



Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender South Asians

trikone MAGAZINE

July 1999 • Vol. 14, No. 3
U.S.A. \$3.95 • Canada \$4.95
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San Jose, CA 95151-1354 USA
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TAMIZ HADERALI

TRIKONE MAGAZINE (ISSN 1042-735X) is published four times a year for US \$12.95 per year by Trikone, 175 Stockton Avenue, San Jose, CA 95126-2760, USA. SEND ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO: Trikone, P.O. Box 21354, San Jose, CA 95151, USA. Overseas subscriptions are US \$19.95/year. A back issue is US \$4.95 (domestic) and \$5.95 (overseas).

Application to mail at Second Class postage rates is pending at San Jose, CA, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: TRIKONE MAGAZINE, P.O. Box 21354, San Jose, CA 95151-1354.

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Trikone (Sanskrit for triangle) is a community group for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people of South Asian heritage. (South Asia includes Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tibet and the diaspora.) Founded in 1986, in the San Francisco Bay Area, Trikone is the oldest group of its kind in the world. Through social and political activities, Trikone offers a supportive, empowering, and non-judgmental environment where queer South Asians can meet, make connections, and proudly promote awareness and acceptance of their sexuality in society. Trikone actively works against all forms of oppression based on race, gender, class, and other identities.

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contents

gender mischievous

6 *Queering Gender*
*Trans Liberation
and Our Lesbian and Gay Movements*
An in-depth look
by Pallavi Seshadri and L. Ramakrishnan

9 *Macho Memos,
Sissy Sahibs*
*Gender Trouble in Popular
Indian Cinema – A guided tour
with Gayatri Gopinath*

11 *Sum Total* by Sonali

12 *Poetry* by A. Banerji

14 *Poetry* by Priyanka Sinha

15 *Hyderabad,
Cyberabad or
Queerabad?*
Scott Kugle reports
on a ground-breaking
conference in Hyderabad

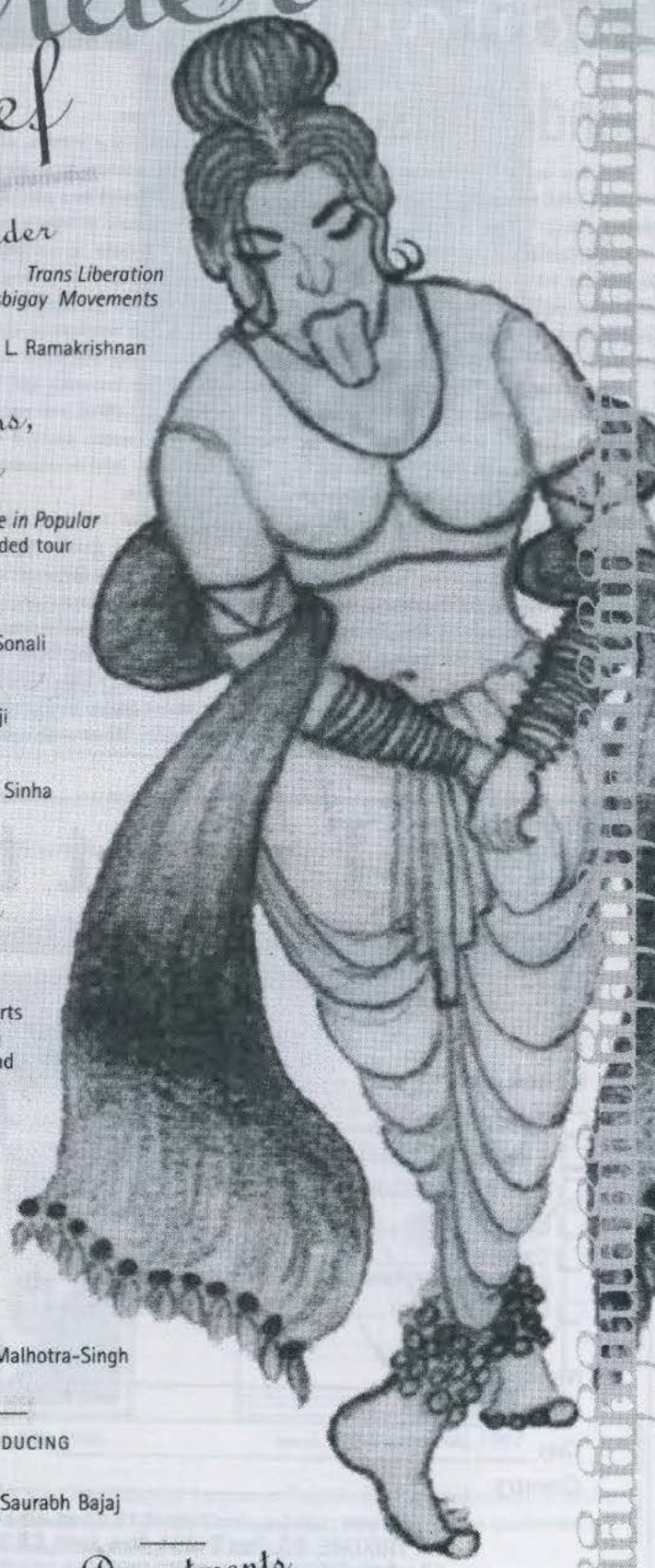
16 *A Bisexual
Bigendered
Performance
Piece* by Nadyalec

17 *Rant* by Angelina Malhotra-Singh

Rave & INTRODUCING
Rave A column by Saurabh Bajaj

Departments

EDITORIAL 2 LETTERS 4 CONTACTS 19 NEWS NOTES 20 CLASSIFIEDS 22 CALLS 23 RESOURCES 24



Gender Mischief

It's not really a matter of "mischief," really. Maybe I tried to lighten it up a little, to make the matter a little "softer," smoothing out the difficult edges and polishing up the brutish surface. It's a lot like the way I tried for years, as long as I can remember really, to soften my own body: turn my long stride into smaller, more compact steps; raise the pitch of my voice (bat my eyelashes).

I've known about it for as long as I've known that I desire women; my first stirrings of lust watching Cheryl in her blue dress in elementary school co-existed with my certainty that my girl's body was a more complicated matter than most people suspected. It's not as simple as we're taught to believe. The tomboy who plays with trucks is "cute"—to a point. Soon a preference for pants and a disdain for bharata natyam classes is perceived as some sort of conspiratorial betrayal. I've been accused of instigating a crisis and the critical issue hasn't been the question of my homosexuality, but the unwillingness of my body to conform to the proscribed expression of my bio-

logical sex.

"You're a lesbian, okay fine," I've heard this phrase spoken by a person who claimed to love me, followed by a plea along these lines: "but why do you have to wear a suit to the wedding? You'd look so nice in earrings. Look, this lipstick is amazing on you." I hear the fear in those words, and worse, the shame. It's a fear fueled by a long legacy of intolerance and hate. We gender queer folk—from tomboys to pretty boys and everything in between and beyond—have been dis-owned, bashed, and murdered. We've been called family curses, medical mysteries and psychiatric illnesses. And sometimes we turn this pain against ourselves.

I had wanted to be playful in this editorial, but for me, gender expression is no laughing matter. I've been desperate enough to wander the raging banks of an icy river, dreaming of one final act, that one final swim into oblivion. What's held me back, kept me from walking into that watery grave hasn't been a matter of mischief either. One winter night, having driven to the shores of the Ottawa River and watching the ferocious water

churning under a gleaming layer of ice, I remembered for no apparent reason, these words: "Within the war we are all waging with the forces of death, subtle and otherwise, conscious or not—I am not only a casualty, I am also a warrior." I don't remember where I read them, only that Audre Lorde wrote them and somehow, they found their way to me on a night when I was convinced that the only place for a creature like me—neither male nor female, and therefore, I thought, inhuman and contemptible—was at the bottom of an icy river. It was the company of words that became the hand on my shoulder, guiding me back towards the warmth of my car, the safety of my lover's arms, the certainty that I belonged on this planet.

I'm grateful to all of the contributors of this issue, gender queers and our allies who refuse to accept imprisoning notions of gender expression. With the courage of their voices and in the company of their words, we'll continue to scurry across strictly patrolled gender borders, each time claiming more space, with every foray snatching one more bit of earth and extending the horizon of the possible for all of us.

A Guju Pretty Boy,

Kalyan/i

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Vol. 6, Number 1, 1998



Vol. 5, Number 2&3

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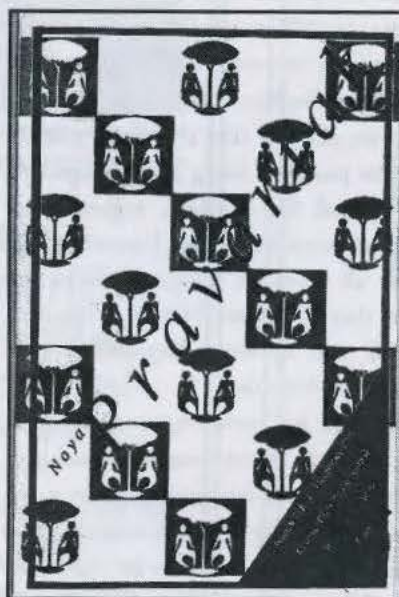
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Issue #7, July-December, 1996



Issue #8, January-July, 1997

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All letters sent to *Trikone* are considered for our Letters page unless you specifically ask us not to. We only publish first names, unless otherwise indicated. Letters written under a pseudonym are also acceptable. Anonymous letters, however, are not eligible for publication.

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Lifeline

Trikone has been a lifeline for me. Being a South Asian queer woman has often been an alienating experience. The first time I saw *Trikone* Magazine, my mouth dropped open and tears came to my eyes because I realized, finally, that I was not alone. I realized that I am not an affront to my Indian culture. This sense of security increased with each new issue, and with each article (especially those that were about Malayalees). I just want to express my deepest gratitude to this magazine and to all my queer South Asian brothers and sisters.

After a couple of years of receiving the love and support of the LGBT South Asian community (through *Trikone*), I would like to take this time to give something back. Enclosed is a paper I wrote for an Independent Study. It is about South Asian Lesbian identity in America. I would love it if you published this piece in *Trikone* Magazine. I know that is lengthy; however, there are 3 sections to the paper: 1) Relationships among womyn in South Asian cultures, 2) Impacts of the U.S. gay movement on South Asian Lesbian identity, and 3) The South Asian community's effects on its lesbians. Perhaps you can publish one section at a time?

Once again, thank you for all the hard work that you do — it is making a tremendous difference in my life and the lives of many South Asian LGBT people.

Ann, New York, USA

Ann, thanks for your kind words. They keep us going. Being a quarterly, it is hard for us to run a long article in 3 segments. But congratulations on doing the article and please try to get it published in one of the academic journals or anthologies whose call for submissions we feature in our calls page. And keep writing. — Ed

Muslim and Gay

I was pleasantly surprised when I came across your magazine in a bookstore the other day. As an openly gay Pakistani man, it is not every day that one comes across a magazine like yours. It's great to see you guys putting in an effort to make the world aware of the fact that homosexuality does exist in our part of the world, and we're sick of hiding it like a dark secret; and allowing gay South Asians to realize that they are not alone.

We all know that millions of gay men and women remain in the closet in countries like Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Nepal, purely due to the social stigmatization of homosexuality, and the wrongful use of religion to promote prejudice and hatred.

I could completely relate to the article in your January 1999 issue, by a gay Muslim man trying to reconcile his homosexuality and his respect for his religion. I too am Muslim, and do not feel that I have to give up Islam to be proud of being gay. I know that Allah loves all his children, regardless of their sexual orientation, and I sincerely feel sorry for all so-called 'religious' folks out there, be they Christian, Hindu or Muslim, who think that homosexuality and religion cannot exist in harmony.

I thank you for providing a resource for millions of South Asian men and women all over the world; and for playing a part in the fact that one day, gay men and women in the subcontinent will be proud to be out of the closet, and be respected and loved by society for who they are.

Asif Sharif, San Francisco, CA, USA

Gay Promiscuity

After reading "Who's to Blame" on gay promiscuity in your October 98 issue, I felt that we gays often tend to blame society or social conditions for almost anything we are responsible for. I wonder how many people would take the argument that because we do not have a 'social sanction' for the relationships we indulge in, we tend to become promiscuous. Besides sex workers, who have

economic compulsions, I think being promiscuous depends on an individual's values in life. If social conditions determined promiscuity then perhaps in countries where gay marriages are legal there should have been no (or negligible) promiscuity which is not the case. Alternatively, in India, many heterosexuals, men especially, are highly promiscuous despite having loving and satisfying partners at home. There are gay 'couples' I know who despite living together, despite enjoying each other's company sexually and emotionally, do indulge often in multi-partner sex.

The onus of promiscuity is entirely on us. And, promiscuity could be an important factor

in the spread of HIV. I have not seen any single group addressing the issue of promiscuity seriously and trying to motivate guys away from it.

It is also a misconception that those who find it difficult to get sex are the ones who tend to be promiscuous. It is the ones who find sex very easily and readily who are generally promiscuous. Lust, I guess, is only to be blamed, not social conditions or society. The fault is not in our stars, it is in us.

Sanjay, Calcutta, India

South African Friend

Just a quick note to say that I am very impressed by the work that *Trikone* is doing. As an Indian gay boy from South Africa, its encouraging and affirming to know that there are gay South Asians all over the world working together.

Shaun, South Africa



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Queering Gender

Trans Liberation and Our Lesbigoay Movements

by PALLAVI SESHADRI & L. RAMAKRISHNAN

As our queer movements grow in numbers and strength, the diversity within them becomes increasingly visible. Minorities within minorities come out and seek acknowledgment of their specific concerns and validation of particular experiences of self. Such "multiply queer" people include people of color within mostly-white queer groups, womyn and transgendered people in predominantly gay groups, queers who are differently abled, queers of working-class, persons with AIDS in South Asian queer groups and so on.

The broader queer movements respond to increased visibility of multiply queer people in various ways. Some groups do not regard issues of multiple queerness as being significant enough for mention, or, worse, fear that these issues and individuals threaten their reputations or "more mainstream" goals. Yet other groups opt to acknowledge the membership of multiply queer people explicitly—hence the expansion of *Trikone* and other such organizations over the years from being "gay" to "gay and lesbian," with "bisexual" and "transgender" being added on in due course.

Such inclusionary trends are important and laudable, but to be meaningful they have to go beyond an ever-lengthening laundry list of labels tacked on to mast-heads and mission statements: we need a genuine recognition of the commonalities of our struggles and a desire to address the specificities of multiply queer experience with understanding and support.

Here we discuss the concerns and struggles of those of us gendered queer, who, despite historical associations and identification with lesbigoay people and activism, have in recent years been becoming increasingly alienated from them because of the mainstreaming of the lesbian and gay movements. We conclude with some reflections on lesbigoay politics and a call for unifying struggles against gender oppression.

Who are the genderqueers?

"We are ... masculine females and feminine males, cross-dressers, transsexual men and women, intersexuals born on the anatomi-

cal sweep between female and male, gender-blenders, many other sex- and gender-variant people, and our significant others. All told, we expand understanding of how many ways there are to be a human being."

—Leslie Feinberg, in *TRANS LIBERATION: BEYOND PINK OR BLUE*.

We use the term genderqueer as a culture-neutral and inclusive signifier for those who deliberately or involuntarily violate the binary categories of male and female sex, and/or the gender constructions of man/masculine and woman/feminine. People marked as being visibly gender-different are ubiquitous throughout history and across cultures (Feinberg 1996). Most attempts to unearth queer histories have appropriated genderqueers of yore under the culturally loaded and simplistic labels of gay and lesbian, be they the *napumsakas* of ancient India or the two-spirit people of Native American cultures. Genderqueers these days may identify with transgender, transsexual, stone butch, cross-dresser, drag queen, drag king, *kothi*, *hijra*, intersexual, *herm*, *transfag*, or any number of other labels.

And some of us may not identify as any of the above.

There is a long and sordid history of genderqueer lives (and deaths) being studied, discussed, and judged by gender-normative people eager to distance themselves from their subjects and read them as psychologically disturbed, as biological oddities, or as objects of anthropological curiosity. Even in writing about ourselves we are acutely conscious that first-person accounts risk being mistaken for authoritative and comprehensive representations of a diverse community. We could not be more heterogeneous in terms of our desires, politics, or perceptions of ourselves. Our intent here is not to define but merely give readers an idea of this heterogeneity.

There is little consensus about particular labels and what they signify, even among genderqueers. Politicized genderqueers have united in recent years under the identity of trans or transgendered, while several others have resisted such labeling and have been quick to point out the differences among themselves. For instance,

some heterosexual cross-dressers resent being taken for gay drag queens. Some males who do drag (e.g., Desai 1995) identify as gay men. Others, such as the Pakistani genderqueers in New York who dance at straight community functions vehemently eschew gay, *hijra* or transgender identification, call themselves "women" (or in one case, "artist"), and often have sex with straight Pakistani men (Ahmed 1998, Gayatri Gopinath, pers. comm.)

To add to this complexity, gender-normative folk readily impose their own restrictive world views genderqueers. When one of us (LR) was interviewed on a gay and lesbian radio program in 1996, the interviewer, a gay white male, insisted on referring to *hijras* as Indian drag queens with the supreme arrogance and obsession with categorization that characterizes so many in the urban GWM cultures in the U.S. He also insisted that we avoid saying anything about gender equality, the reason being that his was a gay and lesbian program, not a feminist program (*sic*)!

Some *kothis*, who are genderqueer males in parts of southern Asia, view themselves as women or not-men. A few opt for castration so they can join the *hijra* communities (Rajiv Dua, pers. comm.). Some stone butches feel at home in the lesbian community and have no desire to change sex, while others see "stone butch" or "transgender butch" as a gray zone of identity somewhere between lesbian and female-to-male transsexual, and yet others who have chosen sex re-assignment surgery (srs) regard their butchness as a proto-transsexuality. In a letter to *Trikone* (Ali, 1995), a female-to-male transsexual wrote that he considered his mental gender to be that of a man and knew he was not lesbian even during his period of female-identification. Essays in a recent issue of *GLQ*, an academic journal of gay and lesbian studies, articulate viewpoints from both sides of these butch/ftm border wars (e.g., Halberstam 1998, Hale 1998).

Many genderqueers experience some degree of discomfort with our birth-assigned sex and/or with our gender identities or roles. Some may opt for srs and hormones in an attempt to re-align sex and gender. Some

harbor the notion of being born in the "wrong" body; a few others furnish this standard description in order to meet the Gender Identity Disorder diagnostic criteria (APA 1994, HBGIDA 1998) needed to qualify for srs. Many desire to pass as the sex/gender of choice, which is mostly a matter of survival in a transphobic world, and sometimes a consequence of pressure from gender clinics to be "gender congruent" (Earl 1998). Others choose not to identify as either gender (e.g., Bornstein 1994) or even refuse to call themselves transsexual maintaining they were not born in the wrong body but in the wrong culture (Wilchins 1997). The propensity of transsexuals to hide pre-operative histories and construct entirely new histories based on their newly assigned sex has been questioned by Sandy Stone (1991) in her landmark essay "The Empire strikes back: A Post-transsexual Manifesto."

We genderqueers come in all sexual orientations. Despite the stereotype that those who opt for surgery do so because they are homophobic or cannot conceive of themselves as gay or lesbian, many mtf post-operative transsexuals in the West are in fact lesbian-identified and some (Weinberg et al. 1994) bisexual. And though many ftm transsexuals desire women, some are attracted to gay men (e.g., Louis Sullivan, founder of FTM International) and yet others bisexual, pansexual or asexual (Morton et al. 1997)

Notwithstanding the variety and complexity of genderqueer experience, many of us—along with other queer people—share common oppression resulting from the binary sex/gender schema to which most of the modern world subscribes. This oppression manifests itself in transphobic responses from "nons" both straight and queer, in forced surgical "correction" of infants with ambiguous genitalia, and in violent acts of hate that do not discriminate between the intricacies of gender variance and minority sexual orientation.

Transphobia

"Puhleez keep them out ... first we had lesbians coming in, now slowly hijras, tomorrow we will have transvestites and then animals maybe, who knows..." —GAY INDIAN MALE ON INTERNET GROUP GAYBOMBAY

Transphobia is fear, discomfort or dislike of genderqueer people. Queer and straight people can be transphobic.

Most people have deeply ingrained notions of what it means to be a man or woman. Because homophobia arises from

a pervasive misogyny that deems females and feminine males to be inferior to "real" males, many gay and bi males have sought to gain acceptance by trying to convince the heterosexual world that loving someone of the same sex or opposite sex is an issue of sexual orientation, not of sex or gender, and that being queer does not make them any less manly. Not surprisingly, many tend to be uncomfortable with genderqueers in their midst, whether these are drag queens, transsexuals or feminine males.

Effeminophobia, a manifestation of transphobia, is all too common in gay males who specify "no fats or femmes" in personal ads or complain that drag queens give them a bad name.

While the lesbian and feminist communities are somewhat more accepting of "soft" androgyny, transphobia exists and manifests itself in discomfort with stone butches ("too much male energy"), in accusations that mtf transsexuals are female impersonators who should not be allowed in women's spaces and that ftm transsexuals are self-hating women who have "become the enemy." The most vitriolic attack published against transsexuals to date has been Janice Raymond's 1979 book *The Transsexual Empire: The Making of The She-Male* (cited in

Stone 1991) in which Raymond posits that mtf transsexual lesbians are malevalent agents of the patriarchy seeking to invade women's spaces and appropriate women's power (Stone 1991). We would be the last to deny the reality of oppression meted out to those socialized as women, and remain committed to ending this oppression. Nevertheless, we suggest that transphobic reactions of some feminists only serve to firmly establish "woman" as an essentialized and monolithic entity, which is antithetical to the "anatomy is not destiny" and "women are made, not born" paradigms (Douglas 1990) of feminism.

Unfortunately for us, transphobia is not confined to the rants of academics or subscribers of internet groups. Our real enemies are far more ominous and our dangers much

more threatening. Genderqueers who do not or cannot pass, or passing transsexuals who get outed, risk losing jobs and lives, just like gay people who are not "straight-acting." The similarity between passing and acting straight directly refutes claims that sexual orientation is only about object choice and has nothing to do with gender identity. Homophobic hate crimes are usually directed at "obvious" gay and presumed-gay people whose visible mannerisms and gender expression are assumed to indicate sexual orientation. Transphobia and homophobia are often indistinguishable when it comes to gender crimes—victims in both cases are "punished" for transgressing gender. Transgendered male prisoners are incarcerated with other males and are at enhanced risk of being raped for their expression of gender. Brandon Teena, a young man in Nebraska variously

described as lesbian, butch and transgendered, lived as a straight man until he was kidnapped, raped and subsequently murdered in 1993 upon the discovery that he was anatomically female (Hale 1998). Homosexual panic is implicated in murders of pre-op mtf transsexuals and cross-dressing males who pass as women till after are picked up by heterosexual males for sex. In January 1999, 18-year old Donald Scott Fuller, a cross-



Tamiz Haderali

dressing youth also known as Lauryn Paige, was brutally stabbed to death in Austin, Texas. While these particular incidents were well publicised, it appears that murders of many transsexual and transgender people are under-reported in the queer and straight press (Gonzalez 1999).

Trans liberation

The goals of trans liberation are to end all transphobias, particularly those institutionalized by the medical, police and legal establishments (Feinberg 1996). The International Bill of Gender Rights (ICTLEP 1995) is a document that was publicly approved and adopted by the Second International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy. It includes the rights to define and express our gender identities and sexual orientation,

the right to secure and retain employment, to control and change one's own body to express a self-defined gender identity, the right to receive competent medical and professional care, and the right to freedom from psychiatric diagnosis or treatment as mentally disordered solely on the basis of our gender identity or expression. Many of these rights are identical to those lesbian and gay people would like to have, some are specific to transsexual and/or intersexed genderqueers. In national U.S. politics, genderqueers are fighting to have gender non-discrimination be part of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (see below).

Genderqueers and mainstream lesbian and gay activism

Genderqueers have been at the forefront of many civil rights movements. The first movement for gay and liberation at the turn of the 19th century in Germany, was reportedly led by a cross-dressing gay man (Feinberg 1996). The famous rebellion at Stonewall Inn in 1969 was initiated by genderqueers such as Sylvia Rivera and Marsha Johnson who belonged in the drag and gay communities and were fighting for their right to survive.

Since Stonewall, however, segments of the queer community in the U.S. have grown steadily mainstream, procuring for themselves visibility and "virtual equality" (Vaid 1996) but no real protection from violence and discrimination. Gay and lesbian leaders seem to have forgotten the history of their struggles and have decided that the Gay movement is for themselves and others of their ilk alone.

An ongoing (at the time of writing) Internet poll on trans inclusion being conducted by the gay and lesbian magazine *Advocate* reveals just how exclusionary the movement has become. Juli Goins-Maclean, a trans supporter, sums it up: "Queer people of privilege ... middle- to upper-class, white, gay men have put so much work in the notion that being gay is as good as being straight, rather than summoning the courage and deference in the face of right-wing reactionist policy that made Stonewall possible in the first place."

As a consequence of this rush to assimilate, the concerns of genderqueers, queers of color and lesbians have been ignored or

downplayed. The Human Rights Campaign decision to leave transgender issues out of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (Dahir 1999) is an example.

Genderqueers and the desi queer movements

Trans activists in the West emphasise the cultural and historical relativism of transphobia and hold up non-Western (including southern Asian) cultures as examples where genderqueers were well accepted in society and had significant social or spiritual roles (e.g., Feinberg 1996). The Sampark Project initiated by activist Anne Ogborn is in keeping with this phenomenon: it is a proposal to facilitate cultural exchange between the U.S.

transsexual and the Indian hijra communities. At the same time, the emerging lesbian and gay movements in southern Asia are looking to the West for their model of "real" gay culture. A proliferation of Internet lists such as Gay-Bombay, GayDelhi, GayBangalore and Gay-Chennai and discussions therein suggest that a significant proportion of the visible gay and lesbian demographic in these urban areas is middle- to upper-class. We expect conflicts between new identities and old ones resulting from a combination of transphobia and classism: individuals with homegrown identities such as kothis tend to perceive themselves as differently gendered and are of lower socio-economic strata than those with access to gay,

lesbian or bisexual identities and discourse. Anecdotal evidence (Rajiv Dua, pers. comm.) suggests that such tensions are indeed brewing. However, in recent correspondence to *Trikone*, Pawan Dhall (1999) of the Calcutta-based Counsel Club has clarified that "gay" is a far more inclusive, hybrid and affirming label in the Indian context than in the West, and that a strict equation of "gay=alien Western concept" is misleading and dismissive of their efforts at self-determination. This point is well taken, but we do hope that genderqueers will be consciously included in the evolution of these movements and that their concerns will not be sacrificed in the scramble for assimilation.

Coming home: the desi queer diasporas

Those in the diasporas have successfully used identity-based organizing and outreach to foster a sense of community among gay and lesbian desis. Bisexuals and genderqueer people have remained largely invisible to date for obvious reasons: there is precious little space within these communities to be open about gender variance or fluidity of orientation and expect any kind of affirmation or acceptance.

We hope inclusionary policies will eventually work their way into minds and hearts. We respectfully urge the community to broaden its political focus and work on building a movement that addresses all forms of gender-oppression within the southern Asian diasporas.

Misogyny, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, even child- and elder-abuse are all legacies of the heteropatriarchal power structure that will continue to stifle our lives so long as we remain focused on fighting for our slice of the "rights" pie to the exclusion of others more marginalized than ourselves. ▼



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors thank Rajiv Dua, Gayatri Gopinath, Anne Ogborn and Kalyani Pandya for their insights, and Juli Goins-Maclean for permission to quote from her post.

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continued on page 18

Macho Mems, Sissy Sahibs

Gender Trouble in Popular Indian Cinema

by GAYATRI GOPINATH

In 1997, Javid Syed and I put together a clip show and lecture presentation on alternative sexualities in popular Indian cinema. We called it "Desi Dykes and Divas," as a tribute to all those gorgeous Bollywood icons—Hema Malini, Rekha, Shabana, Helen—that have peopled the imagination of diasporic queers everywhere. Given the fact that many of us grew up alternately identifying with, desiring, and being alienated by the celluloid images disseminated by Bollywood throughout the diaspora, we wanted to think critically about how popular Indian cinema encodes alternative sexualities and makes certain spaces available for their representation: what does "queerness" look like on the Bollywood screen?

How do these images allow for queer desire and identification on the one hand, and brutally punish and police these desires and identifications on the other?

As Javid and I sifted through hundreds of tapes, it became clear that the most affirming representations of queer desire were to be found in those films depicting archetypal spaces of male or female bonding: the classic instances of macho brotherhood in the buddy movies of the 1970s like *Sholay* or *Dostana*, or the women-only spaces of the middle-class home, the zenana, or the brothel depicted in films like *Razia Sultan* or *Mandi*. We found that the extreme macho toughness of the boys or the hyper-femyness of the girls in these seemingly rigidly heterosexual contexts allowed representations of queer desire to flourish in unexpected and surprising places. In the famous scene in *Razia Sultan* where Parveen Babi kisses Hema Malini behind a white feather, for instance, female homosociality—women together as friends or sisters—shifts seamlessly into female homo-eroticism—women as lovers. The over-the-top femininity of the heroines, in their glittering jewelry and haze of chiffon, does not signify their



Hema Malini and Parveen Babi do the girl thing in *Razia Sultan*

heterosexuality; instead their hyper-femininity encodes queer female desire and in fact enables such desire to occur. The "queer femininity" of Hema Malini and Parveen Babi in *Razia Sultan* is also apparent in Deepa Mehta's recent independent film *Fire*, in the dynamic between Nandita Das's Sita and Shabana Azmi's Radha. As in *Razia Sultan*, the gorgeousness of the two heroines in *Fire* does not signal their availability to heterosexuality; rather it becomes the very marker of their queer desire. In both *Razia Sultan* and *Fire*, then, it is under the cover of being properly feminine women, of gender conformity (which is presumed to be safe and straight), that queer female desire emerges.

Given that lesbian desire on screen is more often than not signaled by the presence of masculine female, it is no coincidence that the desire between Radha and Sita in *Fire* first becomes visible to the other members of the household—and hence open to punishment and censure—during the film's one butch-femme moment. In this scene, gender conformity gives way to a cross-gendered erotic as Sita (dressed in a suit with her hair pulled back) engages in a playful lip-synching duet with Radha (playing a Bollywood heroine). However, the film is unable to sustain this cross-gendered erotic between the two women and Sita quickly reverts back to her feminine self.



Madhuri Dixit and the butch warden in *Anjaam*

around the film following the Shiv Sena violence. As a response to Hindu right wing protests against the film, Mehta and her supporters have repeatedly stated that the film is not a "lesbian film" but a "feminist film" about "choices." I suspect that if the film had been able to maintain Sita's masculinity beyond the brief, playful cross-dressing

scene, Mehta would have had to be more accountable to the queer content of her film. In a way, Sita's quick re-institution within proper femininity, as well as Mehta's white-washing of her film's queer content in her responses to her critics, points out the darker side of our appreciation of the same-sex sensuality/sexuality of films like *Razia Sultan*. While these films do "queer" gender conformity, as I argued earlier, I also think they rely on the evacuation of non-gender conformist characters.

This pitting of queer against feminist that is evident in Mehta's response to the protests against her independent film is echoed in mainstream Bollywood film as well, where more often than not we are forced to choose between a properly feminine, feminist heroine and a tough, masculine and hence queer-coded female villain. Thus while we can revel in images of girl-on-girl or boy-on-boy love and desire in *Sholay* or *Razia Sultan*, it becomes clear that this celebration of gender conformity and the same-sex desire that it enables comes at a price: often, on the Bollywood screen, it is at the expense of non-gender normative characters like butch women or femmy men. Even a cursory glance at popular Indian film offers up numerous representations of men and women who defy gender stereotypes. Men in dresses or with feminine mannerisms, and women with short hair, trousers, and a tough demeanor, have figured quite prominently on the Bollywood screen. In particular, cross-dressing of both men and women has been a standard comedic and plot device in popular Indian film for decades.

These representations are useful for queer purposes in that they hint at other possibilities of gender and sexuality that fall outside the confines of traditional heterosexuality. However, we found that these films also tend to shut down these possibilities almost as quickly as they raise them.

Bollywood seems to have responded to the growing visibility of a lesbian and gay movement in South Asia with a marked increase in recent years in representations of characters that are explicitly cross-gender identified. In the 1996 film *Raja Hindustani*, for instance, the heroine's main sidekicks are an effeminate man and a masculine woman who predictably provide much of the comic entertainment in the film, mostly through the confusion they generate among other characters as to the "true" nature of their sex. In *Raja Hindustani*, as in much of popular film,

feminine men are given a limited, ritualized role as either comic characters or as hijras. Masculine women, however, do not have even these limited options for representation, and are more often than not made to disappear from the film



Aamir Khan as 'femme fatale' in *Baazi*

entirely, as they do in both *Raja Hindustani* and in *Hum Aapke Hain Koun*. For instance in *Hum Aapke*, a 1993 Madhuri Dixit vehicle, Madhuri dances for a brief but glorious moment with a cute butch dressed as the male hero Salman Khan in an identical white suit. Predictably enough however, the cross-dressed woman is shunted out of the scene, and indeed out of the film as a whole, as Salman Khan quickly proceeds to occupy his rightful place beside Madhuri.

Scenes of cross-dressing are often followed by dramatic moments of revelation that re-establish proper gender roles and identification. In the 1995 *Baazi*, for instance, the hero Aamir Khan cross-dresses in order to entrap the villain, who is under the impression that he is about to have sex with an attractive woman. Instead Aamir Khan strips off his drag and, in a display of macho virility, beats him up. This excessive revelation scene anxiously confirms the hero's heterosexuality by violently disowning and punishing any queer desire or pleasure opened up by the act of cross-dressing. A similar moment of revelation and a return to one's "true" gender occurs in the 1970 film *Mera Naam Joker* (Dir. Raj Kapoor), which stars the actress Padmini cross-dressing as a feisty and independent vagabond and circus performer who wields a knife and is called Minoo Master. Minoo Master's butch toughness, however, prefigures the inevitable revelation scene, where Minoo Master is exposed as Mina, a curvaceous beauty who dons a sari, grows her hair, and eventually becomes Kapoor's wife. Minoo Master's domestication as Mina points to the ways in which masculine women in film are not allowed to exist more than momentarily, and are inevitably feminized in order to be drawn back into heterosexuality.

This is not to say, however, that popular Indian cinema lacks images of strong, independent women. On the contrary, from the early stunt films of Australian-born Hindi film star Fearless Nadia in the 1930s and 1940s to the latest action films of the tremendously popular South Indian film star Vijaya Shanti, popular film has reveled in images of tough women on screen.

Nadia's persona as "the lady with the whip," as she was known in the thirties, acted as a precursor for Amitabh's action films of the seventies, and particularly for the films of the current female action star Vijaya Shanti. Vijaya Shan-

ti's films, with names like *Police Lockup* and *Lady Boss*, are tremendously popular among women at least in part because she offers an image of a tough yet glamorous proto-feminist who defends both herself and other women from predatory men. However, both Nadia and Vijaya Shanti are able to enact their tough woman personas because they remain quite clearly recognizable as attractive, heterosexual women. Nadia played upon the stereotype of the sexually liberated foreign woman, while Vijaya Shanti, despite her short hair, big gun and police outfits, still retains the big-eyed, fair-skinned aesthetic of the prototypical Indian female film star.

The 1996 Madhuri Dixit film *Anjaam* makes clear both the possibilities and limits for representing non-traditional gender roles for women in popular film. Madhuri plays an innocent widow who has been thrown into jail due to the machinations of various villainous men. She arrives in prison only to be thrown at the mercy of a cruel and semi-masculine female warden, who calls her a whore, tells her to strip, and proceeds to beat her up brutally when she resists. The prison warden is, of course, a stock character familiar from the B-movie prison films in the U.S., where women's prisons are imagined as notorious sites of lesbian sexual predation and sexual violence. *Anjaam's* prison warden seems to follow in this tradition but is shown in a following scene in bed with her male superior; she is thus quickly and firmly re-established as properly feminine, heterosexual, and sexually available, as are most other masculine women on the Indian screen.

The ultra-feminine heroine, meanwhile, transforms into a Devi figure, a wrathful feminine goddess wreaking revenge on all those men who have wronged her. However, the most drawn-out and gory scene of violent revenge is reserved for the female warden, whom she beats up and eventually hangs in a scene so violent that it is hard to watch (and

one wonders here at the voyeurism that the film both evokes and plays upon in watching women kill each other). This depiction of Madhuri as an incarnation of Devi denotes the traditional space available for women within Indian popular culture to be strong, aggressive and even violent—and still be seen as properly female, feminine women. If Madhuri-as-Devi embodies an acceptable representation of female strength, the prison warden—with her vaguely masculine demeanor—comes to symbolize an unacceptable version of female power, and is brutally punished as a result. The film thus pits a feminist-coded character against a queer, butch-coded one, and the latter loses out on all counts.



Female Bonding in *Mandi*

In other words, male bonding and brotherhood on the one hand, and feminist accounts of self-realization on the other, are achieved within Bollywood cinema at the expense of the effeminate male or masculine female character. Certainly as queer viewers we can uncover moments of visual pleasure in the image of a tough or masculine woman on screen, but the pleasures of either desire or identification are brutally foreclosed by the swift and unusually violent punishments that always await such characters. In short, popular Indian film does have a place, up to a point, for representations of those men who do not embody a virile, heterosexual masculinity, and those women who reject a weak, passive form of femininity.

However, we quickly reach the limits of these unconventional gender representations: effeminate men are comic relief or are shunted into the category of "hijra," while strong women are acceptable only as long as they remain contained within heterosexuality and properly feminine behavior. Perhaps this points to the fact that

Bollywood, despite its many delights, can only go so far and no further in enabling queer pleasure, desire and fantasy. ▼

This article was produced in collaboration with Javid Syed, a New York City based community health worker, HIV/AIDS activist and cultural critic. Gayatri Gopinath is Assistant Professor of Women's Studies at University of California, Davis.



Raj Kapoor with Padmini as Minoo Master in *Mera Naam Joker*

Alliance for 34/170 never married Kayastha Doctor working in U.S.A. boy presently visiting India. Leaving end October. Girl to accompany him. Caste no bar. Reply immediately with Photo and bio-data. At 16, S.P.S/ D.D.A flats. Gautam Nagar New Delhi. Box 69319-CA

Suitable match for 24/183 cms handsome slim, fair, boy Punjabi Hindu family of status, Masters Chemical Engineering employed settled in Canada. Only son of Industrialist from Delhi visiting India soon. Looking for slim, tall, well-natured, bholi-bhali girl, well educated. Preferably in Computer science. Correspond full particulars with instance please. Box 69395-CA

A well educated tall fair, professional wanted for a highly educated smart 28yrs/176cm boy on his own belonging to a highly reputed family of Delhi working in senior consultant in the World's largest warehousing management solutions company. Caste no bar. Send particulars with photograph. PO Box 795547 Dallas Tx 75379 U.S.A. Or call (972) 5190237. E-MAIL XSME@AOL.COM U.S.A. NET. 69409-CA

Seeking beautiful, Indian cultured, well-mannered girl below 30 yrs Match for 34/173 B.A. Punjabi Arora/Khatri family boy, income five figure. No divorcees or widows please. Box 67214-CA

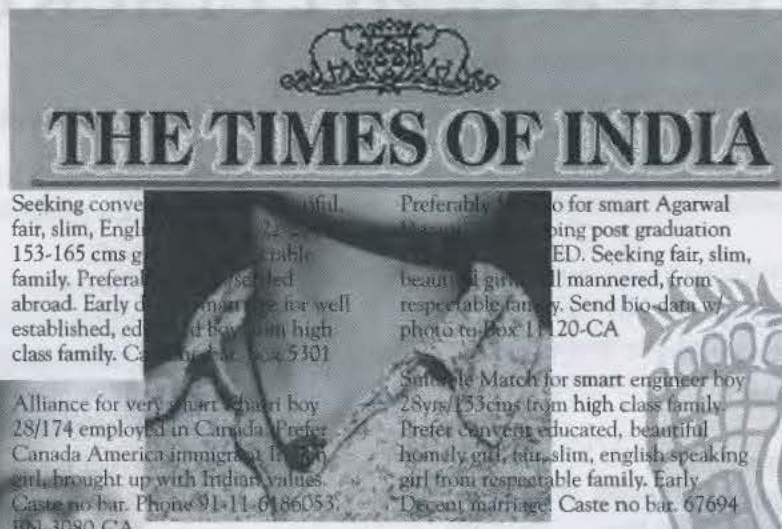
Beautiful professional girl for a very handsome Upamanyu Kanyakubja Brahmin boy 27/172 working as a Systems Analyst & Marketing Manager in an International firm at Australia 40,000 Australian Dollar per annum. Family settled at Australia. Send recent photo of the girl to: Dr. A.N. Dixit, 1 Sacoya Avenue, Orange Crest, Baulkham Hills, 2153, NSW AUSTRALIA PH 298385205. 67713-CA

Good looking smart, beautiful girl for my son U.S. Citizen 174/19-02-63 smart graduate Hotel Management working New York Top Hotel good perks parents Delhi settled simple middle class punjabi Khatri family. bar. Girl only consideration. Tele. 432-4597. 69621-CA

Wanted beautiful, cultured, homely convent educated, fair, slim, girl preferably Doctor/ Lecturer for smart Gupta B.E. (Electronics) M.B.A. Computer qualified Manager leading Public company (Delhi). Father Senior Air Force Officer. 68092-CA

Hindu punjabi Delhite gentleman 56 of substance and integrity, divorced without child seeks issueless fair, beautiful lady of child-bearing age with pure-mind, polite courteous manner. No bar. Only letters with detailed particulars, phone no. and recent FULL SIZE photograph. Assure reply.

Respectable Arya Samaji family seeks



Seeking conventional, beautiful, fair, slim, English girl 22-25 yrs 153-165 cms good education, respectable family. Preferably settled abroad. Early divorcee. Well established, educated boy from high class family. Call for details Box 5301

Alliance for very smart, smart boy 28/174 employed in Canada. Prefer Canada America immigrant. Indian girl, brought up with Indian values. Caste no bar. Phone 91-11-6186053. BN-3080-CA

Preferably match for smart Agarwal boy doing post graduation M.B.A. IED. Seeking fair, slim, beautiful girl, well-mannered, from respectable family. Send bio-data with photo to Box 1120-CA

Suitable Match for smart engineer boy 28yrs/153cms from high class family. Prefer convent educated, beautiful homely girl, fair, slim, english speaking girl from respectable family. Early Decent marriage. Caste no bar. 67694

**sum total
(a matrimonial)**

**One Indian Woman
Plus a lesbian
Minus a dutiful obedient wife
Minus a tall, thin, slender eligible girl
Minus long beautiful hair
Minus a doctor, an engineer,
or even a businesswoman
Minus timid and speechless
Plus determined and opinionated
Divided by abusive demons
Multiplied by a will to survive
Sums me up.**

Wanted beautiful, fair, slim girl for a smart Doctor 26yrs/154cms, well educated family, doing post graduation. Send details to Box 5302

Defence Govt. Officer N.R.I. son seeking very fair, smart, slim 25-30yrs/ 158-165cms, cultured, homely, virgin Brahmin girl. Interested applicants, send bio-data with photo to Box 5303

Clean shaven, well educated Arora boy (32 yrs/160cms) seeking match for good looking, smart, fair, slim girl, well educated (preference to Doctors, Engineers, and Technocrats) from respectable family, well settled. Send applicants only apply to Box 5304

Alliance invited for smart 25yrs/155cms of Noida based doctor officer family. Seeking cultured, beautiful, fair, slim, secure, well established, girl preferably in medical field. Interested applicants apply with photograph to

Seeking match for highly accomplished GurSikh boy 26yrs/159cms working at foreign bank in New Delhi

Defence Govt. Officer's son (32yrs/159 cms) seeking very fair, smart, slim, cultured Brahmin girl. No divorcees please. Send info + photo to Box 16497

Officer Match 35yrs/162cms Brahmin Lecturer looking for good looking smart fair slim, homely girl. Willing to live in Kanpur. Send bio-data with photo to Box 19562-W

Match for smart, clean-shaven boy 28 yrs 155cms settled in Canada. Seeking bride, well educated (preference to Doctors, Engineers, and Technocrats.) Ready to settle in India. Must come from respectable family. Send details to Box 69309-CA

Hindu 38yrs/170cms N.R.I. businessman seeking fair, slim, never before married, well educated and cultured. Good family desired. Send details with photograph (returnable) to Box 69291-CA

Alliance Invited for very smart, fair, well settled Dentist boy 35/160, Noida based mixed parentage. Seeking beautiful, fair, slim, young girl, with no issues, child-bearing capacity. Caste no bar. Send

family. Early decent marriage. 69681-CA

Bisa Agarwal match for 32yrs/158cms computer Engineer B.Tech employed TATA's Noida. Seeking fair, slim, smart girl Delhi employed Engineer preferred. 69624-CA

Gursikh non-Trimmer seeking fair, slim, beautiful Khatri girl, preferably convent educated. Send photos with bio-data to Box 69631-CA

Gursikh Medico 25/160 match seeking beautiful slim Sikh Medico girl doing House Job. Send details with photo (returnable) to Box 17426-CA

Wanted Sikh girl professionally qualified for British government employed 29/163 divorcee without encumbrance parents. Must come from respectable family. Send details to 69765-CA

Wanted well established charming girl 25-30 years settled in U.K. with spiritual mind for young London employed son of divorcee boy. Family with no issues. Seeking fair, slim, beautiful girl who can respect two addresses children. Serious responses, apply Box 69734-CA

Wanted beautiful, well educated, qualified Mahar girl for Manglik working boy 29/170 marriage, devout family. 69715-CA

Wanted beautiful girl for my son boy 22/163/58/3100, doing business with father in Varanasi. Prefer convent educated, homely, cultured girl. Apply box 17806-W

Highly qualified professional Ph.D. (Zoology) punjabi boy 29/156 awarded Scientist seeking slim beautiful girl with no issues. Boy holding States J-1 visa visiting India October end. No divorcees please. Contact M.L. Narula 169 Frontier colony Adarsh Nagar Jaipur. Phone 0141-601470.

Seeking homely beautiful girl, fair, slim for very handsome Arora Development Officer son. Hindu 42/175cms Ph.D. N.R.I. Business parents boy looking for beautiful, fair, slim, tall, well educated (preference to doctor or engineer) girl from good family desired. Box 69288-CA

Alliance for Permanent Resident U.S.A., Date of Birth 01 Feb 1965, Height 175, Brilliant, handsome, affectionate mayoite, B.Tech, LI.T.M.S. Ph.D. U.S.A., outstanding scientist Top Institution U.S.A. from beautiful intelligent cheerful well educated and qualified girl. No bars. Respond details including Bio-data of girl, U.S.A. Contact Telephone number, U.S. Visa status & recent photograph (returnable) to U.S.A. Dr. Amit Goyal, 300, Walker Springs Road, Apt 19E, Sens Souci Apts. Knoxville TN 37923 U.S.A.

the sound of a heart cracking

by A. BANERJI

*I stalk you, following
imprints of your hand
embraced in stones of a city
underground. I've been searching
for you in strange passages,
in foreign quarters,
seeking your whisper in poems,
your stare in photographs, your breath
in rainfall. The way you stroke the line
of my limbs supple and splendid,
spin me through revolutions
and desire I find nowhere else.**

These are early rehearsals
for mortality, for falling.
Now the dogs have taken shreds
of my skin to feed on,
my days are spent scavenging
for scraps of your memory

I crave any simple ritual:
snapshots of a fist
against my jaw
scenes of urgent laughter
the sound of a heart
cracking

2 Absence of Injury

She doesn't suffer
She is wrapped
in the comfort of your gaze
She has no injuries
or lies to live with
(that she knows of)

I have a picture
of her stubborn smile,
the one that dares me
to ask you,
"Leave her"
then falter.

There is nothing between you that will decay.
She has that safe, extravagant calm
of someone who is married,
officially, predictably
yours.

3 This Is How I Have a Picture of Your Love

This is how I have a picture of your love.
Ten years, a reason for jealousy.
Ten years, of:
you in a blue robe
on a love seat, with her by your side,
drinking coffee in the morning,
watching the news on television,
then the intimate suburban goodbyes,
(a kiss on her cheek, a kiss on her lips)
you drive on the freeway to go to
work in your respectable grey building,
and you call each other at lunchtime,
just to see how things are, and things are always
just fine, then you drive back home at rush hour,
and she cooks while you clean
you clean while she cooks.
You turn off the lights. You unplug the phone.
Then, you lock the doors.

I have memorized
each corner of your home,
the apartment
that holds domesticity
like a strangler.

I know your modest portraits and paintings,
decorative bath bubbles in jars,
bottles of perfume carefully arranged
on newly dusted shelves,
ambitious lists of groceries and cleaning agents,
things that need to be fixed, coffee tables lined with
the literature of management.



Nidhi Patel

4 You Know You Love Her

And then there is the bedroom.

She tells you she loves you
You know you love her
She tells you she loves you
and you know you love her

You promise she will never be hurt
and you keep that secret hidden
from me.

5 The Perfect Marriage

You have traced her thighs
a thousand times
You have made love to her body
in nightly confessions

You were the first woman she fell in love with
And you are the last one she loves.

You have the perfect marriage.

The walls are shrinking tight,
but you wanted mathematical security,
the precision of numbers,
and that is what you have:

a passion for the familiar.

You believe in this practice of intimacy
so you know the exact shade
of her favourite lipstick, the size
of her breasts, the strange pitch
of her voice.

and you know you will never, ever
leave.

6 Something You Forget

Years from now, when time
has trampled over me
You will still sit quietly near her,
glancing full of love
profoundly lacking sensation.

But you welcome that cruelty
and curious, you will look at me
like an animal you have killed
by accident.

No remorse, only pity.
Something you forget
because it never mattered.

7 You Will Never Leave

Repetitions can lull you.

I love you I love you I love you
I am insane to love you

You attack me and disappear.
You say you haven't changed in years,
and I believe that
you have not changed
since she made you
hers

You have the perfect marriage

You were the first woman she fell in love with.
You are the last one she loves.

And although you hear
the sound of my heart cracking

You know you will never, ever
leave.

* The first passage of this poem is my reworking of some lines
from Catherine Manansala's "A Love Poem."

Virginia Woolf & Tight Jeans

ecstatic
sense of shame

this stepping out of body
that is, looking at self
from the outside
contempt

but, what are we seeing, George?
A space where your sister stood
conscious of fear, of shame;
something like anguish

positioning the empty
impenetrable space that
could have been wing, anvil,
plumeria

better yet, in
tight jeans, see her:
cobalt pillars — legs astride,
indignant, colossus

(colder now, night-snow like
angry TV static through
arched windows)

reflect
women watching, plastic and ill,
legs that fill; the horror
fire weed, cut glass, splinter —
her sudden gaze

as if from hip bone
cupped in curved pocket
stitches, sharply drawn
bow stringed arms extended
into declaring
the unimaginable
presence

as if to propel sight, say
shame, the splinter, see eye
as your beholder and a space
anonymous

fitting anger into
tight jeans

2 Poems

by PRIYANKA SINHA

Butch: Soft, that is, FOR SUSAN

The way it sounds, lips over
vowel puckered, long low
smooth-soft between the sudden
surprise of aspirated ends

Beginning the walk, just
learning to look at a woman
as if she were the only one
because she is the only one

Take time, practice, humility
turn man-love into the
real love of woman, conscious
power, her deliberate desire;

having to forgive, she never forgets.
Sweet-soft hush in her eyes, and you
know, when you turn your gaze
tilt your head, smile, eyebrow raised

you hope to god, she doesn't hear
thundering heart, feel palms
sweating, see the twitching under
your skull, just enough to know

perhaps she will take you in her
later that month after call
after call, enough to know she will
see through the steel walk, rough

talk, creased shirts, broad sweeps —
say only a smooth voweled word
of a woman trying to show the world
how to love for the last time.



Susan Sihah

Hyderabad, Cyberabad or Queerabad?

by SCOTT KUGLE

This Valentine's Day weekend witnessed an outpouring of love and an upsurge of care in the city of Hyderabad, India. The waves generated by this event may even reach the shores of those familiar with the city who now live in the USA and Canada.

Young professionals from the Hyderabad metropolitan area make up a large proportion of the new immigrants to the USA and Canada, especially in the field of computers. Of them, a certain percentage must be gay, lesbian or bisexual.

Immigrants may even feel that Hyderabad offers them nothing in terms of an emerging lesbigay identity or little freedom to live a queer life. While Hyderabad's new role as "Cyberabad" in the computer revolution can springboard young people to a new continent and a new life of prosperity, it doesn't necessarily challenge their nostalgic memories of a hometown or their imaginations as to what gay and lesbian life could be there.

However, for those immigrants from Hyderabad who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, whether they were out in India or only recently came out in the Americas, there is reason to take a fresh look at home. Hyderabad actually hosts the second oldest gay support group in India, Saathi, which was founded in 1993 after Humsafar Trust was founded in Bombay.

This Valentine's day, Saathi organized an all-India conference for activists involved in gay support groups. This was the first all-India gathering since the landmark conference in Bombay in 1994. Activists from six different support groups and individuals from smaller towns and rural regions with emerging communities (like Pune, Orissa, and Vijaywara) attended the meeting.

The conference, titled YAARIAN99, featured three distinct goals. The first was to further consolidate the local gay support group network in Hyderabad and to encourage a younger generation to step up into leadership positions in that network. Saathi responded by resolving to take the next step of moving from an informal support group to



become a formal organization with an office, telephone and a full-time staff person. Saathi could then initiate peer-counselling training and reach out to lesbian and bisexual women in the city to help them form a cooperative support group.

The second goal was to bring together activists from all the established support groups (like Humsafar Trust in Bombay, Counsel Club in Calcutta, Good As You and Sabrang in Bangalore) to encourage and advise those in emerging communities in smaller cities and rural areas.

The third goal was to use this gathering of activists to launch an all-India organization as a coalition of all the bone-fide support groups for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered Indians. This coalition has been provisionally called LGBT INDIA and all present at the conference donated money to begin its work. This body will organize an all-India gathering every six months (beginning in the last week of December 1999) in order to bring together representatives of emerging and established groups from across the country. This will help to coordinate training programs, outreach initiatives, and cultural events. These periodic gatherings will also help create a common platform for representing the hugely diverse LGBT communities to the government and international organizations, for all these groups share common concerns based on their demand for human rights, repeal of Indian Penal Code 377 (which labels many forms of consensual sexual activity between adults as "un-natural acts" and attaches criminal punishments to them), and increased funding for HIV awareness and prevention within these communities.

The YAARIAN99 conference in Hyderabad launched a working committee to begin planning for such an all-India event, by inviting representatives of those groups who were unable to attend in Hyderabad to respond to this proposed project and to join its collective effort. The working group will be headed by Owais Khan of Bangalore. It will compile an annual summary of the significant events of the past year in the LGBT

regional groups, as well as republish in one cover the most significant articles from all the regional publications of these support groups (with important articles in the vernacular languages translated into English). This annual publication will be titled *The Gulabi Digest*.

The working committee will also administer a fund, called the Lambda Trust, to coordinate the efforts of regional groups and to encourage the emergence of queer support groups in area where they are yet to fully organize. In addition, the working committee will publish an all-India resource guide to those professionals known to be friendly and understanding in dealing with gays and lesbians; the guide will include the names and addresses of doctors, psychologists, lawyers, police personnel and others who can be relied upon to help in crisis situations.

Thus Hyderabad, recently dubbed "Cyberabad" for its advances in computers, has stepped into the limelight as "Queerabad." As the two-day conference drew to a close, Saathi hosted a press conference to release information about the proceedings to the newspaper and TV media, in Hindi, English, Telegu, and Urdu. This press conference sparked a relatively positive front-page article in the leading English daily, the *Deccan Chronicle* on Monday, February 15, as well as a notice in the Hindi paper and the Telegu television news.

As a follow-up to this successful conference, Saathi would invite those who have immigrated from Hyderabad and the wider Andhra Pradesh region to vow not to lose touch with the events of the community back home.

As Amjad Hyderabad says through his Urdu poetry:

*The sprout of life grows when hearts join
in unity*

*Hearts only thrive in the embrace of pas-
sion and beauty*

You can share your experience, literature and internet resources with those struggling back home to create a safe space for lesbians, gays and bisexuals to create their own community. Especially needed here are resources for HIV awareness and safe sex education. Saathi welcomes those who return to Andhra for periodic visits to family and friends, either as non-resident members of the group or as occasional attenders of its Sunday meetings. Saathi's post box address is regularly printed in *Trikone*. By internet, Saathi can be reached at saathi99@hotmail.com. ▼

A Bisexual Bigendered Performance Piece

by NADYALEC

I am my father's son. My father's father died when he was a baby. And his favorite sister, Nadya, died a few years later. He told me that at her funeral he lay on the floor and told everybody he was dead, too. But the adults just kept stepping around him. I keep thinking of him lying there on the floor looking up at the long legs of adults walking around him. He doesn't believe in God, has told me that he wishes he could, but faith has been missing in him since childhood.

He was sent off to boarding school, where he says the other boys were very tough. But they left him alone because his teachers respected his intelligence, and he learned to seem calm no matter how he was feeling.

His intelligence and his reserve kept him safe, and he learned never to show loneliness or weakness.

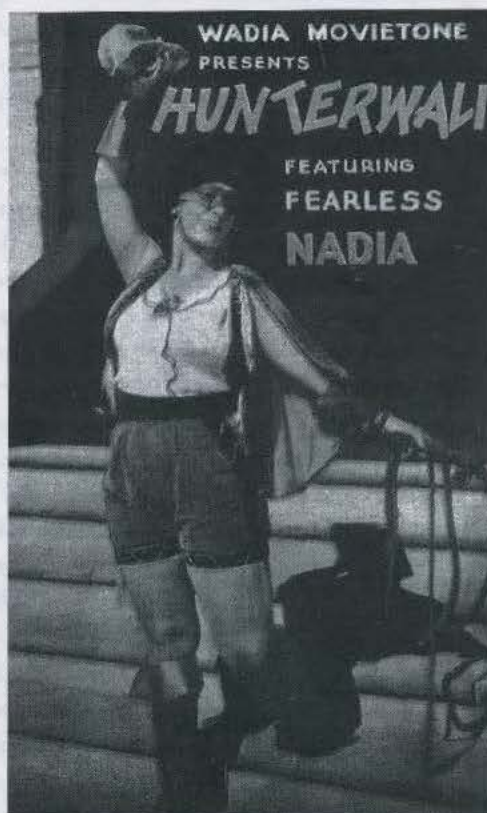
As a young man he came to this country to go to get his Ph.D. in Economics in Texas. He was an ardent socialist, and he used to tell me stories about how members of his socialist group would be exiled for disagreements over a single word or a single point. It reminds me of my time in lesbian activism.

Because his English wasn't good yet, he says that sometimes he went through books looking for sentences to cut out to put together papers. I think about that whenever I put together a zine.

I am my father's son. I have his reserve, his intelligence, his quickness in reading others' emotions. I have his respect and belief in words and ideas. But I am also vulnerable in the way that he could never afford to be. When I'm a boy, I'm a very delicate one.

I am my mother's daughter. This weekend my mom helped me move again. She, my new housemate, my brother and I flung around furniture, roped my mattress to the car, and basically built up some muscle strength. My mom's helped me with every move over the last couple years, and there've been lots of them. Not bad for a woman past 50.

Since I was a kid my mom has done all the heavy lifting at my parents' house, mowing the lawn and clipping the hedges while my dad was inside reading a book. I remember her grunts meant to rebuke him whenever she did something especially hard—this was the work that the men in her family had always done. But if my dad wouldn't do it, then she would, definitely,



Fearless Nadia, the original tomboy actress with riding crop

no matter how much it hurt. She had her uterus removed a couple of years ago. I never really got the whole story since I was away at college. Apparently her uterus collapsed years ago, from all the heavy lifting she does, and she just ignored the pain for years. I'm not sure what made her finally listen to the doctors and have it out.

I inherited that too. I hurt myself a lot, walk into doors, lift things I shouldn't, ignore pain. Learned not to take painkiller when I was growing up, and not to mention anything hurt unless it was killing me. The time my father met me in the emer-

gency room after I was punched in the jaw, I wound up comforting and calming him while waiting for an x-ray. That's a particularly horrible thought to me now, me speaking words of comfort through grinding, broken bones. I've tried to chill out since then. You can take macho too far.

Still, when one of my fag friends comes up to me, lifts me and swings me around in greeting, I'll be damned if I'm not going to do the same. I don't care if he is four times my size. I may be small and cute but I am a tough woman. I'm my mother's daughter, after all.

I am a woman. It had been a long time since I had a girlfriend. I think of it like a desert, miles of hot sand with the occasional patch of green. That was me, wandering in my celibacy, with these rare and precious one time things. We had been flirting a lot, this whole do I like her, does she like me, what are we going to do about it thing. And I had been talking about how much I wanted to try pouring wax on somebody ever since that party when those women did it to me. She was interested, and it seemed like something sexy but safe we could do, cause both knew we weren't going to be lovers. So I'm coming home from band practice, taking these long easy curves on the Beltway, thinking about her naked on my bed. Got home and she and my housemate had melted the candle in a pot of boiling water, with much joking we made it into the bedroom. I kicked my housemate out while she was undressing because he was being too sarcastic.

She has a beautiful body. So many curves and roundnesses. Generous and lush. She lay on her back and let me pet her, run my fingers over her smooth skin. I was telling her how gorgeous she is, how glad I was to touch her.

I started out very gentle with the wax, pouring from high up so that it could cool on the way down, watching it flow onto her and smoothing it with my hands. It was warm, and so was she, and I got caught up in seeing how close I could get the candle to her skin before pouring, watching the way it ran and folded onto her body, the patterns that it made. I hadn't know how she'd like the pain, but she was making these sounds that told me she did, and I was awed by her strength and bravery, by how close she let me get to her clit.

Fucking is too intimate for a one-time thing. I get lonely afterwards. But I wanted to so bad, and so did she, and I couldn't stop myself. Her warmth and moisture on my fingers. Me pushing her open, that tight sweet place opening for me. Everything going hazy and sharp at the same time, and me just wanting it to go on forever, listening to every word, every sound, and wanting it never to stop.

Afterwards I lay on top of my housemate, holding him down with my body while she hit him with my riding crop. And we got dressed, and went to this bar, and I got sad because she's not my girlfriend and never will be.

Next time I melted that candle I discovered how well wax holds scent: it smelled exactly like her.

I am a boy. ... I didn't think he would ever let me touch him because I know that he's straight. I don't understand why he hangs out with me, why he keeps letting me tag along, going to movies with him and his roommates. It's hard to talk when he's in the room.

This one night, after the movie, all his roommates gradually crashed, leaving me more and more alone with him. I was afraid he'd hear my breathing change, hear my heart. Finally he told me to come upstairs with him and he showed me some pictures of his family in Puerto Rico, told me stories about them. I didn't sit too close but he put his hand on my leg. I kept looking between the pictures and his jeans, the seams and creases. I knew it was dangerous, but I couldn't stop looking.

"Go on," he said quietly, when he caught me looking. I turned bright red and looked away. Couldn't think of anything to say.

He put his hand on the back of my neck. Left it there for a long time, then started pressing down. I put my head against his jeans and just lay there, getting warmer and warmer.

The whole time I was sucking him I just kept thinking, I can't believe it, I can't believe he's letting me do this. Velvet and hard and salty and sweet and I always thought he was straight. Same way I feel now, y'know?

This is so beautiful I want it to last forever, and at any second I'm afraid that I'll have to stop. ▼

R A N T !

Come again?

BY ANGELINA MALHOTRA-SINGH

When I began contemplating topics for this column, I realized it was the time of year for the Koothandavar trannyfest in India. I remember several years back, when me and 25,000 of my closest hijra and queer friends descended on Koovagam: Never has being a transvestite or transgendered person seemed more like your desi duty.

So I contemplated writing about the marginalization of transgendered individuals by queer activists in this—but then I watched "The Brandon Teena Story" (again) and perused Feinberg's *Transgender Warriors* (again) and got depressed. Realizing I had to halt my pending slide into suicide, I decided to write about a cheerier topic (sex) and advocate for a personal cause, the Great Y2K Subcontinental Vibrator-and-Dildo Smuggling

Operation.° Because in my opinion, one of the greatest problems in South Asia today is—along with religious fundamentalism, illiteracy, starvation, and political corruption—that a girl can't find a purple jelly dildo to save her life.

A bit of history: there I was, a reporter in Delhi, soaking in a bit of local flavor. Since there's no place more flavorful than a fruit-and-vegetable bazaar, off I went. And around the potato bin, I spotted her: Tall. Muscular. Cropped hair. My gaydar went into overdrive. I edged closer. I invaded her personal space (took it over, frankly). She fled, but not before I got an eyeful—and I could have sworn she was packing. I'd yet to see that in India, and it sent my hormones raging. I geared up to do what any good San Franciscan would do: head

continued on page 18



R A V E !

Desi Pink

BY SAURABH BAJAJ

At first the comment made me angry. "Does Saurabh Bajaj have anything to write about other than being a queer Indian?" It was a sentiment I heard repeated several times last semester when I wrote a weekly column for my university's newspaper, UC Berkeley's *Daily Californian*. In truth, most of my columns were about the trials and tribulations of my life—family relations, experiences on campus, volunteering, and so forth. And of course, I did relate most of those topics to being a desi fag. How could I write about my relationship with my family without acknowledging the turmoil we went through when I came out? And how could I write about my college experience thus far without relating the blinding isolation I fought as I came to terms with my queer identity? The accusations that I was "too

Indian" or "too gay" didn't seem fair.

But, after more thought, the criticism seemed almost comical. I was the first openly gay Indian to write for the *Daily Cal*, so it wasn't as if I was following a long line of queer South Asian columnists who only wrote about their pink desi lives. Most of my readers' exposure to gay India was confined to the 900-word article I wrote one day a week. None of them had ever walked past billboards of queer Indians in each other's arms, or watched movies of South Asian men kissing one another, or seen two desi dykes holding hands on campus. And though I had been, and continue to be, inundated with such images of straight sexuality, I was the one being told to quiet down.

What made me such an irritant to those few readers? Was it the volume with which I refused to be silenced, or the distance I

continued on page 18

July 1998 • 17

Rant

continued from page 17

for Babes in Toyland, and get my hands on a pocket rocket and whatever my *subzi mandi* lovely had under her fitted *salwaar*.

Fat chance.

Forget strap-ons, I couldn't find a vibrating egg timer. Clearly what I had espied earlier was a shoplifted potato or an errant packet of Glaxo biscuits, because Delhi didn't do dildos. Either the sex toy market was so underground I'd need permits to uncover it, or luscious desi dykes were being denied the joys of the Hitachi Magic Wand. Dildos are an extension (sorry) of our right to fuck, and their apparent absence disturbed me to no end. As Ruth Maines notes in her exhaustive history, *The Technology of Orgasm*, the possession of a vibrator is a statement to the world (or, at least, yourself) that you are comfortable with your own peculiarly female sexuality, and that you reserve the right to give yourself sexual satisfaction (we're assuming your lover has a bunny-eared favorite of her own).

Fast forward. I'm back in the U.S., where battery-operated gewgaws are an intrinsic part of my decor, when, worrying about bereft lesbian cohorts, I hatched my master plan: The Great Y2K Subcontinental Vibrator-and-Dildo Smuggling Operation. My queer friends, we cannot sit idly by! We cannot allow the motherland to remain latex-free! We must take action, and begin tucking toys into our suitcases and carry-ons! Give them to your

fellow dykes, slip them to your cousins, present them to those two sister-aunties who live together because they (tsk) never got married. If you're tapped by Mr. Customs Officer (Junior Class 11), pass the vibrators off as massagers and the dildos off as *objets d'art*. You can even try what my chacha did when caught with a Samsonite full of saris—bequeath one upon the officer as a gift for his wife. [Warning: *The chap showed up at the family home two days later, asking if he could trade for another color. So he might come asking for the ridged model in Krishna blue instead.*]

If we get enough of them onto the subcontinent, someone is bound to spot the business opportunity and begin knocking them off. There will soon be a massager-and-sculpture shop in Connaught Place and one by the YWCA in Madras, and you will have done your part for lesbian sex in India. Let's face it: We're not all writers or filmmakers or speechmakers. And we're not all able or ready to take to the streets. But we're all aspiring criminals, and we've all got twenty bucks and nine inches of free space in our luggage. So *carpe dildo* and head for home with your smuggled booty. They'll scream with joy, I guarantee. ▼

Angelina Malhotra-Singh is an award-winning journalist and the former senior editor of GIRLFRIENDS. She lives in Palo Alto with her partner and a menagerie. Criticize her electronically at redmirch@earthlink.net or by snail mail c/o TRIKONE, PO Box 21354, San Jose, CA 95151-1354.

Rave

continued from page 17

labored to put between the existing power structure and myself? Maybe this response was exactly what I was looking for, exactly what I was writing for.

After all, we are well aware of the status of South Asian queers. We are denied recognition and acknowledgment in multiple locations: in India and the rest of South Asia, in America, in the Indian-American community, in the queer community, in our own homes. I realized this fact soon after I came out three years ago and wondered what I could do to change the seemingly unchangeable. Writing the column for the *Daily Cal* was an important first step—a step toward revolution, a step toward the moment when the har-

mony of our voices raised together will become too potent to ignore.

It is in this spirit that I approach this column. It is another chance to engage all of you in a conversation on the challenges we have overcome and those that still stand in our way. It's also an opportunity to discuss what each and every one of us can do to create change, from kissing a lover on a crowded street corner, to writing in a journal "I am queer," to just picking up this magazine and reading it.

And to answer your question: no, I do not have anything to write about but being a big ol' desi faggot. ▼

Saurabh Bajaj is a 21-year-old student at the University of California, Berkeley. Respond to him at khushdesi@aol.com.

Queering Gender

continued from page 8

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APPENDIX: ONLINE RESOURCES:

- FTM International: <http://www.ftm-intl.org/>
- GenderPAC home page: <http://www.gpac.org>
- Harry Benjamin Standards of Care for GID: <http://www.tc.umn.edu/nlhome/m201/cole001/hbgida/>
- International Bill of Gender Rights: <http://www.ftm-intl.org/Politics/Index.html#rights>
- International Foundation for Gender Education: <http://www.ifge.org/>
- Intersex Society of North America: <http://www.isna.org>

contacts

If you are a gay or lesbian South Asian and want to speak to someone, here are people who will be glad to talk to you. If you are new to an area, these contact persons can answer questions and possibly introduce to others.

Remember, contact persons are volunteers committed to protecting people's privacy. They are not at liberty to give out names and numbers. You may ask if the local group meets, and if it is okay for you to attend.

This list is continually updated as people volunteer. If you want to volunteer to be a contact person, drop us a note with your name, phone number, and mailing address (only your name and number will be listed).

Women

Only women may call women contact persons. No calls from men, please.

BERLIN:
 BOSTON:
 CHICAGO:
 COLUMBUS, OH:
 LOS ANGELES:

MINNEAPOLIS:
 NEW DELHI:
 ROTTERDAM:
 SAN FRANCISCO:
 SAN JOSE:
 SEATTLE:
 SYDNEY:
 VANCOUVER:

Men

AMSTERDAM:
 ATLANTA:
 AUSTIN:
 BALTIMORE/DC:
 BOMBAY:
 BOSTON:
 CALCUTTA:
 CALGARY:
 CHENNAI:
 CHICAGO:
 DALLAS:

DETROIT:
 DURBAN:
 HOUSTON:
 IRVINE/ORANGE CO:
 LAS VEGAS:
 LONDON:

LUCKNOW:
 MINNEAPOLIS:
 MONTREAL:
 MUSCAT:
 NEW DELHI:

NEW ORLEANS:
 PHILADELPHIA:

PROVIDENCE, RI:
 SAN ANTONIO:
 SAN DIEGO:
 SAN FRANCISCO:
 SAN JOSE:
 SANTA CLARA:
 SINGAPORE:
 SYDNEY:
 TOKYO:
 TORONTO:
 VANCOUVER:
 VISHAKHAPATNAM:

the news resource of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community of central and northern california

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Chris Narloch
CHRIS NARLOCH

Kevin Cohee
KEVIN COHEE

Marlene Corey
MARLENE COREY

Domenick Scudera
DOMENICK SCUDERA

Erich Mathias
ERICH MATHIAS

Kim Intoschi
KIM INTOSCHI

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What He Did Last Summer

Nish Saran had his hands full. He was about to graduate from Harvard in 1998, his family was flying in from New Delhi for his graduation, he wanted to come out to them, and he was getting tested because he had had unsafe sex with a HIV+ man he had met at a club. Saran decided to capture his dilemmas on video and the result is *Summer In My Veins*, screening at different lesbian and gay film festivals this year. Saran told *Bay Windows* (February 18) "What I really wanted to do with *Summer In My Veins* was to implicate myself more into the process of filmmaking, and really demonstrate what you can do with a camera. The presence of the camera was on some levels a protection for me, but on another level it was a conduit for her (his mother's) realization that what I was telling her was serious."

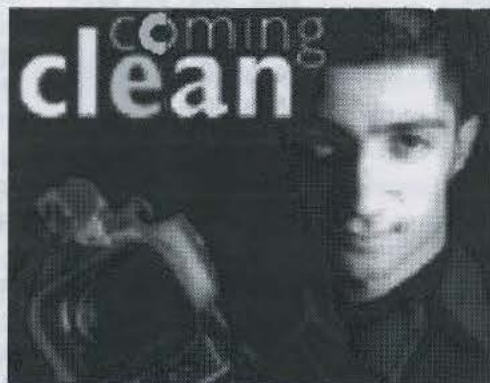
Saran admits that coming out on camera made things hard for his mother to deal with. "She foregrounds this," he acknowledges, "saying, 'How can you do this to me on camera,' and I say 'I'm sorry' — and then she goes on. I know that not turning the camera off is in some ways very cruel, but I also knew that if I turned it off she would have asked me why." The seemingly merciless quality of this climactic scene is ameliorated by one earlier in the film when Saran decides that the moment has arrived for his coming out, and hands the camera to a cousin. But he discovers he is not able to say the words. "I don't really know what it means to me to risk my life, without protection, with a complete stranger, but then to need this kind of armor with my mom — I think it's really interesting."

Gender, Sexuality, Equality

Members of **Trikone-Tejas** and **Saheli**, a group focusing on domestic abuse, participated in a forum on "Gender, Sexuality, Equality" organized by the Telugu Association of North America youth conference on July 18, 1998 in Austin, Texas.

Leading the panel discussion were Vagdevi Meunier (UT Counseling and Men-

tal Health Center), Kamala Visweswaran (UT Anthropology department), L.Ramakrishnan (UT Biology department) and Arjun (UT Health Sciences Center, San Antonio). The subject of alternate sexualities prompted much interest among the audience members, a few of whom had never seen an openly bi, gay or lesbian Indian before. The panelists emphasized that lesbigay people



NISH SARAN

have always been a part of Indian society and that it was the patriarchal emphasis on marriage and perpetuating the family line that kept most of them in the closet. They also pointed out the links between the marginalization of lesbigay people and the oppression of women.

Pay Up Or Else...

Bihar governor **Sunder Singh Bhandari's** hasty exit from Patna's Raj Bhavan is being attributed to former Chief Minister **Laloo Prasad Yadav's** politics, which forced the governor to seek a transfer. *Rediff Online* (March 17 1999) reported that Bihar Congress politicians revealed that the day President's rule was revoked in the state, Yadav sent a group of hijras to Raj Bhavan where they showered abuse on Bhandari, even urging him "to drop his dhoti and run."

Yadav is not the only one capitalizing on hijras' shock tactics. *The South China Morning Post* reported that Unique Recoveries, a firm in Bombay is employing the services of six hijras to help collect debts. Dispatched to the office or home of a defaulter, the hijras threaten to remove their saris if the money is not forthcoming. Since the novel scheme began, it has proved extremely successful, collecting 600,000 rupees in unpaid debts. Mr B. R. Shetty of Unique Recoveries has big plans for expan-



SUNDER SINGH BHANDARI

sion. He said "I am close to signing a deal with a foreign bank. If I win a contract to collect money for credit card defaulters, I will have to employ a hundred eunuchs."

Let's Talk About Sex

An ambitious television talk-show is shattering long-standing taboos in Bangladesh, bringing youthful queries on normally off-limits subjects such as masturbation, homosexuality, and menstruation into the open, said AFP (March 25 1999). Letters from teenagers have been pouring in from across Bangladesh to the office of show presenter **M. Emamul Haque** since the program *Mithoshkriya* or *Interaction* started last year. He persuaded the state-run Bangladesh Television to screen the program, saying it would provide "family life education," a more neutral term than the provocative "sex education" tag. But the questions have been anything but bland.

"I have a homosexual relationship which I think is a teenage need for sexual satisfaction," said one youth, "Is it true?" Robin writes from northern Mymensingh: "I seek solutions to problems which I think many other teenagers face — homosexuality and masturbation." Haque, worried how to get the subjects on air, said "we will make it discreet, but understandable."

Longtime Companion

The Statesman (May 6 1999) reported that **Damini**, a seventy year old elephant at the Prince of Wales Zoo in Lucknow, India starved herself to death after her elephant companion **Champakali** died giving birth to a still born calf. Damini, who had looked after Champakali ever since she was brought to the zoo, refused food and water after Champakali died. She was put on glucose by the zoo authorities but it was to no avail. She simply lay there with her eyes full of tears until finally she died.

Bombay Boy

Readers of the April 1999 issue of *Trikone* will recall our reviewer was quite taken with **Alexander Gifford**, the British actor playing the young Parsee gay boy. Director **Kaizad Gustad** dashed our hopes in *Filmfare* (April 1999) where he reveals that though he selected the young model because he projected "sexual ambivalence", he is not gay. "Not by a long

shot," the modest Mr Gustad told his interviewer. "He looked convincing because he was well directed."

Asylum from Persecution

A March 26 ruling by Britain's highest court, the House of Lords, opened the door for foreign gays seeking asylum from **persecution based on sexual identity**, reported *Rex Wockner News*. The Law Lords' 4-to-1 ruling came in the case of two Pakistani women who sought refuge to escape flogging or stoning for adultery.

The court said women from Islamic nations and gays from various countries could seek asylum in the United Kingdom under the "particular social group" provisions of the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees. Anti-gay persecution could be direct, as under anti-sodomy laws, or indirect, as when a government fails to protect homosexuals and heterosexuals equally, the Lords said.



ALEXANDER GIFFORD



MADHU KISHWAR

For example, poet **Firaq Gorakhpuri** was known to be a homosexual but he was not humiliated for it in the small town he lived in. In more current times, **Jayalalitha**, the former Chief Minister of Tamilnadu, has a "longstanding intimate relationship with her friend Sasikala" but even her political enemies have not made her sexual life a target of attack.

Attacking Sita's famous line of "We are so bound by customs and rituals, that someone has just to press the button called 'tradition' and I start responding like a trained monkey", Kishwar said that Mehta has reduced all Indians to "nothing better than servile, mindless apes." She dismissed *Fire* as an agit-prop film that has done a big disservice to the cause of women by coloring physical affection between people of the same gender, which is common in India like massaging each other's hair or sleeping in the same bed, "through the prism of homosexuality." Kishwar would rather that Mehta have left their relationship ambiguous. Now "many will feel inhibited in expressing physical fondness for other women for fear of being branded as lesbians."

She dismissed Mehta as one more of "a growing tribe of Indian women who have understood that there is a lot of money to be made by portraying the real and imagined miseries of much-pitied Indian women in the western market." And as for the sex that had the Shiv Sainiks up in arms, Kishwar is derisive — "it does indeed require special genius to transform love-making into such a lifeless act and yet sell the film as a hot, sensuous and radical statement on women's sexuality."

family is in a garden around a Muslim monument.

She felt that Indian society has no real history of persecuting homosexuals like the West.

Saul's Solution?

Times of India's advice column **Saul's Solution** (March 16 1999) came up empty-handed for a youth querying about sexual orientation: "I am 20 and am certain that I am gay. Would you suggest where I could meet people with my sexual orientation?"

The response from Saul was "Society has yet to recognise the gay movement or accept it as part of mainstream; and in most circles the subject is still taboo. It is therefore impossible to provide the details. You will need to find for yourself." Saul, wake up and smell the coffee!

Ashes to Ashes

Deepa Mehta's *Fire* got dragged over coals in the feminist journal *Manushi* (vol 109). Editor **Madhu Kishwar** attacked the film as "naïve outpourings of a self-hating Indian" though she defended its right to be screened without threat of violence. She alleged that "you don't have to be a Shiv Sainik to feel offended and hurt by the gratuitous insults aimed at Indian culture in this crude caricature." She pointed out that all the scenes associated with Hindu spaces and symbols are "sites of oppression" while the one and only happy outing as a

foundation. "Our mission is to help individuals reconcile their homosexuality with their religion, in whatever way they want to do it," said Faisal, a founder of **Al-Fatiha**. "I think they can be reconciled, simply because they have been reconciled in individual people's lives already," said the keynote speaker, Ghazala Anwar, who has taught at Colgate University. Many delegates lamented that they have failed to find imams willing to speak to the group. But they are determined not to be isolationist. Al-Fatiha members said they do not intend to start their own mosque. "Islam is about community, and if we open a gay mosque, it would isolate us even more from our community," Faisal said. "But we want to make it so that somebody can go to a mainstream mosque and hear the rhetoric and still feel O.K. about himself."

Dr Vaid

Urvashi Vaid, Director of the Policy Institute for National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws Degree on May 23, 1999 by City University of New York (CUNY) School of Law at Queens College. "The award to Urvashi Vaid is in recognition of her creative and dedicated use of the law to achieve equality and justice," said Kristin Booth Glen, Dean and Professor of Law at the CUNY School of Law.

Best Newcomer

Trikone Magazine was given a special citation as **Best Newcomer at the New California Media awards** honoring the best of ethnic media on May 27, 1999 in San Francisco. It was the only queer magazine to be honored at

the event which was attended by San Francisco Mayor **Willie Brown** and former HUD secretary **Henry Cisneros**. Writer and commentator **Richard Rodriguez** in his keynote commented that the "new" Cali-

fornia had been around for over 150 years though it was only recently that everyone had started talking to each other. Keeping that in mind, the best "newcomer" award for TriKone seemed not appropriate — TriKone is a mere 13 and for much of that it was a newsletter, not a magazine!



NEW CALIFORNIA MEDIA (NCM) AWARD TO TRIKONE MAGAZINE FOR BEST NEWCOMER

Reconciling with Islam

The first conference for **lesbian gay and bisexual Muslims** in New York drew about 60 people, the *New York Times* reported on May 29, 1999. It was sponsored by the Al-Fatiha

classifieds

BELGIUM

Hello, I am a Belgium boy, 40. I am 1m 84, 75 kg and I have blond short hair. I look a young boy between 18-30 years for a close and serious relationship. I speak not so good English, but I will try it. < [redacted] > Belgium

CANADA

I am a 34 year old gay Indian guy who is looking for a wonderful, down to earth, attractive, settled, established male who wants to settle down and build a life with his soul mate. I love movies, dinners, walks, theater, travelling, business, very ambitious, wants to make a difference. I am 5'7, 155, brown hair, hazel eyes and fair complexion. Where are you? Come to me. Raj < [redacted] > Toronto, Canada

I'm a 35 yr Indian gay male wanting to meet other guys in the Vancouver area. I'm 5'9", 145 lbs, lean well toned guy. If you're interested then please drop me a line. Thanks SHAFIQ < [redacted] > Vancouver, BC Canada

I'm an Oriental man living in Toronto, Canada. I'm very interested in having a friendship with an Indian man about 30-35 yrs old, straight acting, not into gay scene and living in Toronto area. If you are out there and interested then drop me a few lines. < [redacted] > Toronto, Canada

INDIA

I'm young handsome independent researcher working with various NGOs and CBOs on HIV/AIDS awareness and rights of gay communities. Seek deep friendship with anybody committed in love and relationship. Want to work worldwide in above-mentioned areas and settle anywhere with Mr. Right. Please write to Raja, < [redacted] > India.

I am smart looking, 19 years old, bi, living in Bangalore. I am doing job and simultaneously studying. I am not sure whether I am gay. My hobbies are singing classical music, watching movies, and traveling. If you are expecting a long relationship sincerely and honestly, I am willing to reply. Ramesh < [redacted] > Karnataka India

I am young gay aged 20 yrs, I am looking for long lasting friendship with decent gays, non-smoking, non-alcoholic, age 18-23 yrs, meeting, cruising, travelling, management, astronomy are my hobbies. Please contact < [redacted] > Datta < [redacted] > Bangalore, Karnataka India

Hi guys, I am Raghu from India. I am 22, studying MCA and a very hot person. I am interested in meeting other guys. I am 5'7", medium built and very passionate. If interested, contact me. I will be glad to receive you. Raghu < [redacted] > Mysore, Karnataka India

A 27 year old, well qualified and experienced gay designer from Bangalore, India, seeks temporary projects (arts, theatre, voluntary organizations) to work on, in any part of the world. Highly dedicated and very enthusiastic individual. Woody < [redacted] > Bangalore, KT INDIA

A bi curious male from Chennai, India, looking for first time relationship, 5'6" height. Respond if interested. Chennai vasis prefered. < [redacted] > Chennai, TN INDIA

An educated, uninhibited Indian looking for gay bi friends. Either from Jaipur or visiting Jaipur. Race, religion no bar. Both willing exciting times ahead. vatsayan < [redacted] > Jaipur, Rajasthan India

I am 39 years old from Bombay. Caring, easy going and offbeat person. Like interesting people, especially those who are creative. Any takers? Do write. Vikram < [redacted] > Bombay, India

I am 21, Gujarati, residing in Bombay, studying. I am from a higher middle class family. I am seeking a marriage of convenience. Rahil < [redacted] > Bombay, India

INDONESIA

I am 24yrs, 178cm, 60kg, slim, smooth Chinese, live in Indonesia. I am seeking a top daddy or big brother. Ashura < [redacted] > Medan, ID Indonesia

LATVIA

Latvian female, 21, who thinks, behaves and longs to be treated like a boy, talented, strong East Indian sensibilities, looks like lovely southern Indian boy, seeks understanding East Indian (gay) male (up to 30 preferred) for life partner. Jimmy, < [redacted] >

MALAYSIA

Hi! I'm Steve and a huge Akshaye Khanna fan. Born to a blood pool of Asian, Portuguese, and even Italian genes (don't ask me why, I just followed as to what me mommy said), 5'9", 82kg with a strong pair of thighs, and love cars and rugby. I am hoping to meet friends anywhere that share the same interest as me. Write me and we'll get to know each other. Steve < [redacted] >

NETHERLANDS

Good looking, well educated European (33yo, 70 kg, 1m79, sportive type) would like to meet bi women or feminine looking men/boys between 15&30, slim, large breast, when visiting Delhi early July 1999. Love group-sessions. Let me know by mail where to find you. Johan < [redacted] > Amsterdam, Netherlands

NEW ZEALAND

I am a 22 yo chinese guy living in New Zealand. I wish to meet more gay friends all the around the world. Drop me a line and you will get a whole lot more back! Nice Guy < [redacted] > Auckland, New Zealand

SINGAPORE

Caring, loving, Chinese prof, 40, fit, manly, discreet, non-scene, non-smoker, seeks similar Indian man for supportive friendship and possibly LTR in the area. Overseas may write if you are looking for a quality friendship. If you are merely looking for a ONS, I am sorry, please look elsewhere. Do write, telling more about yourself and I will respond. Thanks. Jon < [redacted] > Singapore, Singapore

UAE

Hello. I am a very attractive 33 year old Indian male seeking worldwide friends. I stand 5 ft 8 in tall, 62 Kgs. Will answer all responses. Bye for now. KOOTAN < [redacted] > DUBAI, United Arab Emirates

UK

Indian lad residing in London wishes to meet someone nice here. I am 37 years old, 6ft, and I am in the hospitality trade. Would prefer any tall friend either Indian, Pakistani, Nepali. Only criteria is a sincere soul mate with whom I can share some good moments. I am not too much in the scene but yes I do prefer pubs and am a smoker. Tapesh < [redacted] > London, UK

USA

If you are an intelligent, attractive, down-to-earth lesbian or bi woman 22-30 I'd like to get to know you. I am a 25 year old femme black woman with black shoulder-length hair and honey-brown skin. I'm 5'6", 120 lbs. So much for the superficial. I read loads, like to see movies, dance, cook and hang out with friends. I love languages and traveling (I'm trying to plan a vacation now). There's more but I'll stop here. Please write me if any of what I said appeals to you, I'll write back. < [redacted] > Boston, MA USA

30yr old 5'5, full-figured blk lesbian, professional only, in search of Indian womyn to share time, attention and emotional bonding. I am an easy-going person with a love for the finer things of life. I would like to share with a kind hearted, sweet, counterpart. I love children, movies, comedy, good food and travel. If you live either in Sacramento or Bay Area, I would love to hear from you. Please take the time to drop a line, you won't be disappointed. I have a weakness for Asian Women. < [redacted] > Sacramento, CA USA

Fun-loving guy living in Boston looking for guys to have a great time with! I love to do adventurous stuff - from sky diving to rafting! Have a great sense of humor, and like to live life to the

fullest. 6'2", brown eyes / hair. I travel a lot within the States on work. Email me! Jaguar < [redacted] > BOSTON, MA USA

Cute Indian male, 26 yrs, 5 10, 150, attractive, Latin looks, looking for Europeans, Indians, whites, Latinos in the DFW area with diverse interests and for friendship. Interests include exploring new cuisine, foreign languages (French), culture, clubbing, movies, outdoors, witty conversation. I am direct, warm, witty, prompt and non-flaky. So drop me an email and maybe we could meet. Open to women as friends (only) also. < [redacted] > Dallas, TX USA

I am a 45 yr old young looking professional male residing in Orange County, California, seeking a sensitive, caring, honest partner. Am very sincere, compassionate individual, enjoy life and have varied interests. Not into bar scene. Am a kid at heart. If interested pls respond. Hareh < [redacted] > Huntington beach, California USA

Hello, my name is Robert. I am 26 blond hair/blue eyes, white male, attractive. I'm looking to find an attractive young Indian male who likes my ad, and would like to see what could happen between us. E-mail me. Thanks. Robert < [redacted] > Los Angeles, CA USA

I have been back from Saudi Arabia for one year. I am a black man who wants to meet any Indian or Sri Lankan that does not have a Eurocentric problem! I have met many dark South Asian men and I think they are some of the most handsome beings on this planet! I love dark skin and I am looking for the same. I'd love to hear from any of you, especially those of you near Philadelphia, PA, or NJ and New York City. All the best. Bernard < [redacted] > Philadelphia, PA USA

Chinese would like to meet East Indian friends in the Bay Area. I'm 30, 5'11", 160#. Drop me a line. Al < [redacted] > Sunnyvale, CA USA

Bisexual Indian male in NYC, fit, professional, tall & good-looking, looking for a bisexual Indian woman for a committed relationship leading to marriage. I am mostly heterosexual and only incidentally bi, and thus want to marry a woman and have a family. Sriram < [redacted] > New York, NY USA

Hi! Looking for a meaningful LTR? Me too! I am an educated professional, med. ht, have dk brown hair/eyes - all in all like a cuddly teddy bear. I like to travel, read, go for walks - to the beach, mountains or just round the block. I'm into all kinds of music and movies. You - with similar or other interests, kind, good sense of humor, and definitely looking for a relationship. Preferably a top. Physical appearances are not that important, as beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Please respond if u r interested in knowing more, and if u have a photo, all the better. Sanjay < [redacted] > Pasadena, CA USA

I'm planning on relocating to Berkeley this summer. I'm looking to meet other S. Asian grad students at Cal Berkeley for the purpose of making friends, orienting myself to the area. If anyone knows of housing opportunities in Berkeley, please email me dmK < [redacted] > LA, CA USA

I am a 30 yr old, tall, fit Indian guy looking for a marriage of convenience with a lesbian/bi woman. I am a software professional working in the Bay Area. I would like my marriage to be of convenience only with respect to sex. In all other aspects I want it to be a real marriage. I am looking for my soul mate. Kannadigas preferred. Bharat < [redacted] > Sunnyvale, CA USA

Hi! 22 yo with an inquiring mind. Interested in meeting/communicating with other Indian boys, 18-26, str8 acting, 5'9"-6'2"? I specify height since I am 6 feet myself. Yup, 6', 160#s, Punjabi, with black hair, brown eyes, (fair skinned!?) if that makes a difference, very sexy. Email me, dale < [redacted] > Rochester, NY USA

21 year old East Indian male in New York, looking to meet other down to earth Indian guys out there for friendship, and maybe ... Well, let's leave it at that for now. Drop me a line if interested. Kumar < [redacted] > New York, NY USA

Looking for love in Texas. I am a gay Indian male, late 20's and ready to settle down. You are financially secure, independent, driven, open, easy on the eyes and oh, a man. sanjay < [redacted] > Houston, TX USA

Bi-male 32, 5'11", good-looking, searching for an Indian couple. Also would like to meet a bi-female for marriage. Not a marriage of convenience but a real marriage where we are free to explore this side of our sexuality. Hope to hear from you soon! Kumar < [redacted] > NY, NY USA

Well educated, d&d free, good-looking professional looking for bi or gay males in the Tri state area for friendship and possible LTR. I am 5'5", 160 lbs, 26 yrs old. Prefer someone who is older and on the heavier side. Interested? Jay < [redacted] > Middlesex County, NJ USA

calls

Call for submissions:

Re-arranging the World:

South Asian Queers and Political Change

Are you a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered South Asian whose politics and work extend beyond your sense of sexual identity?

As queers of South Asian descent, we struggle with homophobia and heterosexism, yet we also engage in myriad efforts towards broader social and ecological change. We are union organizers and video producers, we work in homeless shelters and teach English as a second language, we plant community gardens and organize rallies against NATO aggression in the Balkans, we do child care and work to green our cities, we are writers and facilitate undoing racism workshops. Although informed by our sexualities, our activism and work are by no means limited to the politics of sexuality; but rather, our efforts move across boundaries into many diverse realms of concern.

San Francisco-based TriKone – Sanskrit for triangle – is the first, and longest-running, community publication for, by, and about, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people of South Asian heritage.

A forthcoming issue of TriKone will focus on our relationships to, and work around, concerns which may not specifically be considered queer issues per se, such as: human rights, nuclear disarmament and peace activism, justice issues, the environment/ecology, urban/rural concerns, health,

feminist/women's, solidarity work, ability, class, work/labour, technology, native issues, cultural production, literacy, education, poverty, immigration, child care...

We invite you to submit experiential narratives, interviews, poetry, critical reflections and essays, artwork and photography, exploring why you are passionate about these and other issues; how they relate to and are informed by your queer South Asian perspective; and discussing the challenges you've faced in integrating your politics, sexuality and culture.

Submission Deadline: August 1, 1999

Length: 500-1000 words

Please include a 2-4 line biography, along with your address, phone number and e-mail. Contributors will retain copyright on their material, and will receive a copy of the magazine.

If we receive more compelling submissions than can be included in the magazine we will also compile an anthology for publication. Please let us know if you would be interested in contributing to this expanded project.

For more information, or to make a submission, please e-mail guest editors:

ANUJA MENDIRATTA: anuja@yorku.ca

MARK HASLAM: mhaslam@yorku.ca

or write to us:

c/o 37 Melbourne Ave., Toronto,
Ontario, M6K 1K4, Canada

Telephone: 416-537-7742

The journal *Men and Masculinities* seeks empirical and theoretical articles for an upcoming multidisciplinary issue devoted to Islamic Masculinities. In the last two decades, attention to gender issues

in the Islamic world has been focussed almost exclusively on a quest to understand femininity – with Muslim women's oppression, the practice of female genital mutilation, and the everlasting question of the veil. But masculinities in Islamic cultures have so far not received as much attention as they deserve.

Please submit essays of up to 7000 words by January 14, 2000, to:

Dr. Lahoucine Ouzgane

Department of English

University of Alberta

Edmonton, AB Canada T6G 2E5

E-mail: Lahoucine.Ouzgane@ualberta.ca

The *Journal for Gender Studies* is publishing a special issue of *Gender and Globalisation* in Autumn 2000. Themes may include: Interrogating the dominant conceptualisation of globalisation, Transnationalisation of identity politics (youth culture, gender, sexuality), the feminisation of labour and the gendering of labour markets etc. We encourage contributions from academics, activists, NGOs, government organizations etc. Contributions may take the form of academic articles, short essays, comments, letters, reports, short fiction, poetry, photographs, artwork or book reviews.

Submissions should be sent to:

The Editors

The Journal of Gender Studies, CASS,

University of Hull

Hull HU6 7RX, England

E-mail: Journal-Gender-Studies@cas.hull.ac.uk

Deadline: January 30, 2000

A picture worth a 1000 words!

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resources

This information is provided as a service to readers. If your group's listing is missing or incorrect, let us know so we may make the necessary changes. An up-to-date listing makes it easier for others to contact your group or publication. Write, call, or email: **Trikone Resources, P.O. Box 21354, San Jose, CA 95151, USA, (408) 270-8776, resources@trikone.org**

Internet

GAYBOMBAY: gaybombay-subscribe@egroups.com
GAYDELHI: http://members.tripod.com/gaydelhi/
GAYINDIA: gayindia-subscribe@egroups.com
GAY-MUSLIMS: write majordomo@queernet.org with a one-line message body: subscribe gay-muslims
GLAD-SRILANKA: glad-srilanka-subscribe@makelist.com
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HEALTH: complementary therapies for people with HIV/AIDS including Ayurveda, Siddha, homeopathy, yoga: http://www.interlog.com/~akash
HOMAAN, a list for gay/lesbian/bisexual Persians: write majordomo@io.org with a one-line message body: info homaan-L.
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KHUSHDC: http://www.egroups.com/list/khushdc
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QUEERARABS: write majordomo@queernet.org with a one-line message body: subscribe queerarabs. A closed list for queer Arab women at sherifk@medcolpa.edu
SAGRRLS: sagrrls-subscribe@onelist.com
SAMALINGA, selected postings from khushlist: http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/5838/

Publications

Avec Pyar, 96 Spadina Ave #607, Toronto, Ontario M5V 2J6, Canada. 1-416-504-9932, fax 1-416-504-9973, desh@io.org. Desh Pardesh's quarterly zine of news, views, and reviews. Submissions welcome.
Bombay Dost, 105A Veena Beena Shopping Center, Opp. Bandra Station, Bandra (W), Bombay 400 050.
Khush Khayal, P.O. Box 6172, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1P6, Canada. Quarterly. \$5/year.
Naya Pravartak: House journal of Counsel Club. C/o Ranjan, Post Bag 794, Calcutta 700 017, India. Copies from Trikone for \$5 each; proceeds benefit Counsel Club.
Paz Y Liberacion (Peace and Liberation) is for gay liberation in the developing world. Readers in Asia get copies free on request. Paz Y Liberacion, P.O. Box 66450, Houston, TX 77266, USA.
Sacred Love: a bimonthly for men who love men. Friends India, Post Box 59, Mahanagar,

Lucknow, 226 006, India. Single copy Rs. 30, annual Rs 175.

Shakti Awaaz: A quarterly voice of Shakti. P.O. Box 93, 28A, Seymour Place, London, W1H 5WJ, U.K.

Shamakami: An international network and journal for South Asian lesbians and bi-sexual women. Shamakami, c/o P.O. Box 1006, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130, USA. E-mail: kbh-jwani@aol.com

Trikone Magazine, P.O. Box 21354, San Jose, CA 95151, USA. (408) 270-8776. Quarterly. \$12.95/year North America, \$19.95/year overseas.

Australia

MELBOURNE: Anbar, a group for lesbian/gay/trans people of South Asian heritage. Anbar, c/o 3/258 Rathmines St, Fairfield, Melbourne, Victoria 3078, Australia, (613) 9481-1424

SYDNEY: Saheli, a friendship network for desi/pardesi dykes in Australia and New Zealand. Poonam (018) 164-316 glowingdiamond@hotmail.com, Uma (02) 9559-4486 umakalishakti@hotmail.com

Bangladesh

DHAKA: Bandhu Social Welfare Society, 106 Kakrail, Dhaka, Bangladesh. 880 2 933 9898/407683. Agency for sexual health for men who have sex with men.

Canada

Montreal: Sathi: South Asian Queer Group. Salman M. Husain (514) 279-2031.

TORONTO: Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention, 399 Church St, 3rd Floor, Toronto, Canada. (416) 351-0131.

TORONTO: Khush: South Asian Gay Men, P.O. Box 6172, Station A, Toronto, ON, M5W 1P6, Canada. Hotline (416) 925-XTRA ext 2173. http://www.interlog.com/~khush

TORONTO: Desh Pardesh, intra-national organization exploring contemporary and diasporic South Asian culture, art, activism. Annual festival/conference, year-round programming, workshops, forums, coalition building. 401 Richmond St West Suite 450, Toronto, ON, M5V 3A8, Canada. (416) 340-1418, desh@ican.net

VANCOUVER: Atish Network Society, 107-680 East Broadway, Vancouver, BC V5T 1X7, Canada. (604) 878-9991, ans@canada.com

India

BANGALORE: Good As You. c/o Samraksha, #402 Ranka Apts Block 4, Lalbaugh Road (near Double Road), Bangalore, 560 025, India. goodasyou@hotmail.com

BANGALORE: Sabrang, Post Box 7625, Bangalore, 560 076, India. sabrang@mailcity.com

BOMBAY: Bombay Dost, 105A Veena Beena Shopping Centre, Opposite Bandra Station, Bandra (W), Bombay 400 050, India. For gay men and lesbians.

BOMBAY: Humsafar Center, P. B. No 6913, Santa Cruz (W), Bombay 400 054, India. Voice mail (22) 972-6913. Drop-in center operated by Humsafar Trust for gay men and lesbians. Meets Fri 6-9 pm.

BOMBAY: Stree Sangam, P.O. Box 16613, Matunga, Bombay 400 019, India. admin@faow.ilbom.ernet.in. A collective of lesbian and bisexual women.

CALCUTTA: Counsel Club, c/o Ranjan, Post

Bag No. 794, Calcutta 700 017, India. Meets first & third Sunday of every month, 4-7 pm. Directions from Pawan 240-5237. Rs 50 per quarter entitles you to 2 issues of Naya Pravartak and other services like pen pal listing, access to archives, counseling help. For gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals.

CALCUTTA: Praajak Welfare Society (formerly Naz Foundation India Trust, Calcutta Project), 468 A Block K, New Alipur, Calcutta 700 053, India. HIV/AIDS/sexualities and sexual health action group.

CALCUTTA: Parichay, P.O. Box 13003, Calcutta 700 053, India. For gay men.

CHENNAI: Sahodaran, c/o Prakriti, 6 Jaganathan Road, Nugalbakkam, Chennai, TN 600 034, India. Agency for sexual health for men who have sex with men.

HYDERABAD: SAATHI, a gay support group. Meets monthly. owaiskhan@hotmail.com

HYDERABAD: Expression, a gay support group in Secunderabad. Meets twice a month. expressionhyd@hotmail.com

LUCKNOW: Friends India, Post Box 366, GPO, Lucknow, UP 226 001, India. For men who love men. (522) 275-905

LUCKNOW: Bharosa Project, 21/6/5 Peerpur House, 8 Tilak Marg, Lucknow, UP 226 001, India. (522) 275-905. Sexual health agency for men who have sex with men. Daily 4-6 pm except Thu.

NEW DELHI: AIDS Bhedbhav Virodhi Andolan, Post Box 5308, New Delhi 110 053, India. Community work in issues of education, health, law, women, gay men and lesbians, blood donors, drug abusers.

NEW DELHI: Humrahi, D-45 Gulmohar Park, New Delhi 110 049, India. Meets every Sat 7-8 pm. Helpline (11) 685-9113 Mon & Thu 7-9 pm. http://www.geocities.com/westhollywood/heights/4463, owais@bigfoot.com. Darpan newsletter.

NEW DELHI: Naz Foundation India Trust, D-45 Gulmohar Park, New Delhi, 110 049, India. (11) 685-1970. South Asian sexual health organization.

NEW DELHI: Sangini, c/o Naz Foundation India Trust, D-45 Gulmohar Park, New Delhi, 110 049, India. For lesbians. Meets every Saturday. Helpline (11) 685-1971.

NEW DELHI: Women's Network, P.O. Box 142, GPO, New Delhi 110 001, India. For lesbians.

NEW DELHI: Siddhartha Gautam Trust for Sexual Minorities and Survivors of Sexual Abuse, B5/207, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi. 110 029, India. Ashwini (11) 610-1391, fax (11) 685-5997.

VISHAKHAPATNAM: New group forming. Write: Dominick, P. O. Box 203, Vishakhapatnam, AP 530 001, India.

Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR: Pink Triangle, P.O. Box 11859, 50760, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Counseling, AIDS prevention.

New Zealand

AUCKLAND: Mastana, P.O. Box 52085, Kingsland, Taamaki Makau Rau (Auckland), 1003, Aotearoa (New Zealand). A mixed South Asian queer group.

Pakistan

FAISALABAD: Hum-Khayal Publications, Attn: Anjum, 2 Jinnah Colony, Faisalabad, Pakistan. Publishers of Pakistan's first book of gay poetry, Narman, by Ifiti Nasim.

Singapore

SINGAPORE: Action for AIDS, 62-B, Race Course Road, Singapore, S-218568.

Sri Lanka

WATTALA: Companions on a Journey, 1003/5 Park Lane, Welikada, Rajagiriya, Sri Lanka. (94) 075-331988. coj@sri.lanka.net. Gay men and lesbians.

United Kingdom

LONDON: Naz Project London, Palingswick House, 241 King St, London, W6 9LP, UK. (181) 741-1879. Dost group for gay men from South and West Asia. Dost Youth Group for people under 25 meets last Sat 3pm. dost_youth@hotmail.com

LONDON: Naz Foundation, Palingswick House, 241 King St, London, W6 9LP, UK. International development agency for sexual health for men who have sex with men in South Asia. (181) 563-0191.

LONDON: Shakti, P.O. Box 93, 28A Seymour Place, London, W1H 5WJ, UK. Helpline Thu pm (171) 837-7341. South Asian lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual people.

United States

ATLANTA: Trikone-Atlanta, P.O. Box 18638, Atlanta, GA 31126-0638, USA. (404) 869-8618. For gay men and lesbians.

AUSTIN, TX: Trikone-Tejas, P.O. Box 4589, Austin, TX 78765, USA. (512) 322-0638. trikonetejas@geocities.com, www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/3259. A campus coalition of queer and straight Asians.

BOSTON: MASALA: Massachusetts Area South Asian Lambda Association, P.O. Box 1182, Cambridge, MA 02142, USA. (617) 499-9669. bostonmasala@egroups.com. For gay, lesbian, and bisexual South Asians.

CHICAGO: Khuli Zaban (312) 409-2753. For South Asian lesbians and bisexual women.

CHICAGO: Sangat, Box 268463, Chicago, IL 60626, USA. Viru, Ifiti (773) 506-8810, fax (773) 271-4024. sangat@juno.com, youngal@aol.com, http://members.aol.com/youngal/sangat.html. Gay men and lesbians.

JAMAICA PLAIN: Shamakami, c/o P.O. Box 1006, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130, USA. kbh-jwani@aol.com. International network/journal for South Asian lesbians and bisexual women.

LOS ANGELES: Trikone-Los Angeles, c/o P.O. Box 10432, Canoga Park, CA 91309, USA. (818) 895-2238. For gay men and lesbians.

NEW YORK: Lesbian & Gay Immigration Rights Task Force, P.O. Box 7741, New York, NY 10116-7741, USA. (212) 818-9639, info@lgirtf.org, www.lgirtf.org

NEW YORK: South Asian Lesbian & Gay Association, P.O. Box 50, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10276, USA. (212) 358-5132. salgany@hotmail.com

PHILADELPHIA: SALGA-Philadelphia, 201 S 12th Street, Suite 1R, Philadelphia, PA 19107, USA. (215) 563-2424. For gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender South Asians.

SAN FRANCISCO: Sadhana Brothers, c/o Ed Brophy, 4211 B 23rd St, San Francisco, CA 94114, USA. (415) 647-4368. For gay men interested in Hindu spirituality.

SAN JOSE: Trikone, P.O. Box 21354, San Jose, CA 95151, USA. (408) 270-8776. Trikone-web@trikone.org, http://www.trikone.org. For lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals.

WASHINGTON, DC: Khush-DC, P.O. Box 53149, Temple Heights Stn, Washington, DC 20009, USA. (202) 728-3870. khushdc@geocities.com, http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/4786/