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CHAPTER ELEVEN

COLONIAL FANTASIES AND
POSTCOLONIAL IDENTITIES

*Elaboration of Postcolonial Masculinity
and Homoerotic Desire*

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The sixteenth and eighteenth centuries were inexhaustible on the subject of Turkish and Persian mores when it came to the world of the seraglio. . . . What is remembered about the harem, however, are the sexual excesses to which it gives rise and which it promotes. A universe of *generalized perversion* and of the *absolute limitlessness of pleasure*, the seraglio does appear as the ideal locus of the phantasm in all its contagious splendor. . . . It underscores its polysexuality: to male homosexuality, to zoophilia and other vices, one can now add female homosexuality.

—Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem* (95–96)

Not only are the travel narratives of the voyages to the East replete with erotic fantasies of aberrant and illicit sexuality practiced in the Orient,

but Western literature is overwhelmingly saturated with a plethora of aphrodisiac pleasures offered by the East, and Western literary writers relentlessly seek “the Orient on the flying-carpet of Orientalism” (Kabani x). In fact, one could unequivocally claim that perhaps nowhere else are the sexual dynamics of same-sex desire so powerfully underwriting questions of identity and subjectivity as within the cultural politics of colonialism. For most Western writers the fabulous Araby is not merely an erotically torrid imaginative geography, but a psychic space on which deviant sexuality is projected, fantasized, explored, and fulfilled. As Said argues, “the Orient was a place where one could look for sexual experience unobtainable in Europe” and procure “a different type of sexuality” (1979, 190).

Yet, the powerful dynamics of interracial desires of same-sex and of homoerotic colonial fantasies continue to be elusive and contradictory in most commentaries on colonial narrative including the works of Alloula and Said.¹ What Said terms as “a different type of sexuality” (1979, 190), the “sexual promise and threat” that the Orient enticed Western tourists with, refers to what is now commonly understood in the West as male homosexual practice. Said argues that the Arabic Orient was consistently gendered as feminine, and Orientalism is a “male perception of the world,” “a male power-fantasy,” and an “exclusively male province,” in which the Orient is penetrated, silenced, and possessed (1979, 207), so much so that the Orient is sexually available to be penetrated, rationalized, and controlled (1979, 36, 40, 41, 44, 45, 137–138). However, though Said explicates how the two terms “orientalism” and “masculinity” are interchangeable signifiers in colonialist orientalist discourse, he analyzes these aspects strictly within a heterosexist framework and completely disregards how the specter of the homoerotic masculine body haunts the colonial project in its politics of masculinity and masculine identity. Said examines the sexual and political dynamics of race by consistently investigating the feminization of the Oriental races and cultures. However, as several of his critiques point out, Said analyzes the feminization of race and culture as a discrete category and does not connect colonial politics of race to that of gender and sexuality (Boone, Lowe). Similarly, in his “Orientalism Reconsidered,” while comparing the discourse of Orientalism to patriarchy, Said ponders on the incongruity of yoking together the “despotic—*but curiously attractive*—ruler” when he comments on how the “Orient was routinely described as feminine, its riches as fertile, its main symbols the

sensual woman, the harem . . .” (emphasis added, 1986, 225).

I would like to draw attention to Said’s phrase, the “despotic—but curiously attractive—ruler,” because I contend that what is evoked here is specifically the male body, and the “despotic but curiously attractive ruler” is the object of European male desire fulfilling the powerful erotic fantasies of the colonizers in its project of subordination of *men by men*.² I also insist that the gaze of the imperial voyeur is directed elsewhere, not necessarily or always on the female, but glancing askance on the colonized men. In this process of appropriation, the East is not only projected as the other, but, more importantly, as the aberrant other to fulfill Western psychosexual needs and to sanction the phenomenon Said terms as “orientalism.” Colonial power sustained its domination and status by appropriating a contradictory but systematic process of avowal and disavowal of sexual desire between men in the colonies. Further, the ambivalence of colonialist masculine erotics, which is simultaneously a promise and a threat, powerfully substantiates my claims that discursive practices of deferred and displaced homoeroticism underwrite colonial rule, and in fact continue to dominate the politics of postcoloniality. We find such conflicting depictions of the politics of homoerotic desire in Salman Rushdie’s novel *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, and its portrayals of colonial masculinity, homosociality, and homosexuality put into crisis the postcolonial politics of masculine identity and representation. In order to delineate these discursive and deferred homoerotic narratives in the novel, this chapter investigates three interrelated thematic strains that complicate the politics of homoerotic desire in postcolonial India: questions of colonial masculinity and emasculation; nationalism and the image of the nation as Mother; and finally the disjunctures of postcolonial diaspora and globalization. By correlating these three themes to the homosocial, homophobic, and homoerotic strains, I contend that the novel portrays how the appropriated and projected aberrant sexuality of the East during colonialism continues to transfer its profound masculine anxieties to postcolonial narratives of empire, race, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity, and questions the dynamics of the postcolonial nation with neo-colonialism, nationality, and nationhood. Finally, I would like to suggest that if we accept the premise that colonialism is predominantly a male project between and of men, then this violative penetration and control that operates as the predominant trope within which the colonial enterprise is executed is that of male rape (Sedgwick, 1985). Sub-

sequently, my reading of Rushdie's novel attempts to uncover the consequences of the violence of colonial male rape on postcolonial India.

The question of appropriation is crucial, and one needs to carefully interrogate not merely the literary representations of same-sex desire or the lack of such portrayals when analyzing colonial narratives, but more importantly examine the predominantly heterosexual frameworks of postcolonial theory. Several postcolonial theorists besides Edward Said, such as Sara Suleri, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak, for example, have provided sophisticated analyses of the complexities of colonial discourse and subjectivity.¹ However, none of these theorists articulate the impact of colonial ambivalence in terms of same-sex desire, which has also caused great male anxiety and terror within the Empire and has intruded upon its project of Empire building. The question of male sexuality either as a covert goal influencing the conquering mission of the Empire or as a voyeuristic spectacle impacting the dynamics of colonial appropriation, knowledge and control remains largely silent or tangential for these theorists.⁴

Some of the works in gay and lesbian studies have taken into account the significance of colonialism and race on the discursive formation of same-sex desire.⁵ As Teresa de Lauretis suggests "[n]either race nor gender nor homosexual difference alone can constitute individual identity or the basis for a theory and a politics of social change" (148). A sustained focus on the imperial constitution of colonial masculinity, race, gender, and sexuality will refine our understanding of the complexities of the modernist production of the discourse of sexuality on a global level. For though recent studies on the politics of masculinity, same-sex desire, and homophobia have achieved ground-breaking theoretical sophistication, their broader sociological and literary analyses have remained ensconced within a predominantly Western metropolitan frame of reference. Similarly, there is a marked reticence in engaging the complexities of the imperial structures of power and knowledge that were undeniably influencing the discursive complexities and practices of same-sex desire in modern societies in groundbreaking studies on sexuality such as those of Michel Foucault and Eve Sedgwick, and especially Jeffrey Weeks's account of the historical construction of gender and the regulation of sexuality in the late nineteenth century. Only one chapter in Sedgwick's *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985) pertains to the analysis of homosexuality and race. Her reserve is notable, as Victorian literature is particularly

obsessed with the colonizing project of the Empire. However, although Sedgwick's analysis of the impact of heterosexual rivalries on gender and sexuality is crucial to the point of departure of my paper, my analysis of colonial masculinity and homosexuality is not based on how homophobia and misogyny have consequences on male bonding and on heterosexual men, which in turn affect women's relationships and positions in heterosexuality; instead this paper concentrates on those liminal and contradictory cultural spaces that constantly expose the ambivalence of colonial masculinity where the colonial male becomes not merely an object of derision but also an item of exchange and a subject for erotic desire and/or voyeuristic pleasure.⁶

The discursive sites of colonial masculinity and homoerotic desire are complicated when issues of race and gender affect the complexities of heterosexuality, homosociality, and homophobia. Sedgwick's triangular formulation describing the relationship of men and women in heterosexuality is problematic when seen within a colonial context.⁷ Several times the issue of race splits male identity, so much so that women of the colonizing cultures 'bond' with the colonizers against the colonized men. European women in the colonies are themselves fragmented in terms of their own identities. Their status was equivocally divided as subordinates to their own colonizing men due to their gender, but they were also active agents of the imperial power. In addition, in colonial situations the homoerotic desire further segregated women of the colonizing culture from that of the colonized men. Indian psychiatrist Ashis Nandy associates white women's racism to the homosexual desire of the white men: "the white women in India were generally more exclusive and racist because they unconsciously saw themselves as the sexual competitors of Indian men, with whom their men had established an unconscious homo-eroticized bonding" (9-10). As the colonized male was perceived as a rival by the women of the colonizing culture, in the colonial situation then the homosocial triangle of Sedgwick is reversed to some extent, where the colonized male becomes the item of exchange in highly charged political imbroglios.⁸

Correspondingly, contributions to the understanding of sexuality and masculinity oftentimes elide issues related to the colonial rule. For example David Halperin maintains that the publication of Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality* in 1978 was the most distinctive contribution made to the study of sexuality (7). According to Foucault, the discourse of sexuality, which is a modernist production, enabled the

construction of the homosexual other by carefully distinguishing in nineteenth century discourse normal and aberrant sexuality. However, Western orientalism painstakingly constructed the colonial other by differentiating their sexual deviancy or abnormality from accepted Western sexual practices.⁹ Foucault's analysis of the construction of homosexual identity in nineteenth-century discourse, as I have argued elsewhere, is analogous to the Empire's construction of the sexually deviant and decadent racial other in colonialist discourse even though Foucault does not account for the influence of colonization on the discourse of sexuality (see Chari 217–218).¹⁰ For the Victorians these contaminated cultures of the colonies were bastions of sexually deviant and abnormal behavior continually in need of European refinement. For example, in his terminal essay of 1885–86 edition of the *Thousand and One Nights*, Richard Burton concludes that “perverse” and “unnatural” sodomitic vices were endemic to the “Sotadic Zone”: “Running eastward the Sotadic Zone narrows, embracing Asia Minor, Mesopotamia and Chaldea, Afghanistan, Sind, the Punjab and Kashmir” (qtd. in Sedgwick, 1985, 183). In fact, the most defiling aspect of the colonized culture according to the Empire was its homosexual practices, and aberrant sexuality combined with the flawed and emasculated colonial masculinity endorsed the continual need for colonial intervention specifically for its civilizing mission. As a matter of fact, the eternal anathema of deviant sexuality on the colonies exonerated the larger contentious global and colonial interests of the Empire.

The ambiguous and contradictory sites of homoerotic desire in colonial discourse are further complicated by questions of colonial and postcolonial masculinity.¹¹ “Postcolonial masculinity” denotes in this essay the politics of masculinity as practiced during the imperial British rule during which a particular variety of masculinity or a masculinized ideal was established. The discourse of colonial masculinity differentiated the cultured and superior Western masculinity from the effeminate and flawed masculinity of the colonies. Recapitulating Ashis Nandy's argument, Partha Chatterjee claims that “[t]he ‘hyper-masculinity’ of imperialist ideology made to figure of the weak, irresolute, effeminate babu a special target of contempt and ridicule” (1991, 61). Subsequently, colonial masculinity does not refer to a single pattern of control but to specific practices of male domination. Implications of colonial masculinity impacted not only the politics of colonialism but also the dynamics of nationalism and neo-colonialism in postcolonial India.

Colonial masculinity not only established stereotypes such as the powerful, manly, and virile Englishman as against the effeminate, impotent, unmanly ‘native,’ but also discursively shifted definitions to “virile” Sikh, “militant” Pathan or Maratha, or the slight and weak Madras.¹² Colonial masculinity contributed to the establishment of a specific discourse and genealogy of masculinity that was further reinforced in post-coloniality in which the virile male body legitimated political and cultural supremacy. Stereotypes of unmanliness during colonialism reinforced the images and implications of anomalous sexual practices and vice versa. Significantly, the exotic tropics became signifiers for same-sex perversions, homosexual licenses, male pornographic fantasies, and male libidinous anomalies. Cultural practices, especially those markers of sexual orientation such as gender bending, cross-dressing, female impersonation, and androgyny, are consistently associated with the Orient, and the burden of oriental homosexuality plagues Anglo-Indian literature (Behdad, Boone, Garber, Lowe, Silverman). In fact, even an early mystery novel like Wilkie Collins's *Moonstone* attributes sexual and racial anomalies to the Orient (Chari). In Anglo-Indian fiction, the imperial narrative of Rudyard Kipling, the portrayal of Kim is haunted by the problematics of homoeroticism and is obscured by Kim's participation in the “Great Game” of colonization (Lane, Sedgwick, Suleri).

The androgynous aspects of oriental cultures particularly attracted modernist writers, such as James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, E. M. Forster, and Virginia Woolf, among others. Modernist writers were strongly influenced by and inclined towards the philosophy of the East. These writers were particularly reacting to the masculinist ideologies of their own culture and some of them found consolation and relief in the androgynous philosophy of the East. So, according to Raymond Williams, the Bloomsbury group identified itself emotionally and intellectually with the androgynous aspects of the Orient (1989, 160–166). Interestingly enough several of the modernist writers who explored the issue of androgyny investigate the transgressions of gender boundaries and of the seductions of homoeroticism by consistently setting their scenes for gender impersonations in the East within an oriental setting. For example, Virginia Woolf's explorations of Orlando's sex-changes are situated behind the oriental veil, eventually eroticized and unveiled within the textual fantasies of Oriental abduction, seduction, and titillation. The lifting of the “veil” to “unveil” Orlando's sexuality is orientalized within

the Eastern trope of veiling and unveiling the colonized oriental woman (*Orlando*, 134–137). The novel dresses the East in the feminine/masculine garb of androgyny to display an alternative physiognomy. While costuming, adorning, and dragging the narrative through various suggestions of sexual alternatives, the novel substantially depends on systematic cultural and racial veils. The narrative's significant event of gender crossing and fantasy of transsexual desire is located *outside* the imperial boundaries of the English soil, but only to be significantly situated *inside* the libidinous terrain of the Orient.

Similarly, the postcolonial novel *The Moor's Last Sigh* presents a blend of sexual repression, homosocial conflicts, and heterosexual complexities of postcolonial India.¹³ In this novel, Rushdie writes from the borderlands of the migrant condition even though the novel is set in India. This novel can be seen as a sequel to his earlier novel *The Satanic Verses*, as Rushdie continues to articulate the anguish of the migrant male and of his ambivalent relationship to the postcolonial nation and nationality. While in *The Satanic Verses* homoerotic desire is implied but buried, in *The Moor's Last Sigh* one of the characters, Aires da Gama, is gay. However, homoerotic desire and the complexity of gay identity are constantly deflected and diverted to be regulated and calibrated within a heterosexual paradigm, and the complexities of Aires's homosexual desire are developed through three interrelated and overlapping themes: the trauma of colonial emasculation, "native" effeminacy or flawed masculinity counteracted with hyper-colonialist masculinity; a fetishized obsession with the nation as mother and the phobia of the motherland emasculating her sons (the love for the motherland is relocated as the theme of nationalism which is nuanced as erotic nationalism); and finally, the anxiety of alienation from home, nation, and ethnic community in which estrangement is portrayed as the fundamental condition of the postcolonial, diasporic, globalized ethnic male identity. Together these themes reflect, deflect, resist, and displace the intense politics of same-sex desire as homophobia, homoeroticism, and homosocialism within the dynamics of colonialism as well as within the politics of multinationalism, nationalism, globalism, and postcolonialism.

The three thematic strands of the novel form a nexus around which homosexual epistemologies of both Western and oriental cultures are encountered, identified, practiced, regulated, and speculated upon. Male desire is simultaneously represented as both object and subject; as the same and the other: as a contradictory and unresolved site of identi-

fication and difference that not only reinforces the binarisms of homosexuality and heterosexuality but also reveals how the encounters of the East and West are imbricated by issues of colonialism, race, nation, nationalism, and class in postcolonialism. By accentuating the hybridity of postcolonial India, the narrative underscores not merely the diversity of its race, culture, and religion, but also of its divergent sexual practices, "[c]ircular sexualist India" (166).

The novel is a saga of the da Gamas; especially of the rise and fall of the half-Jewish, half-Catholic four generations of the da Gama-Zogoiby family whose father might have been an illegitimate descendant of Boabdil, the last Muslim Sultan of Granada, who was driven from Spain in 1492 (72, 79–81). His Catholic mother, Aurora da Gama, comes from a Christian spice-trading family that proudly claims illegitimate descent from Vasco da Gama, the Portuguese navigator who brought European trade and colonialism to India: "English and French sailed in the wake of that first-arrived Portugee, so that in the period called Discovery-of-India . . . we were 'not so much sub-continent as sub-condiment,' as my distinguished mother had it" (4–5). The chief narrator of the novel is their son, Moraes Zogoiby, who symbolizes the hybrid racial, cultural, and religious melange of modern India.¹⁴ Nicknamed the Moor, he is heterosexual and embodies literally and allegorically the trauma of colonial emasculation. As for his physical features, he is described as grotesque with a deformed hand: "a deformed right hand like a club" with "[m]y right hand: the fingers welded into an undifferentiated chunk, the thumb a stunted wart" (146). He also suffers from a genetic disorder which ages his body twice as fast as a normal individual's (144–146, 153–154), in spite of his premature birth—"[[f]our and a half months in the wet and slimy felt much too long to me" (144).¹⁵ The Moor's physical deformity underscores another inadequacy; he is racially flawed due to his hybrid racial heritage, consequently reinforcing and continuing the masculinist colonial anxiety of miscegenation in postcolonial India. Inasmuch as he inherits a diverse mixture of races and creeds that are constitutive of modern India, a secular nation, his racial potpourri also accentuates the crisis of modern India, which is fundamentally divided into Muslims and Hindus, especially after colonization, in spite of the numerous other minority communities and myriad religious faiths and belief systems that form a palimpsest of races and subcultures on the Indian subcontinent: "I, however, was raised neither as Catholic nor as Jew. I was both, and nothing;

a jewholic—anonymous, a cathjew, a stewpot, a mongrel cur. I was . . . a real Bombay mix. *Bastard*: . . . a smelly shit; like, for example, me” (104). While the Moor represents the hybridization of modern India, he also uncovers the colonialist and masculinist phobia for racial impurity, contamination, and homophobia in postcolonial India. Postcolonial India not only imbibes the imperialist ideology and its hypermasculinity—the racial homosocial conflicts of colonialist India—but also preserves the colonialist policies of divide and rule.

In addition, the intricacies and intense familial bonding and rivalries of the da Gama family in postcolonial India duplicate the homosocial politics of colonialism, especially in the manner in which the novel resorts to family disputes and differences in order to defer same-sex desire, which allows the narrative to calibrate male desire within a heterosexual paradigm. The intricacy of the da Gama family replicates the homosocial conflicts of colonial India in several ways: on a personal level it reflects the collapse of the family as a social unit while also mirroring on the political level the disintegration of the secular state in postcolonial India. Homosocial inimity jeopardizes the masculine identity, catastrophically threatening to undo both familial and national history, and the emasculated male identity becomes the predominant trope echoing the cataclysmic partition of the nation into India and Pakistan by the British:

Disharmony and discord have been introduce-o'ed everywhere by appointees of Aires, whether direct or indirect does not signify; business circumstances clearly dictate the company integrity is impossible to maintain. If the Gama Company remains a single cell, then the shame of these atrocities will finish it off. Divide, and maybe the sickness can be contained in one half only. If we do not live separately then we will die together. (41)

The nation, like the family, has to endure the curse of eternal rifts because “[o]nce divided, always divided; in that household it was a fight to the bloody finish” (49).” The history of the da Gama family also divulges the continental history of the subcontinent, replicating in its own familial schisms, the homosocial divide, and rule practice and economics of the empire in colonialism (40, 42, 46, 55, 56). The intense prominence of personal and political rivalries were indicative of private, psychic fear and anxiety about manhood, as well as of a collective polit-

ical panic about masculinity and potential loss of manhood on national and global levels; the personal and the public were profoundly afflicted by the continuing intricacies of colonial masculinity and neocolonialism in postcolonial India. In addition, both colonial and postcolonial India are underscored by a fetishistic obsession for male dominance. However, by accentuating intense male rivalry and homosociality of the family, and in this case the da Gamas in postcolonial India, the novel stifles the unfolding of an intricate and complex portrayal of masculine desire.

The homosocial paradigm of colonialism becomes not merely the basis for the da Gama family and for the conflicts of postcolonial India, replicating colonial manipulation of divide and rule in its portrayal of male bonding and unbonding, but also contentiously shapes neocolonialism and fundamentalism in contemporary India. For example, one of the central anxieties in the novel is the rise of Hindu fundamentalism, which is portrayed by commenting on the celebration of the Ganesh festival or the elephant God. Every year during this festival the Zogoiby family is ripped apart as the various members of the family allege their alliances to the various factious groups of either Hindu fanaticism, the secular moderates, or other religious groups of the Islamic faith. The novel exposes the valorization of the male heterosexual religious narratives (Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc.) in postcolonial India, but only to uncover the different layers of hybridity and to dismantle the homosocial conflicts of race, ethnicity, class, caste, religion, gender, and sexuality. The primary catalyst inciting these dissensions is a relentless fundamentalist moral and political view of hypermasculinity, ethnocentrism, and homophobia that denies any ruptures in the globalized, hybrid, postcolonial Indian identity. The traumatic “ruinous climax of divide-and-rule” of colonial India—“two nations in the subcontinent, one Hindu, the other Mussulman. Soon the split will be *irreversible*” (emphasis added, 87)—is traced in the novel from colonial to postcolonial religious and ethnic dissensions. However, even after independence, the rift continues to split deeper the confines of the already ruptured nation, and the scourge of Hindu fundamentalism afflicts the nation especially during the Ganesh festivals in Bombay: “Ganesha Chaturthi had become the occasion for the fist-clenched, saffron-headbanded young thugs to put on a show of Hindu-fundamentalist triumphalism, egged on by bellowing ‘Mumbai’s Axis’ party politicians and demagogues such as Raman Fielding, a.k.a. *Mainduck* (‘Frog’)” (124). As the homosocial politics of nationalism and Hindu fundamentalism consoli-

date to confront colonial politics, both nationalism and Hindu fundamentalism imbibe and promote the very colonial politics they challenge; in its core both anticolonialist and Hindu fundamentalist postcolonial politics divulge male discourses that are haunted by a homophobic and paranoiac masculine anxiety.¹⁷ In addition, just as the colonial Empire of the mid-nineteenth century was plagued by a dreadful fear of homosexuality and virulently fostered homophobia, especially as England was losing its global and national power, similarly, postcolonial India confronts its national and racial threats of destabilization with homophobia and frenzied attacks on secularism. Any manifestation of weakness or compromise, either on a personal or political level, is perceived as effeminate, and feminization as a threat to national identity (125, 133, 293, 295, 300).¹⁸

The Moor's heterosexual but deformed body becomes the site of intense anxiety about male identity and masculinity. However, in addition to being physically deformed, the protagonist is also religiously and spiritually maimed as he is a racial and ethnic hybrid blending together different religions (he is half-Jewish, half-Catholic). The Moor declares "[m]ine is the story of the *fall from grace* of a high-born cross-breed: me, Moraes Zogoiby, called 'Moor,' for most of my life the only male heir to the spice-trade-'n'-big-business crores of the da Gama-Zogoiby dynasty of Cochin, and of my banishment from what I had every right to think of as my natural life by my mother Aurora" (emphasis added, 5). This condition of being banished by his mother, about which the Moor relentlessly wails throughout his narrative, becomes a predominant trope in the novel, and, within this context of exile, different aspects of masculinity, including male identity, homophobia, homosocialism, and homoeroticism, are problematized. The condition of exile and banishment is subsequently related to themes of nationalism and homophobic fundamentalism; the burden of expatriation becomes a predicament for the postcolonial country that is banishing its inhabitants. The novel is a narrative of intense betrayal where postcolonial India, or "Mother India," as the novel suggests, has emasculated and deceived her sons and has not lived up to its promise of a secular state. Due to this betrayal, postcolonial India continues to engender profound anxieties about racial desire, sexual desire, masculinity and masculine desire, heterosexuality, and femininity. However, what is at stake is the question of masculinity and virility. Homoerotic desire is consistently displaced and deferred into various categories of homosocial conflicts, sexual ambivalence,

political contention, and national and racial dispute. By carefully ascribing the genealogy of the Moor's family to Portuguese, Jewish, Spanish, Arabic, and Indian roots, the novel reveals how racial splits question the homogeneity of race and sexual desire in postcolonial India. Subsequently, masculine desire along with racial desire rupture national unity; diasporic dispersals fracture male identity and the notion of "nation" uncovers the construction of masculinist power and knowledge.

While the Moor symbolizes the physical, spiritual, and racial deformation of the nation, his uncle's sexual identity questions the heterosexual conformity of male desire in India. The Moor's genealogy is further flawed by his uncle's masculine desire, and Aires, the gay character in the novel, is portrayed as a flamboyant Victorian dandy: "brilliantine struggling to keep slicked-down his thick, wavy, white hair premature whitening . . . how my great-uncle postured! . . . what a ridiculous figure he cut in his monocle, stiff collar, and three-piece suit of finest garbardine" (12). Aires is the typical "preening Anglophile dandy" (198). Dandyism, as Richard Dellamora suggests, was associated in the nineteenth century with a "eunuch strain" and with effeminacy, which often connotes male-male desire (199)¹⁹. Similarly, Ashis Nandy explains that colonial masculinity and culture in India revolved not so much around the opposition between masculinity and femininity, but rather between masculinity and effeminacy which was in turn associated with homoeroticism (8). Aires's narrative constructs his gayness through his dandyism, and his dandyistic pose combined with his luxurious, indolent, leisurely, and aristocratic lifestyle undercut the significance of his role as a gay man in postcolonial India. His ostentatious Wildean dandyism, while delineating the multiplicity of masculine identity, reduces the complexity of Aires's gay sexuality. To a large extent, Aires's dandyism deflects the significance of his struggle to confront both colonial and neocolonial masculinist tendencies in postcolonial India, and Aires becomes a comic caricature. In addition, Aires's dandyism promotes a certain amount of indifference in him towards his wife Carmen's distress, and he comes across as a misogynist. His treatment of Carmen further stereotypes and weakens the depiction of gay identity and sexuality (46, 49). Aires's homosexual identity becomes ineffectual, and his "closet" lifestyle is largely held responsible for Carmen's loneliness and oppression: "And Carmen in her solitary bed, her fingers reaching down for solace below her waist, entwined herself in herself, drank her own bitterness and called it sweet . . . excited herself with fantasies

of seductions . . . of seducing Aires's lovers . . . *O God think how many new men he will find is finding has found in jail*" (47). However, when Aires returns from imprisonment, he is confronted by an "altered wife" who threatens to kill him: "'If you do not give up your shame and scandal then, Aires, I will kill you while you sleep.' He bowed to her . . . the bow of a Restorations dandy. . . . He did not give up his adventures; but became more circumspect . . . in a rented Ernakulam apartment. . . . Through the chick-blinds thin blades of daylight fell across his body and another's, and the cries of the market rose up to him and mingled with his lover's moans.'" (49–50)

We are introduced to Aires when he marries Carmen but is rumoured to have dressed himself in her wedding gown and spent the night with his lover Henry, the Navigator:

on her wedding night her husband had entered her bedroom late, ignored his terrified and scrawny young bride who lay virginally quaking in the bed, undressed with slow fastidiousness, and then with equal precision slipped his naked body (so similar in proportions to her own) into the wedding-dress . . . and left the room . . . Carmen . . . saw the wedding-dress gleaming in moonlight as a young man rowed it and its occupant away, in search of whatever it was that passed, among such occult beings, for bliss. (13)

The homoerotically charged encounter between Aires and Henry on the wedding night figures as an unspeakable scene of desire between two male lovers and more significantly as a voyeuristic spectacle which is at once a discreet "secret" of the closet as well as a knowledge that is public:²⁰

The story of Aires's gowned adventure, which left great Aunt Sahara abandoned in the cold dunes of her unbloodied sheets, has come down to me in spite of her silence. Most ordinary families can't keep secrets . . . but then again, perhaps the whole incident was invented, a fable the family made up to shock-but-not-too-much, to make more palatable—because more exotic, more *beautiful*—the fact of Aires's homosexuality?(13)

This voyeuristic spectacle of the gay male body is exposed and displayed for consumption on the wedding night and is displaced to uncover

secrets, aberrant liaisons, betrayals as well as to disclose Aires's lifestyle: "the story . . . put Aires's secret wildness into a pretty frock, hiding away the cock and arse and blood and spunk of it, the brave determined fear of the runt-sized dandy . . . but by no means faithful liaison with the fellow of the wedding-night boat, whom Aires baptized 'Prince Henry the Navigator.'" (14)²¹ While the narrative allows the reader to decipher the subtle signs of gayness, to recognize the gay male body, the "secret" lifestyle of the gay character is constructed as a problem to simultaneously deflect and to make the homosexual more conspicuously visible to the public. However, Aires's gayness and promiscuous life eventually disintegrate; he is castigated for his transgressive behavior when Prince Henry is diagnosed with "a particularly pernicious strain of syphilis, and it soon became clear that Aires, too, had been infected" (117). Further, Aires attempts to shape a compromise between the masculine ideals of colonial India and the bourgeois marriage structure of postcolonial India. In this conflict Carmen, his wife, is caught in between, and the unspeakable display of desire between the two men is represented as a familiar scene of deceit when Aires's homosexual desire wrecks the heterosexual familial structure and bourgeois domesticity. As the Moor in the novel mourns: "Aires and Carmen's lives were painful and twisted, because they were living out a lie, and so sometimes their behaviour came out twisted too" (103). However, while for both Carmen and Aires the bourgeois fantasy of family crumbles, Carmen steps in not as an item of exchange but to nurse both Aires and Prince Henry: "'We better get you well,' she said, 'or who am I going to dance with the rest of my life? You,' and here she made the briefest of pauses . . . 'and your Prince Henry, too'" (117). After nursing them back to health she insists that "there was no need for Prince Henry to move out. 'Too many wars in this house and outside it' . . . 'Let us make at least this one three-cornered peace'" (117). She does not want Aires to masquerade and lead a double life.

Nonetheless, in Aires's case there is a certain anxiety of pretense and falseness in relation to his identity, an aberration between his lifestyle and his gender and sexuality as identity (epistemological and ontological), and the ways in which that gender and sexuality are masqueraded by the homosexual individual in society. Nevertheless, it is the outside heterosexual society that affirms Aires's male body as gay and culturally reifies his "homosexual" identity. From the onset of Aires's narrative, homosexuality functions as a "secret," an identity that neces-

sitates exposure as well as concealment (13, 28, 49, 103, 117). Aires's homosexuality is portrayed as inauthentic and his homosexual difference as anxiety ridden, which is potentially identifiable as well as unidentifiable. In the process, Aires's sexual desire becomes more visible to the society.

However, in postcolonial India it is the construction of the "nation" that becomes the site of a particular heterosexual anxiety, about the inscriptions of postcolonial Indian masculinity, which in turn discloses homophobic paranoia. Neocolonial and fundamentalist movements reassert not only a heterosexual identification with the nation but reveal an epistemological crisis and paranoid homophobic anxiety about what constitutes an Indian/Hindu/masculine nation:²²

I had seen India's beauty in that crowd with its soda-water and cucumber but with that God stuff I got scared. In the city we are for secular India but the village is for Ram. And they say *Ishwar and Allah is your name* but they don't mean it, they mean only Ram himself, king of Raghu clan. . . . In the end I am afraid that the villagers will march on the cities and people like us will have to lock our doors and there will come a Battering Ram. (55–56)²³

The assertion of a vitriolic and virulent Indian/Hindu/masculine nation, "that corrosive acid of the spirit, that adversial intensity which poured into the nation's bloodstream" (351), culminated in the cataclysmic and tragic episode, when, due to the fundamentalist/religious/nationalist paranoia, the Babri Masjid was destroyed in Ayodhya by the insistent and brutal ramming of the "Battering Ram" (363–365). Further, this divisive construction of a postcolonial Indian nation that denies its own hybridity (in fact the fundamental philosophic tenet of Hinduism is metamorphosis) becomes the site of further ruptures and struggles where issues of nation, nationalism, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality are confronted and contested. The fundamentalist national reaction is no different from the colonialist construction of virulent hyper-masculinity and sexuality; both uncover an intense male anxiety about the integrity of male bodies, masculinity, and the nation-state (260, 262, 293, 299, 300, 365). The fundamentalist dogma is obsessed with a paranoid terror of the imbrication of nationalism and sexuality and in particular of homosexuality in the dominant cultural expression of postcolonial India (298–300). Whereas nationalism itself was dependent upon a Eurocen-

tric tradition and on Western forms of knowledge and power,²⁴ therefore, the nationalist schema was already cathected by colonial politics, defiled as well as contaminated by Western sources. Consequently, the relation of nationalism to colonialism was one of homosocial avowal and disavowal, almost an erotic pursuit. If one denies the male desire of colonialism and nationalism, then the novel pursues the possibility of the bastardization of nationalism. Interestingly, the novel projects this racial and sexual contagion on the first Prime Minister of India—Jawaharlal Nehru—who is portrayed as an elite anglophile dandy rumoured to have had affairs with Lady Edwina Mountbatten (176). In addition, the Moor is supposedly the illegitimate son of Nehru and Aurora (175–178). (Aires names his dog "Jawahar.") At every stage of its narration, the novel questions the claims of legitimacy and purity of the nationalist movement, especially in terms of its native/Hindu/religious/nationalist schema. In postcolonial India, both nationalism and sexuality are in flux, a crisis precipitated by the conflicting displacement and insecurity of masculinity and masculine identity in colonialism, nationalism, globalism, and in neocolonial fundamentalism.

Nationalism endorses a distinct form of homosocial male bonding and male fraternity, and as the novel portrays, certain types of homosocial bondings are essential to the perpetuation of nationalistic jingoism. Masculine privilege is sustained by male friendships, alliances, or rivalries, irrespective of whether the characters involved are Aires, his brother Cameons, Aurora, her husband Abraham, the Moor, or Raman Fielding. Fielding, known as "mainduck" or "frog," was a "full time communalist politician one of the founders of 'mumbai Axis,' the party of Hindu nationalists named after the mother-goddess of Bombay" (230). Fielding is the ultimate embodiment and signifier of homophobic hyper-masculinity. In addition, the masculinity urged by Fielding and the Hindu fundamentalists he represents has a twofold project: it demands a disavowal of the feminine identification that colonialism implicated on Indian men, and also paradoxically embraces the hyper-masculinity of colonial identity, the brand of masculinity that underscores virility and masculine power (230, 231, 298, 299, 308, 309, 312). The novel exemplifies the epidemic national anxiety about masculinity, especially that of Hindu fundamentalism, as *the* fundamental crisis of postcolonial India, an apprehension that has spiralled since India's independence and its desire ergo to prove its own "masculine" prowess, not merely across its own borders but globally. Additionally, the anxiety of masculinity in

postcolonial India exemplifies the modernist crisis of individual identity; an identity that is discursively imbricated by the sexual, national, and imperial definitions of masculinity and continually intersected by the postcolonial politics of nation, nationhood, and nation state.

Significantly in the novel, the theme of nationalism is predicated by a fetishized obsession with the Nation-as-Mother and the Mother-as-Nation to the extent that the difference between the mother and the nation is collapsed. This infatuated eros for the motherland, configured as the theme of nationalism and obsessive patriotism, is exemplified as erotic nationalism, inasmuch as the erotics of nationalism and sexuality are sustained by the image of the dominant, controlling, and powerful mother-as-nation and nation-as-mother. With reference to the Jenkins's homosexual affair and scandal during Lyndon B. Johnson's presidential term, Lee Edelman exposes the threat posed to national security when male sexual desire is brought to the forefront of society: the "mobilization of this figure places homosexuality in a conceptual space contiguous with, and impinged upon by, an anxiety-producing image of the power that women wield as mothers" (276). Similarly, in Rushdie's novel the symbolic power of woman-as-mother and mother-as-nation, especially as the "anxiety-producing" and castrating mother/land, is embodied in the figure of Mother-India, Epiphania, Carmen, Aurora, including Indira Gandhi, one of the Prime Ministers of India: "Motherness—excuse me if I underline this point—is a big idea in India, maybe the biggest: the land as mother, the mother as land . . . I'm talking *major* mother country" (137). The mother's relation to the son is incestuous, which is reinforced by Rushdie's use of *Mother India*, the famous cinematic representation of nationalism: "Aurora could not refrain from raising the subject . . . of mother-son relations. . . . And now look—you have gone and marry-e'd him! . . . to marry your own son, I swear, wowie." (137) In the novel, due to the incapacitating abilities of mothers towards their sons, the mother is condemned for emasculating, castrating, and effeminizing her sons. The Moor's sterile feelings of inadequacy and impotency are compounded by a sense of betrayal by his "mothers," which increasingly leads him to doubt his "manhood" (223, 235, 288, 316). Aires and Moreas are both stifled by their mothers, "Mother India who loved and betrayed and ate and destroyed and again loved her children" (60–61). As for Aires, his conflicted identity along with the void created by an absent father (his own father committed suicide) compounded by an impotent Fatherland, entangle him in a widen-

ing web of homoerotic desire (28). Aires's homosexuality is further blamed on the overarching figure of the dominant and controlling mother who usurps the role of the father (18, 26, 33). His homosexual desire is triggered by his crisis of paternity, on both personal and political levels: he is deprived of both personal and political paternal legacies. Additionally, it is within this setting and constraints of a generic patriarchy in colonial and postcolonial contexts that the crisis of male homosexuality, effeminacy, and male emasculation are portrayed.

However, another constraint is enacted in the novel that I want to interrogate; and that is the figure of the mother who is convicted of strangling her child and annihilating the family and the nation: "And maybe I'm right; or maybe this attitude, too, is a part of my complaint, maybe this-what?—this fucked-up dissident mind-set, too, is all my mother's fault" (206). The novel's portrayal of the mother figure is extremely problematic. While the figure of the mother is condemned for emasculating and effeminizing her sons, she is also burdened with the guilt of pushing her son to homosexuality. A predominant concern of paternity is that the suffocating and overpowering mother coerces her son to be more dependent on her than on the father-figure, which in turn leads to homosexuality (Edelman 276–277, Kristeva 13). However, by making the figure of the mother the site for the conflicts of postcolonial India, the complexities of Aires, the gay identity, are also weakened.

The novel ends with the following invocation to his mother "[s]he, too, had gone beyond recall, and she never spoke to me, never made confession, never gave me back what I needed, the certainty of love" (432). As the Moor finds reconciliation in the art of narration, "[a]s for me, I went back to my table, and wrote my story's end" (432), he also captures a moment to pause and discontinue, if possible, his traumatic extirpation from his mother/land and to ruminate on "his" story from the land of his ancestors in Spain from where his Jewish ancestors were expelled in 1492 (72). He returns to Benegeli with a "last sigh for a lost world" (4) to recount how his ancestor, the Sultan Boabdil of Granada, was evicted by Catholic monarchs Fernando and Isabella (80). This moment of banishment, 1492, set into motion the long line of exile due to which all the male inheritors of the Sultan, including the Moor, are diasporic or "wanderers of the earth":

He departed into exile with his mother and retainers, bringing to a close the centuries of Moorish Spain; and reining in his horse upon

the Hill of Tears he turned to look for one last time upon his loss, upon the palace and the fertile plains and all the concluded glory of al-Andalus . . . at which sight the Sultan sighed, and hotly wept—whereupon his mother, the terrifying Ayxa the Virtuous, sneered at his grief. Having been forced to genuflect before the omnipotent queen, Boabdil was now obliged to suffer a further humiliation at the hands of an impotent (but formidable) dowager. *Well may you weep like a woman for what you could not defend like a man*, she taunted him . . . she despised this bubbling male. her son. for yielding up what she would have fought for to the death. (80)

The Moor acknowledges to Sultan Boabdil, “*I too am thy mother’s son*” (80) and is able to find consolation by reclaiming his lost paternity and male heritage. While he gains solace in narration and gains a symbolic “home,” Aires, his gay uncle, is not granted any such consolations; he is left without a “home.” For a postcolonial gay subject, such as Aires, issues of estrangement and alienation are further exacerbated by the trends of global diaspora; and issues of nation, nationhood, ethnic nationality, and “home” are particularly conflicted. In Aires’s postcolonial India, fundamentalism, especially Hindu fundamentalism, complicates the condition of exile and home. The notion of home in the nation state is a formation that is in flux even within normative heterosexuality, whereas, when uprooted by issues of colonialism, nationalism, and neocolonialism, the notion of “home” for gay identities questions not merely racial and gender complexities but sexual multiplicity. The sense of rootlessness is further complicated when queerness and diaspora intersect to question postcolonial global contexts, especially as they influence transnational culturalism.

While the novel represents gay identity through a minor character, there is no evidence of a possibility of change in the parameters of the role of gay identity in postcolonial India. Amongst all the chatter of colonialism, postcolonialism, nationalism, and fundamentalism there is an engulfing stripping away of male sexuality as a political necessity, a distillation that can potentially fatigue the reader. The portrayal of Aires’ gayness remains a weak depiction of alternative sexuality as it is caught within the intricate web of colonialism, postcolonialism, fundamentalism, and nationalism. Aires’s membership in the upper echelon of Indian society instills in him a confidence that is grounded in his wealth rather than in his sexual identity; his alternative sexuality fails to determine his selfhood. In several ways the novel entertains the colonial pho-

bia for sexuality and shows an unwillingness to avail itself of the lessons of history, and the stereotypes of sexuality prevail. Filtered through a fundamentalist anxiety (a fundamentalism that attempts to assert cohesion through a negation of differences), the use of sexuality as an identity easily erupts into a parody that is denied and choked of any cultural representation or of multivarious coterminous possibilities. The disjunctive norms of alternative sexuality are caught within the dichotomy of East/West, colonizer/colonized, homosexual/heterosexual, female/male, with the West signifying modernism/progress and the Orient a symbol of paganism/crude practices. My concern is with the space of sexuality as an identity in postcolonial India that Aires leaves and the manner in which he avoids or fails to express the totality of his hyphenation as a postcolonial-gay-man and that of his other margins. My goal is not to define or limit Aires as a character. He deserves the freedom to define himself. Instead, this chapter aims to clarify the manner in which the portrayal of Aires’s gay subtext, while attempting an independent vista, ultimately authorizes homosexuality solely as a specter reinforcing the existing colonial structure.

NOTES

1. For a complex analysis of the sexual politics in colonialism I am indebted to both Joseph Boone, “Vacation Cruises; or, The Homoerotics of Orientalism,” and Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*. Both these works have influenced my understanding of the politics of sexuality in colonialism.
2. For a more detailed analysis of the connections between colonialism, masculinity, and decadence see my article, “Imperial Dependency, Addiction, and the Decadent Body.”
3. Most of the critical theories in colonial and postcolonial studies tend to overlook the issue of same-sex desire. Several of these theories elaborate on the effect of colonial or postcolonial contexts with respect to gender or class but almost always neglect the question of homoeroticism. Similarly, certain theoretical frameworks fleetingly mention the issue of homoeroticism but do not engage in this issue in a sustained manner with a detailed analysis.
4. However, recently Anne McClintock carefully analyzes how social categories of race, gender, ethnicity, class, and sexuality powerfully implicated the colonial project and rule, especially pages 75–180.

5. I am particularly indebted to the following works: Joseph Boone, "Vacation Cruises; or The Homoerotics of Orientalism"; Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests*; Christopher Lane, *The Ruling Passion* and *The Burdens of Intimacy*; Kaja Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*; Steve Neale, "Masculinity as Spectacle"; Eve Sedgwick, *Between Men* and *The Epistemology of the Closet*; Teresa De Lauretis, "Sexual Indifference and Lesbian Representation."

6. See Tania Modleski, *Feminism Without Women: Culture and Criticism in a "Postfeminist" Age* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), where she mentions the criticisms that are levelled against Sedgwick's analysis for "driving a wedge between gay men and straight men" (12). See also Lane (1995), 8–9.

7. My analysis moves away from Sedgwick's model, especially in her analysis of the positioning of women, to use her phrase "between men." Sedgwick maintains that women's identity is affected in homosociality especially when men exchange women to bind themselves in relationships of kinship and reciprocity. In Sedgwick's framework homosociality is a triangular desire where woman's identity is caught within the politics of male allegiances and binding of male society. Woman becomes an exchange item and, as Gayle Rubin contends, it results in the "traffic in women." The role of women, to a large extent, is in fostering and nourishing positive bonds between men and in bringing them together. According to Sedgwick, women regulate men's desire and function as cohorts of a "potentially erotic" relationship of men for men. Further, Sedgwick also argues that patriarchal cultures, which are based on male coalitions, are also intensely homophobic. So men will be compelled to direct their desire and intimacy through women, and women mediate men's desire for each other.

8. European women to a large extent reinforced white solidarity and demarcations of racial boundaries. Further, several scholars of Lesbian and Gay studies have examined the difficulty of Sedgwick's term "homosocial," and these critiques are extremely useful for colonial and postcolonial contexts.

9. See also Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question," p. 19. Similarly, Sander Gilman claims that the Hottentots, especially the black female, prevailed as the essence of the black in the nineteenth century. Gilman also argues that the sexuality of the black becomes an icon for deviant sexuality during the colonial period, and "deviant sexuality" is the most notable marker of decadence and of "otherness" (209).

10. It is astonishing that Foucault in *The Order of Things* attributes the constitution of the "other" to the beginning of the nineteenth century and investigates how the negative aspects of Western culture was transferred to the "other" but does not analyze the discourse of colonization (see Chari, "Imperial Dependency," 219). For an analysis of how Foucault's examination of sex eludes colonial politics of race, see Ann Laura Stoler, pgs. 1–94.

11. For questions of masculinity see Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis, and Simon Watson, eds., *Constructing Masculinity*; Harry Stecopoulos, and Michael Uebel, eds., *Masculinities*; Anne Stoler, *Race And The Education of Desire*. See also, Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali,'* which draws connections between colonialism and masculinity. Sinha does not take into consideration issues of same-sex desire and passingly refers to homosexuality.

12. For more detailed analysis of colonial masculinity, especially for differentiations of cultural value systems between the "manly" Englishman and the "effeminate" Bengali babu, see Mrinalini Sinha. She also provides a detailed analysis of the impact of colonial masculinity on the course of Indian history and the legal systems.

13. The term "homosocial" is used catachrestically throughout this essay to analyze the ambivalence of either rivalry or intense male bonding amongst men and to examine male relationships that can be perceived as erotic or potentially erotic.

14. Rushdie's fascination with Islamic culture and religion continues to haunt this novel even though it is not as overtly concerned with Islam as is his earlier novel, *The Satanic Verses*. However, one cannot help but register the embedded reference to Islam when he traces the religious and cultural genealogy of the Moor; the Moor is the offspring of Judaism and Catholicism analogously reflecting the religious lineage of Islam.

15. Rushdie, however, does point out that his Moor was handsome: "I must say without false modesty that, for all my South Indian dark skin . . . and with the exception of my crippled hand, I did indeed grow up good-looking; but for a long time that right hand made me unable to see anything but ugliness in myself" (162).

16. Interestingly enough at this point of the narrative the two da Gama brothers—Camoens and Aires—are arrested echoing the imprisonment of the Indian nationalists by the British:

In June 1925 the da Gama brothers were sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment. The unusual severity of the judgement led to some speculation that the family was being paid back for Francisco's involvement with the Home Rule Movement. . . . Many Menezes and Lobo men, and some women, were jailed or condemned. . . . (40)

17. Partha Chatterjee, noting the importance of history as a source of nationhood, points out that "Hindu nationalism" is synonymous with "Indian nationalism" and is a modern concept. He also argues that the seeds for the Hindu fundamentalist movement in postcolonial India were sown during the

Indian nationalist movement's struggle for independence against colonial Britain. "The majority 'community' is Hindu; the others are minorities. . . . This view, which today is being propagated with such vehemence in postcolonial India by Hindu-extremist politics, actually originated more than a hundred years ago, at the same time Indian nationalism was born" (1993, 110). Rushdie refers to the rise of Hindu fundamentalism, especially the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its election slogan to achieve "Ramrajya," or Rama's rule, which was synonymous with ideal rule. Ramrajya never implied a "Hindu" rule other than a just rule. However, the ruling BJP party, synonymously interchanged "ideal" with "Hindu" and denied the inherent pluralism of Hinduism (55–56, 351). The "battering ram" refers to the "ramming" of one single religion and to the violent destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, considered as Rama's birthplace, by Hindu fanatics in 1992. Countrywide communal riots followed after the attack in which several hundreds died. Further, for Indian nationalism's dependence on colonialism see, Ashis Nandy, 1983, and Partha Chatterjee, 1986, 1993.

18. I am particularly referring to the portrayal of homophobia, homosexuality, and masculinity in literary works such as Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*; Charles Dickens, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*; Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, etc.

19. "In the nineteenth century, 'effeminacy' as a term of personal abuse often connotes male-male desire, a threat of deviance that seems to haunt gentlemen should they become too gentle, refined, or glamorous" (Dellamora, 199). Similarly, James Eli Adams argues that in attacks on the Tactarians during the Victorian period what emerged was a "gendered rhetoric that facilitated the subsequent sexualizing of gender transgression, in which 'effeminacy' was seen not as a public failure . . . but as the outward manifestation of a private, sexual deviance" (17). Further, Adams with reference to Carlyle argues that "his writings are incessantly preoccupied with the dandy as a figure of masculine identity under stress" (24). The analysis of the dandy as "a figure of masculine identity under stress" is relevant to Aires's position in postcolonial India. However, both Richard Dellamora and James Eli Adams point out that the Victorian dandy did not belong to the aristocratic classes but was instead predominantly middle class. They also argue that Regina Gagnier misplaced the "dandy" in high society because the dandy is a middle-class phenomenon in the Victorian age. Nonetheless, in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, Aires belongs to the leisurely upper aristocratic class, fashioned after the flamboyant Wildean dandy. However, neither Dellamora nor Adams connects his analysis of the role of the dandy to colonial or postcolonial masculinity; their analyses pertain to the role of the dandy in the Victorian age and how it affected different aspects of Victorian masculinity.

20. Sedgwick notes that as a result of the Wilde trials the new public discourse on male homosexuality was simultaneously "minoritizing" and "univer-

salizing." The discourse pertaining to male homosexuality she describes as "the occluded intersection between a minority rhetoric of the 'open secret' or glass closet and a subsumptive public rhetoric of the 'empty secret'" (164). Sedgwick's analyses of the discursive complexities of the "secret" and of the "secrecy" of the gay closet, which are simultaneously private as well as public knowledge, are pertinent to Aires's homosexual lifestyle (1990, 164–165).

21. Steve Neale's analysis of the spectacle of masculinity and of spectatorship in Hollywood cinema is relevant to Aires's display of his gay identity as spectacle on his wedding night. Neale defines and differentiates between three psychic functions that influence the male as object of the look—identification, voyeurism, and fetishism—and demonstrates how all of these attempt to disguise or deflect homoeroticism: "in a heterosexual and patriarchal society the male body cannot be marked as explicitly as the erotic object of another male look: that look must be motivated in some other way, its erotic component repressed" (281). These three aspects—identification, voyeurism, and fetishism are exhibited; however, Aires's display of the gay male body is clearly marked by male desire.

22. Contemporary Hindu revivalists and members of the Bharatiya Janata Party claim that the only manner in which India can achieve some recognition as a world power is by asserting its "Hindu" identity and masculinity. This affirmation was particularly revived when India recently conducted a series of nuclear tests. On hearing of the tests, Bal Thackeray, a chauvinist leader of the Shiv Sena Party exclaimed: "We have to prove that we are not eunuchs" (qtd. from *Los Angeles Times*, Tuesday, May 17, 1998, p. B7). Rushdie's portrayal of Mainduck or Raman Fielding is based on Bal Thackeray.

23. It must be pointed out that Hindu fundamentalism is very much an outgrowth of postcolonial globalism, largely supported and financed by expatriate Indians and their network and sites in cyberspace, especially in the United States. One could almost say that the "patriarchy" and "masculinity" of the Hindu fundamentalist movement are the main concern of postcolonial India and are predominantly prompted and supported by globalism and by corporate fundamentalism. The Hindu fundamentalist movement began with the rural to urban migration, was connected to nationalism, but has currently become a part of the metropolitan fabric of postcolonial India and is strongly affiliated to and influenced by postcolonial globalism, the global economy, and global politics.

24. Nationalism's dependence on colonialism and on Western forms of knowledge has been extensively researched and chronicled to establish that nationalism was cathected by colonialism and discursively implicated by the colonial process. See Ashis Nandy (1983), Partha Chatterjee (1986), and Gayatri Spivak (1988).

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CHAPTER TWELVE

BY WAY OF AN AFTERWORD

 SAMIR DAYAL

In this Afterword, my aim is to highlight some of the important issues raised by the contributors to this collection and to identify elements of an ongoing project for queer studies that emerges from a consideration of these issues. The collection traverses several disciplinary borders, including those that define literary studies, gender studies, cultural studies, and postcolonial studies. Such a cross-disciplinarity is required if one wishes, as many contributors here evidently do, to situate queer studies in a global frame. The chapters appeal to a general audience, recognizing that queer studies must address a wider readership than gay, lesbian, bisexual, and/ or transgender (GLBT) communities as such. And John Hawley, in his introduction, briefly traces the traveling of "queer theory" from the terrain previously demarcated by terms such as "gay" and "lesbian." The shared premise here is that "queerness" entails a queering of the pitch, a displacement of colonial, heteronormative, or otherwise hegemonic stratifications, and that a queer perspective constitutes an interrogation, implicitly at least, of the way in which all subjects, not only GLBT subjects, are interpellated as gendered bodies within a given social space. For what often causes discomfort is when these bodies refuse to stay within disciplined, normative categories. This broadening of the critique of normativity (call it "queering") is as great