders' goal was "to ensure that the organization would be driven by volunteers rather than staff. We wanted to ensure that even if we lost funding there would be a body of women committed to continuing the work. Also, being volunteer-driven would ensure that the direction of the organization was not solely decided by just a few women."[45] Over time the board held greater sway than both the staff and volunteers, pointing Sakhi towards a more conservative direction. Although the volunteers for the most part occupied different social strata than the clients, both held radical conceptions of community change. The volunteers and clients

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[43] Abraham, *Speaking the Unspeakable*.
[44] Abraham.
[45] Abraham.

sought to push the South Asian American community to reevaluate internalized notions of gender, womanhood, and violence. As the board's power increased, the radical acts that pushed this value-set forward had to be diluted.

5. Sakhi's Radical Roots: Protest and Public Shaming

Sakhi's early actions exemplify its radical roots, forcing the South Asian American community to face the effects of sexual violence head on by making what was once a private matter visible. They began with leafleting various religious centers across NYC to spread awareness about the seriousness and consequences of domestic violence.[46] By approaching different cultural sites, Sakhi made a feminist intervention to dispel attitudes coming from within the South Asian community that reinscribed the Model Minority Myth by attempting to portray the community as a monolithic whole. This not only erases the lived realities of entire segments of the South Asian community, but also feeds into the American Dream mentality by upholding an image of the South Asian community as educated and economically well off, as a community that has seamlessly blended into America. With this mindset, "women become the main symbol of cultural continuity and are faced with both external and internal pressures to uphold the culture in specific ways, including adhering to culturally prescribed gender roles."[47] Idealizing the South Asian woman in such a manner strips her of her rights to anger, freedom, and independence; it extends to her bearing the responsibility of upholding familial and community honor, honor being synonymous to an obligation to the patriarchal head, whether that be a priest, community leader, husband, father, or brother. These cultural spaces encourage silence.

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[46] Abraham.
[47] Abraham.

On occasions like Diwali,[48] India's Independence Day Parade, and Pakistan's Independence Day Parade, all of which glorify South Asian culture and history, Sakhi's physical presence gave visibility to domestic violence and space for survivors to claim their own version of South Asianness.[49] In particular, the Indian Independence Day parade, planned by the Federation of Indian Associations, was a site espousing cis-heteropatriarchal nationalism. Gay and lesbian South Asian Americans were historically barred from the parade, but consistently protested from the sidelines, "waving gay pride placards along with the green-and-orange Indian flag."[50] In contesting the deep patriarchal internalizations of the ideal South Asian woman (a heterosexual, self-sacrificing, chaste, and virtuous wife), Sakhi protested alongside, aligning themselves with progressive, radical movements towards equity and liberation.

Protest was used as a tool to disrupt the norm, elevating and giving power to marginalized voices, which created a space of resistance for some and deep discomfort for many. Before the 1997 Indian Independence Day parade, Madhulika Khandelwal, the then acting director of the Queens College Asian American Center, described the protest as, "an inevitable shift in the way a new ethnic community defines itself in the United States… the protesters see themselves as South Asians rather than as members of ethnic groups like Gujaratis, for instance, or even as Indians or Pakistanis. They also tend to be concerned about issues like racial and sexual equality. The federation, on the other hand, is more rooted in India than in this country."[51] This form of rootedness in India is dangerous considering who is able to create these cultural spaces in the US – in the case of the Federation it was a wealthy, Hindu, Indian man. Thinking

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[48] Diwali is the Hindu festival of lights, one of the biggest festivals celebrated in India and across the diaspora.
[49] Abraham, *Speaking the Unspeakable*.
[50] Somini Sengupta, "Groups Plan Protest At India Day Parade," *New York Times, Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y.*, August 17, 1997, sec. 1.
[51] Sengupta.

about who has the power to define "womanhood" and the Indian male nationalist assertion of "protecting "womanhood,"" as "a concept that is almost synonymous with the nation itself," Sakhi's public stance protested against a monolithic Indian identity that bars survivors and LGBTQIA folks.[52] A battered South Asian woman lives outside the bounds of the Model Minority. In the case where she derives her class and immigration status via her husband, any attempt to leave that marriage can move her to an "undesirable" status, or "plunge her into further obscurity."[53]

As a tactic coming out of Sakhi's goal to operate on both systemic and individual levels, this form of protest did not work towards systemic change (to transform perpetrators of violence in any way) but did tackle community complacency, the step in between the individual and the system. Joining in the protest upped Sakhi's visibility as an oppositional and confrontational force, and for the first few years, Sakhi was met with overt resistance from the South Asian community. In an interview, Bhattacharjee explained,

> Not everyone welcomes our message. Sometimes the priest or imam has heard of women this is happening to, and they are more open to us…then there are many others who feel we are doing something that is none of their business, or that we are homebreakers. Some men have written anonymous letters, accusing Sakhi of being a society of frustrated spinsters.[54]

Reducing Sakhi staff and volunteers to "frustrated spinsters" further reinforces the image of the "good South Asian woman," punishing those fighting against this violence by pushing them to the margins of the community.

Sakhi's progressive positioning and allyship worked to empower survivors by giving them space to claim their own version of South Asianness, to celebrate and legitimate the

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52 Alexander and Mohanty, *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*.
53 Alexander and Mohanty.
54 Constance L. Hays, "Enduring Violence In a New Home," *New York Times, Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y.*, December 6, 1993, sec. B.

intersections of their identities. In conjunction with the tactic of public protest, groups of Sakhi volunteers would demonstrate in front of the houses of perpetrators, publicly shaming them; these public showings of solidarity broke silence and directly confronted the South Asian community, once again challenging the portrayal of South Asian women as quiet and passive. One key action took place in 1995. Syeda Sufian, a young Bangladeshi woman, was horrifically assaulted, doused with gasoline, and set on fire by her husband. After miraculously surviving, various members of the South Asian community were brought together by Sakhi to demonstrate outside her husband's home. In doing so, the community "publicly condemned this atrocity, shamed the batterer and his family, and showed that violence against South Asian women in the United States would not be tolerated and kept private for the sake of family and community harmony."[55] They stood outside and chanted: "Wake up fathers. Wake up brothers. If you abuse, you will lose."[56]

Prior to these kinds of actions, the community could more easily absolve itself of responsibility and separate itself from the violence it sanctioned through its silence. Public shaming is an effective strategy in finding justice without going through legal routes, especially within the South Asian community where honor and shame are key tenets of its value systems.[57] Working from the individual level, public shaming can empower survivors, serving as an interruption to the cycle of violence, misogyny, and patriarchy and simultaneously addressing rape culture. It began to break down the barriers between public and private, explained by Bhattacharjee,

> In my experience of working against domestic violence, we rarely step into the home of the heterosexual, patriarchal family itself. We find ourselves working around the home but never

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[55] Abraham, *Speaking the Unspeakable*.
[56] Das Gupta, *Unruly Immigrants*.
[57] Das Gupta.

> within it. Even in our most radical moments, it is a space we cannot enter, as it is sacred and private. When a woman is at home with her abuser (her spouse), we cannot approach her. Only when she leaves her marital home can we openly approach her. It is that sense of respect for that "sacred" space we call home, and the fear that it inspires, that continues to haunt us in our work.[58]

Though these demonstrations all took place outside the home, they did the work of changing the narrative of domestic violence from a shameful matter to one that should incite anger and a collective response. From a TJ standpoint, however, the tactic of addressing rape culture through public and visible protest does not do the work of transforming perpetrators, rapists, and rape apologists. It shifts the blame from the woman to the violent man, rightfully so, but does not deconstruct the deeply inculcated mindset of misogyny and toxic masculinity.

6. Subversion and Resistance: Sakhi's Preliminary Programming

Sakhi's radicality continued to manifest in their service programs for survivors: the court interpreters campaign, health project, NYPD cultural sensitivity project, job-training program, and literacy program. The court interpreters campaign was developed in the late 90s to protest the system of court-appointed interpreters in the New York family courts. When the courts provided translation services, the interpreters were predominantly male and unreliable; their biases and attitudes were informed by rape culture and often distorted the survivor's story. The lack of training, monitoring, and accountability distorted the survivor's account and heightened the anxieties associated with reporting instances of violence; Sakhi volunteers would be forcefully present in court while survivors were undergoing these legal processes. They would act as interpreters when possible and watchdogs when not.[59] The volunteers served as advocates for the survivor's rights, alerting the judge if the interpreter had wrongly translated the survivor's words. In conjunction with this campaign, Sakhi worked with NYC's coordinator of court

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[58] Alexander and Mohanty, *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*.
[59] Abraham, *Speaking the Unspeakable*.

interpreters to raise attention to the need for female interpreters for various South Asian languages. This project was one that addressed both systemic barriers and individual needs by disrupting court spaces and impressing the need for an intersectional approach within such spaces, all while ensuring that individual cases were given a fair trial, reflective of Sakhi's mission.

Similarly, the health project worked on a macro level by aiming to raise awareness about abuse and increase cultural sensitivity among physicians and health care workers in the NYC Health System through workshops with the goal to help South Asian survivors navigate a foreign health care system. These training were similar to cultural sensitivity trainings conducted for the NYPD where Sakhi volunteers provided handbooks that covered gender- and culture-specific issues.[60] Both projects worked at the systemic and individual levels, ultimately encouraging health care professionals and the police to inform South Asian survivors about Sakhi's services making evident the fact that neither system could adequately support South Asian survivors. Instead, Sakhi volunteers strategically created connections between both spaces with the hope to make hospital visits more accessible to survivors, working to increase their sense of agency and control. However, given the capacity of volunteers, the trainings were limited and came secondary to direct survivor support.

The job-training program provided one-on-one skill learning workshops and the literacy program offered English-speaking classes; these classes used material written by women about women's rights, labor issues, racism, and events happening within the South Asian community, serving as a space for survivors to engage with political material while also acquiring the practical skills needed to enter the workforce. This program uplifted individual survivors to find

[60] Abraham.

economic self-sufficiency and push away from abusive tactics like forced dependency – a truly revolutionary act. At the macro level, however, it further idealized capitalism and did not touch the roots of rape culture. The tension between individual and systemic positioning manifests through these programs, telling of the need for sites of resistance at each level.

7. Domestic Workers Committee

In 1994, Sakhi expanded their definition of domestic violence to "all forms of violence taking place in the privatized space of the 'home,'" effectively extending their scope to fighting against the exploitation of domestic workers through their Domestic Workers Collective (DWC). This extension serves to validate that for a domestic worker, the private is their workplace (what should be considered public) and the public workplace is, then, a home (what should be considered private), and in cases where the domestic worker has a live-in situation, their home.[61] Distinctions made between the public and private add to who is and isn't considered a member of the public, coming to questions of citizenship and personhood and how legal structures play into these labels. Bhattacharjee notes that, "[A man's control over his wife or an employer's control over a domestic worker] is encouraged by the legal structures…of a so-called public (but, in a crucial sense private) space." Sakhi's move to address the needs of domestic workers was especially important given the immigration patterns of the 90s. Bhattacharjee's definition of this demographic is as follows:

> Domestic workers are primarily poor immigrant women. They may be either undocumented or, in some rare instances, sponsored by their employers for employment visas. In either case, they may face severe abuse from their employers, and their situation is often similar to that of the battered wife. The employer may deny her sponsorship or hold the power to do so over her. She is extremely vulnerable to all forms of abuse, often works around the clock, and may be denied basic subsistence. She, too, can face complete

[61] Alexander and Mohanty, *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*.

isolation as her employer can control her movements much like a husband controls those of a battered wife.

Thus, by working hand-in-hand with South Asian women placed at the intersection of race, gender, and class oppressions, Sakhi took a step towards combating classism and casteism, effecting structural change that no SAWO has embarked upon to date given the power dynamics within our community that celebrate upper-class and upper-caste immigrants.

The DWC was a project that better integrated and prioritized the voices of domestic workers themselves instead of having middle to upper-class volunteers at Sakhi deciding what they needed and what to focus on; it marked a shift from the Domestic Violence Project's one-to-one and individualistic nature in favoring collective work.[62] One of the first members of the DWC was Nahar Alam, a Bangladeshi woman who fled to the U.S. to escape her abusive husband, an influential police officer. We get a full picture of her experience through Monisha Das Gupta's ethnography. Her work looks particularly at immigrants who "can inhabit spaces in the global North because they are made into temporary workers, whose temporary status rests on not being afforded the social standing and political rights that come with citizenship."[63] Due to Alam's status as an undocumented immigrant, she had much difficulty in finding work. To support herself, she ended up working as a live-in domestic worker, but was again terribly abused, this time by her employers who overworked and underpaid her. Refusing to be treated this way, Alam went to Sakhi. They helped her access international mandates to fight for gender asylum. This allowed to her change her immigration status, upholding her "right to safety, her right to reside and legally work in the country to which she had fled, and the right to economic

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[62] The one-to-one structure was and is necessary in the domestic violence project given the nature of sexual violence and how it affects survivors differently even though it is a manifestation of systemic patriarchy and rape culture.
[63] Das Gupta, *Unruly Immigrants*.

justice and dignity for domestic workers like her."[64] Alam's case is important to both Sakhi and the South Asian survivor community as a whole; winning her asylum case was a testament to collective action and its effectiveness in fighting towards justice.

To create the DWC, Sakhi opened up space and, most importantly, leadership roles to domestic workers, avoiding the client-provider model because it serves to replicate systems of power that position a domestic worker as someone in need of help, rather than as an individual taking control to exert their rights. The project was extremely controversial and radical because it worked at the root of class and caste differences within the South Asian community. The DWC implicated the South Asian community by identifying structural issues that liberal middle and upper class, upper caste South Asians participate in and contribute to, mainly the dependence of professional women on the labor of low income working-class South Asian women. This includes domestic work, but also dependence on women's labor in the food industry, dry cleaning services, taxi services, etc. The project changed the notion of what is considered a "private" space by turning the home, the domestic sphere, into a place of contention.

The DWC was able to function for three years as an independent body that operated out of Sakhi, maintaining its autonomy and radicality by avoiding institutionalization, but just as it gained membership and movement it was suddenly dissolved in 1997. Though an immediate and sharp choice the dissolution comes as no surprise. The reason for dissolution has never been outrightly articulated, but I suggest that it was either due to the class positioning and status of Sakhi's board or an ideological split between the board and volunteers. It likely stemmed from the desire of upper-class folks to maintain the façade of the Model Minority. Bhattacharjee attributed the split to, "Sakhi's failure as a middle-class women's organization to work through

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[64] Das Gupta.

fundamental questions of class-based inequality of which Sakhi itself was a microcosm."[65] In calling Sakhi a microcosm of the classism within the South Asian community calls attention to the nature of DWC as a project by Sakhi volunteers who worked with domestic workers to organize and rally, in lieu of analyzing their own positionalities. The volunteers failed to recognize their own dependence on the labor of domestic workers and did not acknowledge that they were able to afford working outside their homes because of their class status, thereby bringing them into conflict with the aims and goals of the DWC.

Moving away from the DWC, some volunteers wanted to focus on only providing immediate and urgent services for battered women, arguing that it was too much to expect Sakhi to both provide services and organize for systemic change, though the original mission sought to, "organize survivors so as to challenge the very bases of patriarchy."[66] In the midst of supporting survivors, though, a volunteer pointed out that for a battered woman, for any woman fighting for her independence, getting a job will (and should) take precedence over organizing, however she also noted that, "activists often created a false opposition between service provision and social change work by treating the two types of work in isolation."[67] To her, a clear example of this was through the aforementioned literacy classes.

This brings up the crossroads at which Sakhi stood; the split was between solely doing service provision work, organizing work, or both. In Sakhi's December 1997 letter (post-DWC's dissolution) to its members & community, it stated, "We at Sakhi…believe in a multi-pronged approach to social change: one that combines education, advocacy, leadership development, and community action, and that does not place undue emphasis on one mode of organizing. We

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[65] Das Gupta.
[66] Das Gupta.
[67] Das Gupta.

believe that support services are an essential component to organizing and empowering battered women and domestic workers."[68] After the split, Alam created Andolan, an autonomous labor organization, to continue actively fighting for domestic workers' rights.

8. NGOization of Sakhi

To garner more community support after receiving countless offensive letters and phone calls and being excluding from mainstream community spaces, Sakhi's board sought to establish legitimacy by appealing to more conventional forms of resistance. Though its NGOization catalyzed more support from the community, it too came into conflict with its initial framework.[69] The tensions between the board, staff, and volunteers peaked. In an interview, Bhattacharjee quoted Diane Mitsch Bush noting that "the original emphasis of the battered women's movement on empowerment of women by shifting responsibility for violence from the woman to the perpetrator and locating his actions in a patriarchal power structure was lost as many shelters and their goals became institutionalized."[70] Along with the dissolution of the DWC, Sakhi officially became an NGO in 1997.

Before this point, Sakhi sustained itself with money from various fund-raising events aimed towards middle- to upper-class Indian, Hindu folks that worked to increase the visibility of domestic violence and begin conversations about its impacts on the South Asian community, but placed some control over the organization into the hands of wealthy donors. Film screenings, art showcases, cultural functions, etc. drew in large audiences who were more interested in the cultural and artistic attributes of the events, but once present, were made to engage with their

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[68] Das Gupta.

[69] Sanam Hasan et al., "Young Women Discuss Sexual Harassment and Assault," *News India - Times; New York, N.Y.*, July 26, 2002.

[70] Alexander and Mohanty, *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*.

positionalities in regards to domestic violence. In the process, Sakhi's visibility increased, reaching survivors and allies who otherwise might have been unaware of their services.[71]

Sakhi's ability to garner support from upper class South Asians reflected the founders' "motivation, as professional, middle-class women, to build "professional" operations" and ability "to communicate with the elite in [their] communities," putting more power in the hands of the already privileged segment of the community.[72] These events created an opportunity for upper class South Asians to do feel-good philanthropy without engaging with the systems that create the conditions for violence and their own complicity. This praxis is contradictory to the founders acknowledgement that "domestic violence organizations are gradually accepted by mainstream society and funders…[owing] much to the fact that they do not threaten important principles of straight, bourgeois society: individualism, ideas about privacy, reluctance in naming the oppressor, a belief in the legal system, and a desire for feel good benevolence."[73] Yet, it can be said that this self-critique is indicative of the founders' radical ideology that was hindered by the community's stance towards systemic change work. The revenue generated through these fundraising events was not sufficient to finance Sakhi's programming, forcing the organization to a turning point: moving deeper into grassroots organizing or institutionalization.

In 1997 Sakhi began to apply for state funding, contradicting their goal to work on both the systemic and individual levels especially when thinking about the division of funding between federal, state, and citywide grants and individual donor contributions. The idea that the control of social justice movements lies in the hands of either the state or wealthy people brought about much unease among the staff and volunteers. Sakhi formalized as a non-profit organization

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[71] Abraham, *Speaking the Unspeakable*.
[72] Shah, *Dragon Ladies*.
[73] Shah.

within the year, one of the most contested choices made by the founders given the ramifications of NGOization and the Non-Profit Industrial Complex (NPIC).[74]

Many scholars and organizers have explicated the dangers of the NPIC, honing in on its "control of dissent by incorporating [resistance] into the state apparatus," regulating the extent of radicalism shown by an organization and seizing funding as seen fit.[75] The catch to using foundation money is that the organization's principles and practices can be surveilled, a danger for communities of color and immigrant communities. This danger is extended to the NPIC's relationship to the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC)[76] because organizations are rarely able to employ alternative strategies to justice and instead focus on operating within criminal justice system to find solutions to violence. This only reinforces the PIC and continues the cycle of violence against black and brown communities. The overlap between the NPIC and the South Asian community is particularly tied together through the exportation of NGOization to the Third World. Gayatri Spivak's model of the West "saving brown women from brown men" from the "extreme patriarchy" within these "brown" nations directly affects the treatment of hyphenated, diasporic brown bodies, particularly brown, Muslim-presenting bodies in the USA, suggesting a loopback between "brown" nations and people from those nations in the USA.[77]

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[74] Dylan Rodríguez explains the NPIC as, "a set of symbiotic relationships that link political and financial technologies of state and owning class control with surveillance over public political ideology, including and especially emergent progressive and leftist social movements" (INCITE. *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*. Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press, 2007).
[75] INCITE., *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex* (Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press, 2007).
[76] "The prison industrial complex (PIC) is a term we use to describe the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, and imprisonment as solutions to economic, social and political problems." ("What Is the PIC? What Is Abolition?" Critical Resistance. Accessed November 7, 2017. http://criticalresistance.org/about/not-so-common-language/).
[77] Patrick Williams and Laura. Chrisman, *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

As an NGO, Sakhi was recognized at the city-level, appealing to a class of South Asians who valorize American democracy and the American Dream, both of which outline a particular way to non-confrontationally reach change. This demonstrates one way in which the South Asian American community was not ready to engage in TJ practices; a collective consciousness about the individual and systemic nature of violence has not formed. Sakhi had to begin with, and must continue, providing direct services to survivors because this baseline has yet to be met.

9. Sakhi today

Sakhi celebrated its 29th anniversary this month, continuing its work in survivor support, but now as an accredited NGO. Over the years, its reputation has noticeably solidified within the middle and upper class populations of the South Asian community, increasing donations and turn out for events specifically geared towards gender justice. Connecting with socially aware and conscientious community members has shifted Sakhi's position while also increasing the visibility of sexual assault, the caveat being that its programming is either not accessible to or does not reach vulnerable populations. Sakhi's website states that 75% of their clients are below the poverty line, conversely the audience that attends its Bystander, Sexual Assault 101, and Domestic Violence 101 trainings are, for the most part, middle to upper class South Asians and other direct service providers in New York City.

Looking beyond this training gap, Sakhi continues to provide crucial, individualized services for survivors, accounting for both societal barriers and the emotional support survivors might need. Currently, Sakhi offers domestic violence and sexual assault services, an economic empowerment program, a reproductive justice initiative, and a youth empowerment program that reaches out to the children of survivors. These programs use an integrated approach, aiming "to

work backward in terms of unraveling how inequity has exacerbated in the last twenty years."[78] Tying together Sakhi's initial goal to this present moment it is evident that doing both direct service work and organizing is not feasible. However, Sakhi's continual expansion to the conversation surrounding sexual assault in the South Asian community is slowly breaking down internalized notions of rape culture and intentionally creating space to do so. Their work is invaluable and must continue alongside organizations that operate on different registers, each pinpointing a spot within the cycle of violence to engage in collective disruption, one might say.

[78] "#MeToo & The Fight For Black, Brown & Working-Class Women," The Aerogram, January 19, 2018, http://theaerogram.com/metoo-fight-black-brown-working-class-women/.

Chapter III
Applying Radical Pedagogies

Love will always move us away from domination in all its forms. Love will always challenge and change us.
bell hooks

Resistance lies in self-conscious engagement with dominant, normative discourses and representations and in the active creation of oppositional analytic and cultural spaces. Resistance that is random and isolated is clearly not as effective as that which is mobilized through systemic politicized practices of teaching and learning. Uncovering and reclaiming subjugated knowledge is one way to lay claims to alternative histories. But these knowledges need to be understood and defined pedagogically, as questions of strategy and practice as well as of scholarship, in order to transform educational institutions radically.
Chandra Mohanty

1. Introduction

Carrying over the understanding that direct service organizations only *interrupt* cycles of sexual violence, in this chapter I suggest using radical, community-based, anti-rape culture education as a modality to *disrupt* these cycles. I analyze various pedagogies in order to outline a set of principles that I deem necessary in enacting anti-rape culture education geared at youth ages 10-17 within the Indian community. I move from analyzing the South Asian community as a whole to the Indian community in order to avoid generalizing or reducing cultural difference. South Asia is vast and each country has specific needs in relation to rape culture education. I am focusing on India given my experiential knowledge as an Indian-American woman who has traversed many Indian-American spaces. The praxis I employ will be an intervention in normalizations and socializations of sexual violence, and when paired with direct survivor support, will offer a more cohesive community response plan to violence. Shifting from already existing institutional apparatuses to imagining new community-based possibilities, I argue that knowledge coming from within the community will be more legible and powerful, and better able to deter cycles of intra-community violence from occurring. Such community-based

educational spaces and initiatives that focus on rape culture do not currently exist because of the social stigma associated with sexual violence and lack of culturally-informed, culturally-sensitive knowledge. Thus, theorizing pre-violence education models informed by a set of critically aware pedagogical principles will be the most effective way to see tangible, generational change, bringing the Indian community one step closer to Transformative Justice, the ideal modality of organizing.

Working on multiple registers, anti-rape culture education is a form of strategic resistance that does the work of consciousness raising and provides the community with tools to actively respond to rape culture, the silencing of survivors, and the general lack of conversation about sexual violence with youth, all of which are key enabling factors that reproduce violence generation after generation. Internalizing what is taught, both formally and informally, and learning from social norms, we actively and passively reproduce violence through as if there is no alternative and then pass on these perceptions to the generations to come. But, if given the tools necessary to approach rape culture, I contend that a cohort of children versed in culturally nuanced knowledge will have greater capacity to intervene and disrupt the cycle of violence. Disruption requires intervention, and intervention requires education.

I focus on youth in particular because this age group is unique in their imaginative capacities, in being able to envision beyond the constraints of material reality to find both an end point and emancipation from cycles of violence. The anti-rape culture education I formulate is geared towards all youth who may or may not have directly experienced physical or sexual violence, but rather with the understanding that witnessing interpersonal violence is in itself

deeply traumatizing. I draw on the Creative Interventions Toolkit to explicate the effects of inherited and learned violence.[79]

- Direct physical harm including death if they are also being harmed or if they try to intervene and stop the harm
- Direct emotional harm if they are also being harmed
- Direct sexual harm if they are also being harmed
- Physical, emotional and other developmental damage because caretakers are unable to pay attention to their needs
- Physical disease caused by prolonged stress and worry
- Emotional damage caused by seeing people they love and depend on being harmed or harming others
- Emotional damage caused by constant feelings of danger and worry
- Emotional damage caused by confusing feelings of fear and love for those doing harm
- Emotional damage caused by confusing feelings of love for, disappointment in, or disrespect for those who are being harmed
- Unfair expectation or need to overly identify with the person doing harm or the person who is harmed.
- Unfair burden to comfort and protect others – siblings, parents, or others – from harm
- Increased vulnerability to community harms including sexual abuse, community violence, substance abuse due to lack of protection
- Increased vulnerability to self-harm including cutting or other self-injury, and substance abuse
- Increased likelihood to harm others including other children and pets/animals
- Lasting lessons about family and home as an unsafe and dangerous place
- Lasting lessons about love being confused with violence and harm

When youth bear witness to violence and watch it go unaddressed, silence is normalized and the possibilities of new futures without violence are diminished. Without the language to name violence, sources of imagination become limited. But, with language and community-based learning, youth will be equipped as a generation to forge non-violent pathways and engage in community accountability from a young age, making this praxis natural by uprooting routine rape culture.

In *Teaching to Transgress*, bell hooks quotes Terry Eagleton's *The Significance of Theory* where he argues that "children make the best theorists, since they have not yet been educated into accepting our routine social practices as "natural," and so insist on posing to those practices the most embarrassingly general and fundamental questions, regarding them with a

[79] "Creative Interventions Toolkit: A Practical Guide to Stop Interpersonal Violence."

wondering estrangement which we as adults have long forgotten. Since they do not yet grasp our social practices as inevitable, they do not see why we might not do things differently."[80] By giving children tools and language to address sexual violence, the cycle can be disrupted. I focus on the importance of language because I see it as a catalyst for conversation, increasing empathy, and building connections across generations, especially within immigrant communities with differing levels of both spoken English and Native languages. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, an Indigenous scholar, speaks particularly to decolonization within indigenous populations, but her theorizing of language is relevant to my endeavor. Smith notes, "decolonization must offer a language of possibility, a way out of colonialism," just as anti-rape culture work must provide an avenue to envision a world without violence.[81] She describes this sort of imagining as a way of theorizing and forming a deeper understanding as to *why* experiences as marginalized folks are unjust, and given these realities, finding alternatives to our world "from within our own worldviews."[82] Such principles are key to creating a culturally-relevant anti-rape culture curriculum for South Asian youth and cultivating the language needed to talk about sexual assault and beginning the consciousness-raising process about learned patriarchy and misogyny.

This chapter provides the foundation of critical education praxis and the development of guiding principles necessary to create a curriculum for South Asian youth that keeps diasporic culture, history and the tangible effects of colonialism, and intergenerational trauma in mind, further elaborated on in Chapter Four. Situating anti-rape culture work from within the community does the work Smith speaks of, understanding both a broad and specific worldview and mobilizing in response to these concerns as they affect one's community. This kind of work

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[80] bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 1994).
[81] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd ed. (London: Zed Books ;, 2012), http://worldcat.org.ccl.idm.oclc.org/oclc/805707083.
[82] Smith.

also shifts perceptions regarding what education is and who is able to offer education, valuing community and scholarly knowledge equally.

In this chapter I will draw from Paulo Freire and bell hooks' work to inform my critical pedagogy and the principles I outline. I draw on hooks as an anti-racist feminist theorist and Freire as a key founder of critical consciousness to assess key theories that lay the foundation for radical pedagogies and how these pedagogies can be employed as a disruption to the cycle of sexual violence. To complement the guiding principles I establish, I analyze anti-sexual violence curriculum designed for middle and high schoolers by WISE—an organization that seeks to end gender-based violence through survivor-center advocacy and education. I use WISE's program as a point of analysis because it is quite successful and its lesson plans do a good job of communicating understandings of rape culture and sexual violence to a young audience. WISE's curriculum serves as my proof of concept, and will be extended in chapter four with the anti-sexual violence curriculum I create for the South Asian community. Identifying rape culture as a location for intervention creates space to bring in specific aspects of South Asian culture that normalize sexual violence, offering a counter-narrative and imagining new futurities.

2. Foundations of Culturally-Critical Pedagogy

Culturally-critical pedagogy teaches critical thinking skills, to both reflect and take action, working against hegemonic education that treats education as a process of depositing knowledge rather than a process of active engagement to achieve liberation all through an inclusion and accessible framework. To resonate with Indian youth, knowledge situated within an appropriate cultural context takes into account different cultural norms around topics like sex, sexual assault, domestic violence, etc. The Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence put out a report that explains cultural competency as a

> system of care that acknowledges and incorporates, at all levels, the importance of culture, the assessment of cross-cultural relations, vigilance towards the dynamics that result from cultural differences, the expansion of cultural knowledge, and the adaptation of services to meet culturally unique needs. Culturally-relevant programs refers to services designed to meet the needs of the specific communities they serve, counteracting stigma and discrimination, moving past cultural stereotypes and biases, recognizing and addressing historical trauma and the healing value of cultural and spiritual traditions and connections.[83]

Using culturally appropriate and accessible language to explain concepts is helpful in situating family-based violence as both an individual and societal issue. If the knowledge taught is not relatable, it is more difficult to digest. But, if information is described in terms of what students have always known and already know, the experiential knowledge they carry is valued and brought into the room as a tool to facilitate a form of praxis that can be enacted by the Indian community. Cultural relevance makes space to explore and deconstruct specific nuances within domestic violence.

As the foundation of a community classroom,[84] this pedagogy creates a sense of trust and love among students and between the students and instructor who all come from the same community. A community classroom is simultaneously a learning community, a space that values wholeness over division, using collaborative measures to create a class dynamic where discussion builds from one comment to the next, based on empathetic dialogue between people who share a similar goal. Freire explains dialogue as conversation "nourished by love, humility, hope, faith, and trust. When the two "poles" of the dialogue are thus linked by love, hope, and mutual trust, they can join in a critical search for something. Only dialogue truly

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[83] "A to Z Advocacy Model: Asians and Pacific Islanders Build an Inventory of Evidence-Informed Practices, 2017," *Asian Pacific Institute on Gender Based Violence Website* (blog), September 26, 2017, https://www.api-gbv.org/resources/a-z-advocacy-model-report/.

[84] I define a community classroom as a classroom physically situated in a space foremost run by community members and emotionally situated within feelings of comfort, understanding, and acceptance. I use the term community classroom strategically to demarcate the intentional creation of a space to engage in conversations by and for community members. This is crucial because it centers community-based knowledge production rooted in identity politics, paying close attention to intersectionality as it informs the positionalities of folks involved.

communicates."[85] Such compassionate conversations foster closeness, pushing against the neocolonial urge to indoctrinate the minds of students rather than liberate them.

Subverting colonial knowledge hierarchies that prioritize whiteness, this pedagogy utilizes community knowledge as the foundation for all learning, which in this case mobilizes Indians to teach Indian youth about rape culture and sexual violence. bell hooks describes that "when contemporary progressive educators all around the nation challenged the way institutionalized systems of domination (race, sex, nationalist imperialism) have, since the origin of public education, used schooling to reinforce dominator values, a pedagogical revolution began in college classrooms," reflecting the importance of teaching within the community as an alternative to institutionalized systems of domination. Intergenerational learning breaks historical silence regarding sexual violence, and through efforts by the teacher and students alike, makes rebuilding trust possible. hooks posits that trust is the foundation for communal learning and healing, that without trust we will never be able to truly know one another,

> "Creating trust usually means finding out what it is we have in common as well as what separates us and makes us different…it will always be vital, necessary for us to know that we are all more than our differences, that it is not just what we organically share that can connect us but what we come to have in common because we have done the work of creating community, the unity within diversity, that requires solidarity within a structure of values, beliefs, yearnings that are always beyond the body, yearnings that have to do with universal spirit."[86]

Without knowing our community, knowing the values that unite us, it is difficult to accept our violent histories and move forward. Establishing trust within the curriculum I create will be easy in terms of finding common ground. Indian youth share certain cultural knowledge, but I do anticipate tensions to arise in broaching topics that are relegated to the private sphere. In gradually introducing anti-rape culture praxis, trust can be built with time and validation.

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[85] Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*., [1st American ed.]., A Continuum Book; Continuum Book. (New York,: Seabury Press, 1973).
[86] bell hooks, *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

Along with trust, love is the basis of all critical anti-rape culture work as a force that is an act of courage, a force that cannot fear reality or avoid creative discussion.[87] Parker Palmer extends love as the "the origin of knowledge," that "the act of knowing is an act of love, the act of entering and embracing the reality of the other, of allowing the other to enter and embrace our own. In such knowing we know and are known as members of our community."[88] Love in the classroom is integral in portraying healthy relationships and integrating the theoretical and practical to avoid individual estrangement from bigger systems like patriarchy and colonialism. Love encourages taking personal responsibility for one's positionality and privileges, infusing a sense of deep responsibility and ensuring that what is learned will extend beyond the community classroom and into other community spaces. For educators, teaching rooted in love is teaching with selflessness, imagination, and hope. It requires a forgiving attitude, understanding that everyone comes into the space holding different experiences and different knowledges. Teaching with love removes the capitalist, neoliberal relationship[89] between instructors and students which figures students as subjects to be measured by their productivity and output.

Centering teaching with love and acceptance creates a space more conducive to critical engagment with large systems of oppression, empowering varied experiences and challenging the "taken-for-granted hegemony of schooling," as put by Tuhiwai Smith,. This hegemony creates a static conception of what education should look like, who educators are, and how knowledge should be disseminated.[90] Disrupting these hegemonic views subverts vertical power dynamics in favor of a horizontal teaching structure in which the teacher and students share

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[87] Paulo Freire and Ana Maria Araújo Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1994).
[88] hooks, *Teaching Community*.
[89] In *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith describes neoliberalism in education as "a discourse of education as a market, with parents and students as consumers and clients, teachers and schools as self-managing providers of services, and curriculum knowledge as a commodity that can be traded in or traded up for social goodies such as well-being and social status."
[90] Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*.

equal voice in classroom conversations. This structure places students in the subject position, a position of power that values the experiences and knowledges they bring to the room, fostering a sense of respect and, ideally, trust. It allows room to expand the definition of educator from only teachers to parents, family members, friends, elders, and oneself, giving credibility to every community member involved in the learning process.

Developing a culture of love and trust within the classroom sets the stage for mobilizing Freire's "problem posing" model to question rape culture and pose imaginative solutions. The "problem posing" model teaches critical thinking skills as a practice of freedom in order to fight for liberation as opposed to the "banking model,"[91] a mode of teaching in which the students exist as vessels where teachers store knowledge; the students' only role is "receiving, filling, and storing the deposits."[92] Moving away from hierarchal learning, the "problelm posing" model is based on dialogue and horizontal relationships between students and the teacher, dismantling power structures and assumptions about hierarchical knowledge-production, ultimately empowering the students to offer solutions to the problems that the teacher poses. In this case, the students are empowered to think beyond the bounds of misogyny and sexism to envision a world without sexual violence. To critically think about oppression and the conditions that enable power imbalances, seeking to transform society.

The primary goal of problem-posing is conscientization, a deep understanding of the world, its social and political conditions, and taking action against oppression through reflection—praxis. With a culturally-critical pedagogy, this model will mobilize the individual as

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[91] In the classroom, the student is a passive subject while the teacher is the ultimate authority. The power dynamic is vertical with the teacher holding all knowledge (prescribing any pre-existing knowledge students hold as inconsequential) and enforcing a top-down method of learning. This model intentionally removes historical context that would be relevant or helpful to students, constructing a static form of reality – adapting students to normalize current oppressive conditions. The banking model reproduces the oppressor/oppressed binary, inculcating violence and domination.

[92] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30th anniversary ed. (New York: Continuum, 2000).

a site for change by empowering youth to critically think and employ their understandings in their everyday lives, fostering agency and establishing trust among the classroom community. Treating lived experience as a valid form of knowledge production is another tenet of culturally-critical pedagogy, bridging emotional and theoretical lenses and infusing emotionality into praxis. This is especially important in crafting an anti-rape culture curriculum as sexual violence is intimate and painful.

Because sexual violence is embodied and passed down, rape culture can only be theorized to a certain extent. In critically evaluating the perceptions we pass down to our children, an anti-rape culture curriculum teaches responsibility not intellectually, but through experience.[93] This manifests by valuing the lived experiences of survivors and treating their accounts as a form of intellectual knowledge. It's engaging in community accountability practices on a day-to-day level, telling male friends to stop when they make a sexist joke and explaining why, for example. This level of criticality is crucial because rape culture is always transforming and there is no one way to be anti-violent. The system shifts and morphs with time in order to keep reproducing power differences in various socially "acceptable" ways.

For educators, criticality emerges in personalizing the material and not only making it culturally competent, but remaining flexible throughout and focusing on areas that the students express interest in and/or need more time on. Focusing on consciousness raising along with cultivating specific skills (such as bystander trainings) will help to create a new, non-violent consciousness that builds upon tools of intervention. But, conscientization isn't an end in itself. It isn't enough to be critically aware, we must also act on this new awareness and use the theoretical, intellectual knowledge that we have built up and take it to the ground. This is where

[93] Freire and Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope*.

praxis comes in. Educators foster our awareness, and in praxis, we use that awareness to alter behavior. bell hooks aptly says, "our lives must be living example of our politics," that praxis "is not blind action, deprived of intention or of finality. It is action and reflection. Men and women are human beings because they are historically constituted as beings of praxis, and in the process they have become capable of transforming the world—of giving it meaning."[94]

Invoking Dian Million's "Felt Theory," actions informed by experience—felt action—serve as a powerful tool to politicize personal narrative that can be applied to culturally-critical pedagogy to illuminate the importance of lived experience and affect in creating theory to explain systemic injustices. Million is an Indigenous scholar who crafted felt theory to describe the nature of Native women's fight for justice from the various abuses dealt by the Canadian government. Felt action is both the narrativization of one's personal story as a form of evidence and organizing action based on what one feels is just. It reconfigures feeling and experience to be rational and reliable, pushing against mainstream narratives of emotionality as subjective and not a marker of knowledge. She describes a felt analysis as "one that creates a context for a more complex "telling,"" speaking of Native women's use of storytelling and narrative as a political tool to amend the Canadian Indian Act.[95] She, like Tuhiwai Smith, speaks of the importance of creating language to address the many layers of systemic and individual violence by "insisting on the inclusion of our lived experience, rich with emotional knowledges, of what pain and grief and hope meant or mean now in our pasts and futures."[96] Validating emotional knowledge informs how knowledge is produced in the community classroom by prioritizing and elevating feelings, and taking time to explain these feelings, to name feelings, and work to make

[94] hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*.
[95] Dian. Million, "Felt Theory," *American Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (2008): 267–72.
[96] Million.

connections between what we feel, why we feel this way, and how it all relates to how we have been organized by white, western, capitalist society.

Felt theory is a tool of conversation and to build trust, recognizing feelings as active responses to inflicted pain, direct or indirect. When used as a community guideline within the classroom, felt theory can be a method to root conversation in the lived experiences of the community, demonstrating the power in recognizing pain and the need for collective understanding of personal, intergenerational, and historical traumas. Rather than explaining rape culture through various terminologies, a praxis informed by culturally-critical pedagogy will stem from lived experience, encouraging students to reflect on their positionalities and claim discursive autonomy. Cultivating the power of reflection "would mean an increased capacity for choice."[97] For this curriculum, the choice to not be violent, misogynistic, sexist, and complacent. The choice to be compassionate and brave. The choice to imagine a new future.

3. Principles

With the foundation of culturally-critical pedagogy in mind, I have created a set of principles to guide the implementation of an anti-rape culture curriculum for South Asian youth to imagine new futurities. These principles are seemingly simple, but add critical layers atop existing work being done in this field. When put together, these principles will build the basis for a successful culturally-nuanced anti-rape culture program.

Principle 1: Trust and love are key to creating a community classroom
Principle 2: Root cultural relevance within each lesson plan
Principle 3: Prioritize conscientization through self-reflection & self-criticality
Principle 4: Connect individual experiences with the greater systems of domination they are situated within
Principle 5: Consistently engage in praxis. Consistently engage in taking accountability

[97] Freire and Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope*.

4. An Analysis of WISE

WISE is an organization situated in New Hampshire that serves communities in both New Hampshire and Vermont which straddle the Connecticut River, otherwise known as the Upper Valley. Founded in 1971, this grassroots organization offers a 24 hour crisis line for survivors, a confidential emergency shelter, and advocates for social justice through education mainly through trauma support trainings and community workshops that teach healthy relationship skills. WISE has several curriculums for different age groups, offering programs for middle and high school aged students. I will analyze their curriculums as an application of a developmental framework about gender-based violence showing my proof of concept for the principles created above, with a few considerations in mind. The Upper Valley is composed of several small locales and is 88.4% white according to the 2010 Census.[98] Though their curriculum is thorough and an important point of reference, it is by no means transferrable to suit the needs of the Indian community. In addition, WISE's curriculum is geared to be used in school classrooms with guidelines informed by the CDC and National Health Education Standards, while I aspire to create a curriculum that can be used in non-institutionalized, community spaces that is guided by both individual and community needs.

Its middle school prevention program is divided into lessons for 6, 7, and 8th grade, beginning with identifying locations of rape culture and working towards understanding consent and what a healthy relationship can look like. Youth ages 11 to 12, 6th grade, work to approach Media Literacy and Creating Change. The first lesson looks at how the media informs our perceptions about the world and reproduces stereotypes. In looking at the process of meaning-making and taking a critical look at various gendered representations in the media, the students

[98] U. S. Census Bureau, "Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010," accessed March 23, 2018, https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk.

will able to identify some motivations behind these representations and resist unhealthy messages. This lesson is rooted in analyzing gendered social norms and lesson two moves to understanding the privileges that come with holding a particular gender identity, demonstrating *Principle 2,* to root cultural relevance. The goal of the lesson is for each student to understand their positionality and how they can use their privileges to influence and enact positive change. In tying personal experiences to broader pop culture representations, this lesson works in *Principle 3*. The curriculum suggests creating personal strategies and a collaborative poster campaign for their school community to raise awareness and shift unhealthy gendered representations.

The 7th grade curriculum outlines two lessons on Consent and Sexual Harassment. The first sets expectations for what constitutes safe and respectful touch, centering individual agency, autonomy, and choice. The students practice different communication styles to understand how to deliver and receive consensual signals. Lesson two focuses on distinguishing sexual harassment and flirtation, and how to intervene in sexual harassment as a bystander. Bystander intervention begins to address *Principle 5,* demonstrating that violence in any form is unacceptable, but keeping bell hooks' definition of praxis in mind, I would extend praxis to include personal reflection as a part of the intervention process. Doing so encourages a firm stance on rape culture. In another section of lesson two, however, the lesson does address community responsibility in responding to sexual harassment by asking students to identify safe and trustworthy adults they can reach out to. This connects with *Principle 1* because it develops a sense of trust that extends beyond the classroom space.

The last section of this segment of the curriculum is geared towards ages 13 to 14, 8th grade. The topics of discussion are Healthy Relationships and a Consent Scenario. This final

lesson connects all the concepts from the previous two years, beginning by revisiting media representations, but this time looking particularly at unhealthy messages that shape our understandings and expectations for romantic and platonic relationships. After reflecting on restrictive and harmful social norms, lesson two introduces a scenario about consent which works in cultural roots and individual behaviors that play into dating and sexual violence, wrapping in *Principle 2*. The students will offer suggestions as to how the character could have intervened more effectively and where harmful behaviors began. In seeking to connecting cultural norms about gender to the normalization of violence, the students begin to talk explicitly about power imbalances and identify how people take away power. Relating greater social inequity to individual scenarios of gender-based violence allows students to situate themselves within greater systems, an aspect of *Principle 4*. Acting on *Principle 5*, the final activity is strategizing how to intervene and build empathy for those who historically and socially have less power.

WISE's high school curriculum focuses on historical context, gender roles, dating violence, sexual violence, and deeper understandings of consent to fill in the ideas framed by the middle school curriculum.[99] The five topics are defined in terms of themes rather than specific exercises possibly to leave room for organic conversation specific to each classroom. They are not split up by age or grade, teaching the same material to all students. I push against this format because by teaching freshmen and seniors the same material, there is little room for intentionally fostering growth during the four years.

The first two lessons bring *Principle 4* into conversation by using the students' experiences as a starting point to work backwards from, identifying the structures of domination

[99] "WISE Upper ValleyPrevention."

where their perceptions about sexual violence and rape culture stem and how these structures continue to manifest in their lives. The Historical Timeline lesson seeks to teach global, national, local examples of violence that situate the cultural foundations of violence within a historical context. A key theme of this lesson is that violence is learned and not innate, pushing students to find a sense of personal responsibility towards disrupting rape culture, to critique traditional gendered expectations and how they can be subverted. The following lesson is Gender Boxes, an interactive exercise that outlines gender assumptions and how these assumptions restrict personal identity development and perpetuate violence. Looking inwards, the students are able to reflect on the impact of gendered assumptions on their own lives and extend compassion from here, beginning to explore the concept of gender as a spectrum rather than as a binary. Students will also make connections between gendered stereotyping and the harm it can enact on individuals and relationships.

Self reflection and criticality, *Principle 3*, is a thread through the next two lessons, working to understand individual positionalities in relationship to dating violence and sexual violence. In the Dating Violence lesson, students are taught to identify warning signs and understand the dynamics of power and control inherent to sexual violence. After learning about victim blaming, the students focus on creating bystander strategies to respond to dating violence. This lesson is geared towards highlighting how peer relationships play a monumental role in the perpetuation of sexual violence. Putting toxic masculinity, hyper-masculinity, and sexually aggressive behavior in conversation with healthy and respectful friendships pushes students to evaluate the effects of violent social norms in their friendships and relationships. This lesson pairs with the next about Sexual Violence. Separating dating violence from sexual violence is important to make space for specificities and build up conversation over time, giving students

time to ruminante and reflect on the previous lessons' information. In talking about sexual assault, the curriculum focuses on defining what assault looks like on a spectrum. The conversation is grounded in statistics to dispel commonly held misconceptions and by the end, students identify specific avenues they can work from to prevent violence. The final lesson revisits consent. Only focusing on active communication and ethical standards for intimacy, this lesson is very open-ended.

Looking at trends in terms of the principles I am seeking to administer, the WISE curriculum hit on some moreso than others:

Principle 1. The WISE curriculum does not give much background regarding teacher-student relationships or classroom guidelines, leaving the class dynamics ambiguous and without a set of values to guide the learning process. With extremely sensitive topics like sexual violence and rape culture, intentionally creating a comfortable space is crucial as students come into the classroom bearing different experiences and exposure. The curriculum suggests cultivating empathy for peers in regards to power dynamics and gendered stereotypes and includes a sub-focus on identifying trustworthy adults, an incredibly important exercise that I will employ in my curriculum. This exercise serves as a sort of "safety mapping" where students can visualize the supportive spaces and people in their lives and share this information with another trustworthy adult—the educator.

Principle 2. The curriculum lacks cultural relevance in terms of understanding the social and political nuances of gender-based violence. There is a focus on pop culture in examining gender representations in the media, but this examination lacks an intersectional lens. Who is being represented? Who is left out? Why? With a culturally relevant approach, these critical questions would be posed to the students and a diverse range of pop culture references would be

included not to push difference narratives, but to expand the students' scope of understanding. Shifting to my curriculum for Indian youth, knowledge-production must include how the students' experiences as people of color in America and as diasporic bodies has informed what they know about rape culture. Pulling from the CI Toolkit's suggestion to build on what we know, they affirm that " as individuals, families, friendship networks, communities and cultures [we] have a history of creative and community-based ways to resolve violence. We want to remember, honor and build upon the positive things we have known and done throughout history."[100]

Principle 3. This principle seems to be one of the main guiding tools for the curriculum. Each lesson seeks to use conversation as a means to primarily provoke internal reflection, hinting at self-criticality. Reflection facilitates deep thinking in regards to sexual violence, while criticality extends reflection to listening, learning, taking responsibility for one's own actions, and changing. It is an understanding of how each individual plays a role in condoning sexual violence in their everyday lives.

Principle 4. WISE's lessons wrap in greater social issues, whether that be media representations or socialized gender norms, as a jumping off point to provoke internal reflection. These conversations less so reflect the impact of political conditions, limiting the students' reflection to personal interactions by not introducing histories of violence and privilege that enable sexual violence to occur. This especially harms the students of color in the classroom as their intersectional experiences are not acknowledged.

Principle 5. Exercises outlining bystander intervention tactics are explained in this curriculum and this is one way in which praxis can take form. Bystander intervention is an

[100] "Creative Interventions Toolkit: A Practical Guide to Stop Interpersonal Violence."

important tool in confronting rape culture as a youth, beginning with disrupting toxic conversations and de-escalating possibly violence situations. Linking accountability with praxis, however, extends to the "ability to recognize, end, and take responsibility for violence."[101] This is a program for youth ages 10-14, but they have the capability to put *Principles 1-5* together and take responsibility for personal violences they have inflicted, informing their personal praxis by thinking of the ways "we may have contributed to violence, the ways we may need acknowledge and make amends for our contribution to violence, and the ways we can take action to make sure that violence does not continue and that healthy alternatives can take its place."[102]

[101] "Creative Interventions Toolkit: A Practical Guide to Stop Interpersonal Violence."
[102] "Creative Interventions Toolkit: A Practical Guide to Stop Interpersonal Violence."

Chapter IV
Imagining New Futurities: A Feminist Intervention

Trauma is a time traveller, an ouroboros that reaches back and devours everything that came before.
Junot Diaz

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I move to creative production; I seek to theorize hope. This chapter is meant to be read by members of the Indian community. Folks who already know and did not need to read the past 40 pages, but did anyways. Folks who believe in the power of knowledge and love. This chapter is meant to be read by folks who feel skeptical. Those who had hope and lost it along the way. Bringing together all the knowledge from the pages preceding this one, in this chapter I create a curriculum for Indian youth. A culturally-relevant, anti-rape culture curriculum that centers my community and one of its most pressing issues. This chapter is an experiment. I argue that if youth are given the tools and the *responsibility* to address rape culture, then there will be a **disruption** to the cycle of sexual violence and an **intervention** to deconstruct learned misogyny, sexism, and victim blaming.

A disclaimer: I speak to various Indian cultural norms through this chapter. White America has interpreted these norms as a sign of backwardness, a signal that brown women must be saved from barbaric brown men. This is absolutely not the case. Every culture is influenced by patriarchy in specific ways. These specificities are what make a culturally-relevant curriculum crucial. There is a danger in invoking Indian culture and tradition as the reason for sexual violence--a strategy by both perpetrators and western society. This is not my aim. Rather, I examine facets of culture and tradition that enable violence and look at ways to destigmatize sexual violence.

Informed by the five principles created in Chapter 2, my curriculum is sectioned into seven lessons for youth ages 10 to 16 that weave culture and history into rape culture. This chapter will not be written like a traditional thesis chapter. I mainly draw on my experiential knowledge to guide my insights along with the Creative Interventions[103] Toolkit, a resource guide that "re/imagines solutions to domestic or intimate partner, sexual, family and other forms of interpersonal violence."[104] As an imaginative how-to guide, this chapter will be made accessible at every step of the way with a goal that anyone should be able to pick up this curriculum and use it immediately, without knowing academese or undergoing any training.

This curriculum necessitates conversations about colonialism, imperialism, and hegemonic instillations of violence to provide context for the specific experiences of Indian immigrants as a marginalized group in America. In doing so, Indian youth will have the opportunity to learn about their history and culture in an anti-oppressive, empowering fashion that will encourage resistance and reformulations of what we have accepted as the norm. Shifting from direct survivor support to pre-violence intervention is key because sexual violence affects all community members, not just those who are facing the violence. In bearing witness to such violence, perceptions and internalizations of the norm are created as well as continued intergenerational trauma.

2. Where Does This Curriculum Fit In?

Employing the Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence report, "The Community Engagement Continuum: Outreach, Mobilization, Organizing and Accountability to

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[103] From their website, "Creative Interventions assumes that the relationships, families and communities in which violence occurs are also the very locations for long-term change and transformation. It assumes that those most impacted by violence are the most motivated to challenge violence. It assumes that friends, family, and community know most intimately the conditions that lead to violence as well as the values and strengths which can lead to its transformation."

[104] "About | Creative Interventions," accessed April 6, 2018, http://www.creative-interventions.org/about/.

Address Violence against Women in Asian and Pacific Islander Communities," I situate this curriculum as both a community outreach/education and community mobilization effort. This report conceptualizes a continuum on which a range of community based approaches are categorized to understand the impact of varying strategies. There are four levels: community outreach and education, community mobilization, community organizing, and finally community accountability.[105] The continuum model doesn't imply the value of one level as opposed to another, but rather it examines community involvement and capacity.[106] The report details that "activities at the beginning level of engagement may phase into a strategy eventually leading to higher levels of community involvement."[107] The end goal of the continuum is community accountability to encourage "us to imagine a community which takes responsibility for holding abusers accountable, for supporting survivor safety and healing, and for creating practices and institutions which prevent further violence. It challenges us to aim our activities towards the community-wide transformation of the very attitudes and conditions responsible for violence in the first place."[108] Identifying youth as a demographic for change-making is the first of many steps towards disrupting cycles of sexual violence.

Inspired by generationFive, a transformative justice organization that seeks to end child sexual abuse within five generations, I want this curriculum to catalyze community and

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[105] Each level is defined by the report as follows: "community outreach and education raises community awareness about the issue of violence against women and children and anti-violence resources; community mobilization aims for active community participation and engagement supporting the anti-violence organization or addressing the problem of violence against women and children; community organizing involves longer-term strategies meant to increase sustained community based capacity to address violence against women and children. It is further divided into community organizing (general) and community organizing (among those most affected); and community accountability develops the capacity of community members to support survivors and hold abusers accountable for their violence."

[106] "The Community Engagement Continuum: Outreach, Mobilization, Organizing and Accountability to Address Violence against Women in Asian and Pacific Islander Communities," *Asian Pacific Institute on Gender Based Violence Website* (blog), September 18, 2017, https://www.api-gbv.org/resources/community-engagement-continuum-outreach-mobilization-organizing-accountability-address-violence-women-asian-pacific-islander-communities/.

[107] "The Community Engagement Continuum."

[108] "The Community Engagement Continuum."

generational change. generationFIVE offers survivor and bystander leadership development, community prevention and intervention, public action, and cross-movement building to integrate child sexual abuse prevention into other modes of community organizing to challenge the isolation of child sexual abuse.[109] I craft this curriculum with a similar goal in mind. By inspiring a shift in understanding and re-orienting the ways in which we as a community perceive gender, sexuality, masculinity, consent, and power, the isolation of sexual violence both as a concept and a lived reality will be disrupted. To work towards generational change means to use education as a means to foster intervention strategies and capacity building of youth to respond to the silence around sex and relationships.

3. Centering Indian Culture

Keeping cultural nuances and the impact of diaspora in consideration, an anti-rape culture curriculum is a move towards transformative justice, and might not be easily accepted by Indian communities. Centering conversations about rape culture undermines the heteropatriarchal power held by men in the community and I anticipate pushback and resistance especially from first generation Indian immigrants. Media representations of Indian familial structures stereotype and are not representative of the whole, but few carry truth. Hasan Minhaj's comedy special "Homecoming King" touches on the intricacies within first and second generation relationships. His stories illustrate the gap in understanding, almost as wide as the geographical space dividing India from America. Jokingly explaining that he was never able to date (but of course he did in secret), was not allowed to go to prom (he climbed out his window, jumped on his bike, and got himself there), and almost did not marry the love of his life because she is Pakistani. These examples share tropes of Indian culture that manifest around one sentiment, a phrase delivered from Minhaj's father to him -- *log kya kahen gai?* What will people say?

[109] "About Us | Generation Five," accessed April 9, 2018, http://www.generationfive.org/about-us/.

Photo by Mandee Johnson[110]

This particular kind of silencing puts an unhealthy emphasis on respect and shame, positing love, dating, and sex as unacceptable and inherently encourages victim blaming by defaulting to the expectation that if youth do not engage with their sexuality, no harm can occur. This is of course not the case. In her commentary on Minhaj's comedy special, Doreen St. Félix describes *log kya kahen gai* as a phrase of fatherly concern about "breaking with tradition," an apt marker of the tensions held by first generation immigrants negotiating how to carry and pass on their culture to their hyphenated children.[111] Pulling from my own experiences, I have seen this tension manifest in the limited scope of conversation about culture and history, developing particular and curated understandings that favor nationalism and thus erase the histories of violence and toxic cultural norms that Indian norms perpetuate. That makes this curriculum even more relevant and crucial, but I realize that this endeavor might be an uncomfortable step forward, but only with discomfort can norms be disrupted.

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[110] "Hasan Minhaj's 'Homecoming King' Recounts Trials of Being Brown | The Daily Mississippian," accessed April 13, 2018, http://thedmonline.com/homecoming-king-trials-being-brown/.
[111] Doreen St Félix, "Hasan Minhaj's 'New Brown America,'" *The New Yorker*, June 6, 2017, https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/hasan-minhajs-new-brown-america.

4. Employing an Integenerational Approach

With an intergenerational approach I hope to put first generation ideologies in conversation with those of the second generation. The differences between first and second generation Indian immigrants are palpable and approaching first generation Indian immigrants who emigrated to the United States in the 1980s and 90s complicates my work given the deeply inculcated perceptions of womanhood and private/public divides. But, ending sexual violence in the Indian community within five generations becomes a possibility with intergenerational knowledge production that challenges the status quo. Speaking directly to the impact of diaspora and having to hold two cultures simultaneously, this curriculum will create space to build healthy relationships between and among generations.

I envision using an intergenerational teaching model in which cohorts of youth cycle the knowledge and language they gain back to younger folks in the community. The startpoint of this cycle will be a group of college aged folks, Cohort 1,[112] who teach and work with high school students, Cohort 2. Cohort 2 will simultaneously teach and work with middle school students, Cohort 3. Once Cohort 2 has graduated, they will assume the role of Cohort 1. Likewise, once Cohort 3 enters high school, they will begin to teach new middle school students, Cohort 4. Cycling information from generation of student to student is important because it seamlessly integrates experiential knowledge into the curriculum. Also, in mobilizing youth to teach other youth, the skills and knowledge they have learnt are put into practice quickly. This model gives youth the opportunity to take on responsibility and infuse the curriculum with their own knowledge. To prepare for taking on a teaching role, each lesson will have a praxis activity designed to bring knowledge outside of the classroom.

[112] Ideally, Cohort 1 will communicate with and seek advice from community elders--whether that be grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, religious leaders, etc. to create a true, cohesive cycle of intergenerational knowledge.

5. Logistics

Three possible sites of implementation are religious study groups (at a Mosque, Gurudwara, Church, Temple, etc.), language and culture school, and at a community member's home, all of which are spaces that center and prioritize Indian culture that will shape the intentionality of the classes. Crafting the curriculum out of community spaces, rather than public schools allows for intentional healing.

Religious centers are a useful point of intervention because they are a traditional gathering point for immigrant communities. Many patriarchal beliefs stem from the practice and interpretation of religious schools of thought and introducing this kind of dialogue challenges those patriarchal norms by simply being in the same space. Giving youth authority in a religious center shifts power dynamics and can introduce new ways of knowing. As a regular meeting point, this site is very practical in terms of consistency, but could present challenges in requesting space from community elders. Language and culture schools exist in limited spaces, but offer a direct connection between the curriculum and other cultural knowledge being passed down. For example, Waterloo, ON has a weekly "Gujarati School" held at a local high school on Saturday mornings for K-12 students. At Gujarati School, folks from within the community teach students to speak, read, and write Gujarati, while also teaching about India generally and Gujarati culture/traditions specifically. Hosting classes in a trusted community member's home would be the easiest and most practical site of change, needing only one radical community member who will bring youth together to catalyze larger scale change.

The curriculum is set up in themes, intending for one theme to be covered each school year. Each theme is broken up into five lessons. For the purposes of this chapter, I will outline one lesson plan per theme in the interest of space. Each lesson outlines a two hour time period.

Anti-Rape Culture Curriculum for Indian Youth

Guiding Principles:

Principle 1: Trust and love are key to creating a community classroom
Principle 2: Root cultural relevance within each lesson plan
Principle 3: Prioritize conscientization through self-reflection & self-criticality
Principle 4: Connect individual experiences with the greater systems of domination they are situated within
Principle 5: Consistently engage in praxis. Consistently engage in taking accountability

6th grade Media and Representation: Lesson 1 of 5

Materials: laptop, butcher paper, markers, magazines, glue, scissors, paper

Learning Goals:

1. To identify how American and Indian media influence our perceptions of gender roles
2. To understand "gender roles" and explain this concept to others
3. To describe the importance of representation and why Indian representation is limited in American media

Activities & Key Questions:

- Watch three 5 minute scenes drawn from one Bollywood film and two Hollywood films, one of which has Indian representation and another that does not (eg. Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, Bend it Like Beckham, and The Parent Trap). Discuss what is happening in these scenes in small groups. Who are the characters? What is the plot of the scene? What is the same and what is different between the scenes?
- Identify roles that men and women typically play. What roles do we expect men and women to have? What roles do we expect Indian women to have?
- What does it feel like to rarely see someone who looks like you on screen?
- How do stereotypical representations of Indians make you feel?
- How can we take this conversation beyond today's lesson?

Key Terms: Gender roles, stereotype

10 min: Introduction to the lesson + name game
5 min: Brainstorm ground rules to foster a sense of community and trust
5 min: Word association map with the terms media, Bollywood, and Hollywood
5 min: Explain and employ the Bechdel test to prepare for the next activity
15 min: Watch the two movie scenes
20 min: Discuss key questions in small groups
10 min: Share out discussion
20 min: On butcher paper, brainstorm observations of common gender roles in the media and at home
30 min: Journal, draw, or collage independently about gender roles that impact you

For next time: Journal about how gender roles have affected your friendships.
Praxis: Use a TV episode as an opportunity to talk about gender roles with your friends. Notice how chores are being delegated in your home; say something about it!
This lesson highlights Principles 2 and 3.

7th grade Consent: Lesson 1 of 5

Materials: butcher paper, markers, construction paper, glue

Learning Goals:

1. To respect and understand nonverbal and verbal consent
2. To recognize saying "no" as normal-boundary setting
3. To have the tools to express what you do and don't want
4. To believe that you deserve to be treated with respect and love

Activities & Key Questions:

- Practicing different styles of communication through role play
- Watch Tea and Consent (https://goo.gl/MTzYCo) & Ask.Listen.Respect (http://www.teachconsent.org/) videos
- Pizza activity: different scenarios illustrating that if consent is confusing, ASK!
- Build a toolbox: write down different ways you can express consent, in English and other languages

Key Terms: Consent, agency, multilingual

10 min: Introduction to the lesson + names

5 min: Revisiting ground rules

5 min: What is consent? Group brainstorm on butcher paper

15 min: Watch and discuss the two videos--do you feel like these videos are relatable? Why or why not?

15 min: Pizza activity in small groups

15 min: Pair up & brainstorm different ways to communicate consent on butcher paper. Have you talked about consent at home? If so, what did you talk about and what did you learn? Are there ways in which your family or community express consent in a different language? How can you incorporate both?

10 min: Share out to the big group

20 min: Individually, construct a "toolbox" out of construction paper in which you can write all the tools and language you have learned today and the ones you already knew

10 min: Share out your toolbox

15 min: Practice offering (or not offering) consent through role play situations

For next time: Journal about times you have witnessed adults respecting and not respecting consent. How does this make you feel?

Praxis: For one day, be extremely cognisant of how you interact with others. Are you respecting consent (in all walks of life)? Are you able to give consent?

This lesson highlights Principles 1, 2, and 3.

8th grade History & Colonialism: Lesson 1 of 5

Materials: butcher paper, markers, print outs of political art pieces, flashcards with historical markers

Learning Goals:

1. To understand the lasting impacts of colonialism on the Indian diaspora
2. To connect history with Indian cultural norms that condone sexual violence
3. To situate individual experiences within broader systems

Activities & Key Questions:

- Myth or reality? Common misconception game
- Timeline: what do we know about Indian history?
- Look at pieces of political art by Indian activists
- What is the impact of colonialism on Indian community formation? On Indian culture? On constructions of patriarchy and masculinity?

Key Terms: Diaspora, colonialism, caste

10 min: Introduction to the lesson + names
5 min: Revisiting ground rules
15 min: Myth or reality game
15 min: Walk around the room and fill in the historical timeline with what you know
5 min: Debrief
15 min: Explore the parts of Indian history and colonialism that are not commonly told, discuss key questions--pass out flashcards with historical markers and have everyone tape each to the moment in the timeline they think it occurred
5 min: Debrief & go through the timeline
10 min: Connect and add pieces of Indian culture & patriarchy to the timeline. How is rape culture tied to our perception and learning of history?
10 min: Pass out pieces of political art and discuss what resistance to these violences can look like.
20 min: Create your own piece of political art!
10 min: Discussion--how and where can we showcase our art for our community?

For next time: Continue working on your art piece and share it with your family! Journal about their reactions and the process of creating your art piece.
Praxis: When Indian folks are talking about India, Indian history, or Indian culture, pay attention to what they are saying. Are they not mentioning or erasing parts of our history and culture? Speak up and say something about it.
This lesson highlights Principles 2 and 4.

9th grade Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Dating Violence: Lesson 1 of 5

Materials: butcher paper, markers,

Learning Goals:

1. To name and understand what each term means
2. To identify warning signs
3. To build a trusted network of friends and adults you can talk to

Activities & Key Questions:

- Creating word webs
- Draw a map connecting the people you trust
- Scenarios to practice supporting survivors

Key Terms: Consent, agency, manipulation, denial, silence, stigma

10 min: Introduction to the lesson + names
5 min: Revisiting ground rules
10 min: As a big group, create world webs for domestic violence, sexual assault, and dating violence
15 min: Discussion--what do these terms mean? What are warning signs? Have you discussed gender violence before? At home?
15 min: Brainstorm in small groups about how power imbalances create silence and stigma about gender violence on butcher paper
5 min: Share out discussion
10 min: Large group discussion--what is survivor support? What can it look like?
20 min: Split up into pairs to act out the scenarios given. Try different tactics to support survivors
30 min: Draw out a trust map to pinpoint the people in your life you can reach out to and talk to

For next time: Journal about how you like to be supported. What are ways in which you can support survivors in your life?
Praxis: Actively support and be present for two people in your life, whether they are survivors or not.
Are domestic violence, sexual assault, and dating violence silenced in your home? If so, try bringing it up with a trusted family or community member to begin a conversation.
This lesson highlights Principles 1, 2, and 4.

10th grade Gender & Sexuality: Lesson 1 of 5

Materials: butcher paper, markers, tape, pre-made identity signs, magazines, scissors, glue, construction paper, any other zine making materials

Learning Goals:

1. To be open and accepting of all identities
2. To understand how sexual violence affects people in different ways
3. To gain a basic understanding of intersectionality

Activities & Key Questions:

- Examining positionality: identity signs exercise
- Watch Intersectionality video: https://goo.gl/wZc1s4
- What is intersectionality? Why is it important? How is it relevant to understanding sexual violence?
- Create a collaborative zine
- What are common attitudes within the Indian community towards conversations about gender and sexuality?

Key Terms: Intersectionality, fluidity, gender binary, feminism

10 min: Introduction to the lesson + names
5 min: Revisiting ground rules
10 min: Group discussion--how do gender and sexuality inform the kinds of violence we have been talking about?
5 min: Watch intersectionality video
20 min: Introduce & begin identity signs exercise
5 min: Debrief!
20 min: In small groups, discuss how gender & sexuality are talked about (or not talked about) within the Indian community and at home
25 min: Create one page for the class's collaborative zine about what gender and sexuality mean to you
10 min: Share out of everyone's zine page + construct the zine together
10 min: Big group discussion--how can we talk about gender and sexuality at home?

For next time: Continue thinking about how we can talk about gender and sexuality within the Indian community. Journal about your identity and how it felt to discuss these topics today.
Praxis: When a friend, family member, or community member says something misogynistic, call them out!
This lesson highlights Principles 1, 2, and 4.

11th grade Intergenerational and Historical Trauma: Lesson 1 of 5

Materials: butcher paper, markers, various art supplies

Learning Goals:

1. To relate individual experiences with familial and historical experiences, and oneself to the community
2. To make deeper connections with our community
3. To understand some root causes of sexual violence

Activities & Key Questions:

- Construct a community tree, naming at least fifteen folks you are connected to
- Paper chain link activity to tie various concepts together

Key Terms: Love, connection, accountability, microaggression

10 min: Introduction to the lesson + names

5 min: Revisiting ground rules

15 min: Word associations for the terms intergenerational, historical, and trauma

10 min: Discussion--what experiences do you share with your family and community? What ties you to your family and community? How is your community linked together?

20 min: For the first five minutes individually construct paper loops with different concepts and experiences written on each. For the remainder of the time, attach your paper loops to other folks' paper loops that connect to your concept, culminating in one big paper chain link.

20 min: Debrief--how did this activity tie intergenerational and historical trauma to sexual violence, historical erasure, colonialism, etc.? How does intergenerational trauma relate specifically to racism, microaggressions, gender, and sexuality?

20 min: Individually, create a tree and be creative! On your tree, name at least fifteen folks within your family and community that you have a strong connection with. Keep in mind what experiences connect you together.

20 min: Share out community tree to the rest of the group, pick one connection to talk about

For next time: Journal about what traits, behaviors, experiences, ideologies you have inherited from your family and community. Do you like these aspects of your identity? Why or why not?

Praxis: Spend fifteen minutes actively listening to a member of your family or community. Ask them about their experiences to both learn and give support.

This lesson highlights Principles 1, 2, and 4.

12th grade Healthy Relationships: Lesson 1 of 5

Materials: butcher paper, markers,

Learning Goals:

1. To define what a healthy relationship looks like for you
2. To center trust, understanding, consent, and respect in all your relationships
3. To develop communication strategies to advocate for yourself and your needs

Activities & Key Questions:

- Stations activity
    - Station 1: What is a healthy relationship you have seen within your family or community? What stood out to you? How do/did the folks in the relationship interact with one another?
    - Station 2: What does community mean to you?
    - Station 3: What is love?

Key Terms: Found family, trust, respect, autonomy, communication

10 min: Introduction to the lesson + names

5 min: Revisiting ground rules

5 min: Split off into 3 groups--for the next hour, each group will rotate through three stations. Each station has a list of questions and some materials to answer the questions. At Station 1, brainstorm on butcher paper. At Station 2, draw to answer. And at Station 3, use acting or dance to answer.

60 min: Station activity

10 min: Come back together as a big group and debrief

20 min: Discussion--how do conceptions of what a healthy relationship is differ between you and your parents or elder community members? How do you communicate given these differences? What are communication strategies we can use? How do you communicate with your found family?

For next time: Journal about your ideal relationship--whether that be romantic or platonic. Think about communication, modes of understanding, and community while writing.

Praxis: Put healthy relationship principles into action with two of your friendships. Try different and new ways of communicating to see how they affect these relationships.

This lesson highlights Principles 1, 2, and 5.

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