

## **South Asian Youth in Diaspora Anti-racist Discourses & Entangled Epistemes**

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### **Abstract**

The South Asian postcolonial diaspora has produced multiple new encounters with racism for South Asian immigrants. Colonial forces that repressed non-western traditional thought and knowledge persist today through the coloniality of power. Erasures of South Asian cultures are advanced through imperial legacies of racism, colorism, sexism, and islamophobia. South Asian youth raised in diaspora must negotiate a liminal state poised between their parents' often romanticized and conservative traditions that were forged in relation to coloniality and the marginality of their own experiences and identities produced through North Atlantic discourses of whiteness and modernity.

This article is based on textual analysis of feminist and antiracist discourses in *Brown Girl Magazine*, a multimedia platform founded by and for South Asian womxn. We use the theoretical frameworks of coloniality and decolonialism to situate everyday practices within broader cultural practices—both contemporary and historical. Our analysis concerns how feminist, anti-racist discourses in *Brown Girl Magazine* characterize and challenge inequalities affecting South Asians. Our analysis demonstrates some of the discursive strategies deployed in *Brown Girl Magazine* to construct counter-hegemonic discourses and practices—in particular those used to cultivate a sense of cultural community for South Asian youth.

### **Keywords**

Textual Analysis, Discourse Analysis, Coloniality, Decoloniality, Feminism, Racism, Anti-racism, Epistemic Disobedience, Ontological Insecurity

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## **Introduction: South Asian Diaspora in the North Atlantic**

Over the last five decades South Asian immigrants have left home in search of economic opportunity, political freedom, and western education. They have moved to countries around the world; yet the primary destination countries for the South Asian diaspora have been the European Union (EU), Canada, and the United States—countries of the North Atlantic.<sup>39</sup> Historically, South Asians have been among the wealthiest ethnic immigrant groups, however newer generations of immigrants trend toward low skill workers and their families. Despite varying levels of economic success, diasporic South Asians consistently face discrimination in various ways. These include but are not limited to erasures of South Asian culture advanced by racism, colorism, sexism, and islamophobia. If new homes in the North Atlantic seemed to promise hope, it is clear that the epistemic forces that repressed South Asian culture and knowledge under colonialism persist in their new homes through what Quijano (2000) aptly characterized as the coloniality of power.

While South Asians living in diaspora have faced the challenges of assimilation in the European Union, Canada, and the United States, their children born into the cultures of the North Atlantic face distinctive challenges. South Asian youth raised in diaspora must negotiate a liminal state poised between their parents’ often romanticized and conservative traditions that were forged in relation to coloniality and the marginality of their own experiences and identities produced through North Atlantic discourses of whiteness and modernity. In this article, we are most interested in how South Asian youth born into the North Atlantic diaspora resist entanglements of colonial, South Asian, and North Atlantic epistemes (c.f. Pascale, 2016, 2018). For South Asian Youth in Diaspora this means new sites of struggle and resistance.

Brown Girl Magazine ([browngirlmagazine.com](http://browngirlmagazine.com)) offers curated web content that serves as a vibrant resource for understanding how South Asian youth engage in a variety of counter-hegemonic discourses. Brown Girl Magazine is an online forum created by and for South Asian womxn and dedicated to South Asian expression around the globe. The site’s global reach bridges the gap between lifestyles in diaspora and traditional South Asian cultures. It offers representation and voice to those who are immersed in both. Not only is the magazine written for youth growing up in diaspora, its contents are written by young professional and amateur South Asian writers who are concerned with issues of multicultural anti-racist thought and practice. Brown Girl is a multimedia company that advertises itself as curating content directed at community engagement, empowerment, and dialogue that challenges stigma, stereotypes and taboos. Our overarching goal is to understand how feminist and anti-racist discourses in Brown Girl Magazine challenge the effects coloniality in both South Asian and North Atlantic epistemes. We understand South Asian epistemes as having precolonial legacies that are inflected by colonial occupation. Epistemes of coloniality legitimize a Eurocentric perspective of knowledge and knowledge production. Consequently, they extend far beyond occupation. Finally, we understand North Atlantic epistemes as being rooted in notions of modernity and whiteness.

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<sup>39</sup> At the time of the 2006 Canadian census, there were approximately 1.6 million South Asian immigrants living in Canada. According to Eurostat, the EU was home to about 4.1 million South Asians in 2010. And the United States is home to approximately 5.4 millions South Asians in 2019 and are expected to be the largest immigrant population in the country by 2065 ((South Asians Leading Together, 2019)).

## 1. Literature Review

The colonial histories of Europe, Canada, and the United States have shaped contemporary considerations of racism and anti-racism. Consequently, racism experienced by children of South Asian immigrants is more likely to be captured in European literature on racism, than in Canadian or U.S. literature on racism. For example, in the United States discourse of racism and anti-racism are typically framed as issues concerning African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Latinos (c.f., Kretsedemas, 2008) whereas issues facing South Asians outside of South Asia are framed in terms of immigration and anti-immigration (c.f., Purkayastha, 2018) or by specific issues, such as homophobia, faced by queer South Asians (c.f., Adur, 2018). Discourse analysis, as a field, often centers on unequal relations of power and offers analyses of anti-immigration discourses (c.f., Cap, 2018; Don and Lee, 2014) as well as racist discourses (c.f., Chiang, 2010; Essed, 1991; van Dijk, 1987, 1993; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). Benwell (2012) and Whitehead (2013) are among the ethnomethodologists who have explored anti-racist discourse by examining racial commonsense. Yet very little has been written about the experiences of South Asian diasporic youth in European, Canadian or U.S. literatures—and even less has been written about their efforts to resist various forms of discrimination.

Our article is rooted in multidisciplinary literature that analyzes South Asian experience in diaspora. It's clear that South Asian immigrants value and maintain a cultural connection to their homelands that younger generations don't share (Dwyer, 2000; Rusi Jaspal, 2011; Maira, 2002; Safran, 1991; Sridhar, 1997). Too often diasporic studies do not pursue "diasporic subjectivity" (Anand, 2009). Anand (2009) points us to the need for more accurate and more nuanced representations of immigrants who tend to be forced to the margins by structural erasures in both their new home and in their homeland. For example, South Asian girls and women living in the North Atlantic face convoluted and ingrained forms of sexism from the dominant culture in which they live and from the traditions of their minority ethnic groups. South Asian women find themselves facing complex gendered and raced expectations in both cultures, and these often contradict each other (Durham, 2004; Punwar, 2003). In many families, young women are burdened by expectations that they must reproduce their homeland culture; this often results in women being "monitored" for "appropriate" behavior while men have greater degrees of freedom, particularly to develop their sexuality and confidence (Aujla, 2000; Maira, 2002). Yet the dominant culture of their new home places competing expectations of gendered behavior on women. In interviews with South Asian women in civic organizations, Takhar (2011) found that a progression toward an empowered female collective identity requires some recognition of South Asian women's agency within community organizations. That is to say, women must practice feminism through their South Asian identity rather than against it.

The racialization of South Asians in diaspora is a cultural production that is both gendered and multi-generational (Aujla, 2000; Ghosh, 2013). Research further shows that racialization becomes internalized in everyday life situations (Gosh, 2013). Stereotypes are a central aspect of racialization. Stereotypes produced through cultural misrepresentations of homogeneity erase complex identities and reinforce racial hierarchies (Skrikant, 2015). Among common racial stereotypes of Asians is that of the "model minority," which simultaneously racializes South Asians as "other" and holds them to specific standards of success. Broadly speaking, Asians have sought to advance their socioeconomic status by emulating previous generations of migrants who emigrated with an elite status—a circumstance that has been rarer among immigrants today (Eguchi and Starosta, 2012; Kaufer, 2006; Mudambi, 2019). One

consequence of these efforts has been that South Asian youth engage in systematic erasures of their South Asian identities as they seek social acceptance through performances of class and race (Bailey, 2010).

Through complex performances of class, race, and gender, South Asian diasporic youth struggle to fully “belong” in the dominant culture as well as in the culture of their parents. Across the literature we see that South Asian immigrants, pushed to the cultural margins of the North Atlantic, must carve out a space for their own identities to develop. We look to advance existing analyses by considering the experiences of South Asian diasporic youth and by drawing from theoretical work in the coloniality of power.

## 2. Ecologies of Power

We draw from the field-defining work of Quijano (2000) and Mignolo (2000, 2002, 2003) to explore the (re)production of the coloniality of power in the lives of diasporic South Asian youth. We understand coloniality as a model of power—a codification of knowledge, hierarchies, and discursive structures—that renders colonized nations including the identities, cultures, institutions, within them as fundamentally and permanently lacking. The coloniality of power legitimizes a Eurocentric perspective of knowledge and knowledge production (Quijano, 2000; Walsh, 2007). It operates through the discursive attribution of modernity and progressive scientific models to European intellect (Chakrabarty, 2008a; Quijano and Ennis, 2000), while relegating the knowledge of colonized cultures to myth and tradition (Mignolo, 2002). Coloniality works to erase the anti-historical collective memories of the colonized (Chakrabarty, 2008b)—those created independently of the colonizer.

Coloniality is maintained well beyond the historical occupation of nations through bureaucratic systems (e.g., governments, economies, criminal justice systems, educational institutions, and media) as well as through cultural expressions, commonsense knowledge, the self-image of peoples, and the aspirations of self. This deep cultural imbrication survives the end of colonialism itself and is one of many reasons why Quijano (2000) argues that it is important to speak of the coloniality of power rather than simply colonialism. The devastation of colonialism goes well beyond any historical era or event, normalizing relations of power, and the forms of knowledge they produce.

Decoloniality then must arise from what Mignolo (2009) calls epistemic disobedience. Epistemic disobedience requires the production of non-Western modernities as well as the rejection of imperial knowledge (Mignolo, 2009). Decolonial strategies embrace the idea that all knowledge is embodied rather than attributed to some objective disembodied truth. For Lugones (2010), decolonial feminism is integral to understanding modernity’s dehumanization of colonized bodies and its mission to “civilize” the colonized. The creation of colonial subjects relied upon strategic use of binaries including those of gender, race and religion (Lugones, 2010). Decolonial feminism rejects these binaries and interrogates the complexity of identity. In particular, Lugone’s decolonial feminism offers insight into the nonbinary complexities of identity. We make the connection here to Chakrabarty’s anti-historical construction of collective memory which resists another fundamental binary—that of modern and primitive.

While young South Asians raised in diaspora have escaped colonial rule, we demonstrate how they have become entangled in three epistemes: coloniality (Mignolo, 2003; Quijano, 2000), South Asian (Chakrabarty, 2008a) and North Atlantic (Pascale, 2016, 2018). In particular, we examine how South Asian youth engage and resist these epistemes in the pages of *Brown Girl*

Magazine. Our analysis borrows from the field of International Relations to consider diasporic ontological security—a group’s sense of order, continuity and coherence as a whole (Giddens, 1991; Kinnvall, 2004; Mitzen, 2006). This is useful to understanding the effects of ongoing epistemic violence that challenges identities and agency among South Asian youth. Additionally, for South Asian youth growing up in the North Atlantic, it is difficult to establish the routinization of cultural identity when South Asian identities and experiences undergo continual erasure.

### **3. Methods & Methodology**

Brown Girl Magazine provides a cultural home for South Asian youth. Its content offers a wide range of topics from essays on race relations to entertainment reviews. We began by selecting all content published in 2019. We then used theoretical sampling to locate essays on topics including racialization, gender discrimination, media representation, and cultural stigmatization. This eliminated all advice columns, health and relationship blogs, recipes, and reviews and provided a dataset of 25 articles.

Using the techniques and logic of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2001, 2006, 2009; Glaser and Strauss, 1967) we began our process by selecting all content published in 2019, approximately 220 articles. We then used theoretical sampling to locate essays on topics including racialization, gender discrimination, media representation, and cultural stigmatization. This eliminated recipes, music reviews and the like and provided a dataset of 25 articles. We coded all 25 articles and conducted a close reading of texts.

We draw from post structural discourse analysis by considering how meaning is enabled through social practices even as it is constrained by cultural discursive formations. Consequently, our analyses take up the discursive production of meaning as both an effect of language (Butler, 1997; Foucault, 1980) and a social practice (Billig, 1997; Pêcheux, 1982; Williams, 1999). In this process we link local practices with cultural discourses to consider the implications for anti-racist discourses in diasporic communities of South Asia.

Across our data, we identified several themes in which South Asian youth in diaspora are caught in epistemic entanglements. In this paper we analyze two: intergenerational conflict and recruitment into whiteness. Our analyses center discourses of agency and the reclamation of ethnic identity in articles about race and gender. We trace the (re)production and circulation of hegemonic and counter hegemonic discourses in the contexts of family and culture. Further, we consider the consequences of these constructions for anti-racist, feminist projects.

### **4. Epistemic Conflicts**

#### **4.1. Intergenerational Conflict: There's No Place Like Home**

Across the articles in *Brown Girl Magazine* we found discourses of liminality emerging among South Asian youth in diaspora. The youth framed their personal desires for success with competing discourses: one rooted to North Atlantic culture (Canada, Europe or the U.S.) and another rooted to their parents’ cultural expectations. While this may be true to some extent for many youth today, what is distinctive for South Asian youth is that their parental expectations

are formed by the entanglements of coloniality and South Asian tradition. Here is an exemplar of intergenerational conflict regarding the nature of success:

There are so many standards of what it means to be successful, many of which are socially within South Asian culture. The most prominent one being that you need to be a lawyer, engineer, or doctor to be truly successful and happy in life. Not only is this outdated but it is incredibly destructive to South Asian children and leads them to believe that they have little to no agency in making their own decisions. I have seen far too many South Asian children sacrifice their mental health and wellbeing for their parent's pride and dignity (Silva, 2019).

The very narrow construction of success attributed to South Asian cultures in this exemplar is part of a broader discursive formation in which the professional achievement of children reflects the character of the family. Success is understood in terms of parental pride and dignity. The writer frames parental expectations for success as a burden of the backs of their children. We argue that this discursive framing becomes possible in a North Atlantic episteme rooted in notions of modernity in which personal agency is valued over self-sacrifice. Even considerations of mental health in this exemplar are inflected through a North Atlantic episteme in which therapists, psychologists, and psychiatrists are as much a part of culture as grocers, pharmacies/chemists, and department stores. In diaspora, South Asian youth are challenged by identifications with modernity that offer them a promise of success that is always shadowed by exoticification and marginality.

In diaspora, the very definitions of success, as well as the opportunities for success, have shifted in ways that complicate a generational divide that older immigrating generations have yet to fully recognize and the younger generations struggle to conceptualize. First generation immigrant parents who perceive success through the values of their homeland communities (Rusi Jaspal, 2015) are met with conflict when their children immersed in North Atlantic cultures do not share the same definition. For example, in North Atlantic cultures, youth often encounter the admonition made famous by Steve Jobs to “do what they love” when thinking about a career. Within North Atlantic cultures parental demands that children pursue particular careers, *regardless of their interest*, are often interpreted as remnants of anachronistic cultures. The exemplar gives voice to this sentiment: “Not only is this outdated but it is incredibly destructive to South Asian children.” Colonial, South Asian and North Atlantic epistemes entwine in notions of personal agency.

South Asian youth continue to be called upon to fulfill their parents' expectations and to (re)produce their parents' relationship with South Asian culture. All too often their parents' relationship to South Asian cultures is frozen in time and inaccessible to youth. Youth can be caught by their family's often romanticized memory of South Asian culture, lured by North Atlantic discourses that marginalize or exoticize their South Asian identities, and disconnected from the South Asian projects of anti-historical collective memory.

Issues of agency and intergenerational differences come into focus in complicated ways for South Asian women who also face the impositions of patriarchy—both at home and in public life (Lugones, 2007). Within South Asian communities, sexism is a potent mix of traditional cultures and colonial impositions. This combination often snares women in traditional forms of sexism as they attempt to resist the even more dehumanizing forms of colonial sexism. In *Brown Girl Magazine*, we found young women refusing misogyny they identified as being rooted in South Asian cultural practice. We get a glimpse of what Anand (2009) referred to as diasporic subjectivity in this exemplar:

To fix a problem, we all have to acknowledge it exists and speak up against it. To all my fellow *desi* women out there, I ask you this: How can you better help a parent, a sibling, a friend, or just another aunty or uncle you know, understand the consequences of sexist remarks and actions? Tell them a story, one that you lived. Tell them how you fought for your right to have a career. Show them how you raised your daughter or supported a sister to be strong and confident. Remind them how you face a battle with sexism every day and it's exhausting, but you will never give up because that's just not what *desi* women do (Hossain, 2019).

This call to action emphasizes change from within the community; sexism is named and challenged through personal interactions, centered around familial contexts. We see decolonial feminism as expressed *within*, rather than against South Asian identity (Lugones, 2010). The exemplar demonstrates epistemic disobedience and reclamation of feminist elements of South Asian cultures. Women's agency is arguably reclaimed through a reinvention of decolonial feminist discourses that might be said to be distinctly *desi*. That is to say, it is not produced through colonial, South Asian, or North Atlantic discourses but is positioned within what may be part of the formation of a *desi* episteme.

#### **4.2 Recruitments into Whiteness: Looking for Ourselves**

In this section, we consider how South Asian youth in diaspora experience competing epistemic entanglements outside of familial relationships. The impact of media in the circulation and (re)production of hegemonic discourses is difficult to overstate—both in terms of productions and erasures. Indeed, erasures are themselves a productive force that can enter the most seemingly private of spaces: our thoughts about ourselves and others. This theme reoccurs throughout the 2019 issue of *Brown Girl Magazine*. Here is an exemplar:

For a long time, I didn't realize how important representation was. The closest thing I had to see myself in a story was the Patil twins in Harry Potter. But I was happy to keep reading *The Hunger Games* and watching *Wizards of Waverly Place*. These were American stories, and I was American. I could relate enough to how the characters felt.

And then I started writing my own stories. Years of reading about white characters made that the default in my head. So, when I came up with characters, they tended to be white or have an unspecified race (basically they were still white, but just in your head) (Bansal, 2019).

This exemplar demonstrates one of the ways that discursive productions (in this case media representations) become integral to how one sees the world and finds a meaningful place in it. Representational practices in cultural forms serve both as a claim to belonging and also as an active production of exclusions (c.f., Hall, 1991; Hall, 1997). Coloniality continues to operate in this exemplar through hegemonic binaries of whiteness and other. Unsurprisingly, representational practices in the North Atlantic have long disproportionately privileged white people. Too often it appears that to belong to the North Atlantic is to be white. For South Asian youth, this can cause a fragmentation, or dislocation, of identity (Warren, 2016) when they don't see themselves included in the place they consider home.

This exemplar, also illustrates how the erasure of identities that are not white can serve as an active recruitment into whiteness for youth. The excerpt explains: "Years of reading about white characters made that the default in my head. So, when I came up with characters, they tended to be white or have an unspecified race (basically they were still white, but just in your head)." The recruitment into whiteness not only produces a cultural imaginary, it also produces cultural

practices (e.g., writing only white characters) that align South Asian youth with the perspectives and values of whiteness. The recruitment to whiteness offers a false promise which results in South Asian youth becoming complicit in their own erasure within a racialized order. These representational practices render all racialized identities as both marginal to and contingent upon whiteness. The previous exemplar continues:

Once I became aware of it, I felt responsible for creating diverse characters, especially Indian characters. I put them in my stories, but I feel this pressure to only write about those characters. I'm an Indian-American writer, so I should write what's expected from an Indian-American story...I get so excited when I see representation and I want to be a part of bringing diversity into stories, but I don't want to feel like those are the only stories I'm allowed to tell. I grew up in America, and that's a part of my background too (Bansal, 2019).

In this excerpt, the rejection of whiteness as the only or the most important story is more than a critique, it is a form of epistemic disobedience. Actively resisting erasure by inserting oneself present in public discourse is a reclamation of agency that not only interrupts dominant epistemes, it also creates a space for others to do the same. The coloniality of power emerges—and is resisted—in ways that are both personal and cultural.

Moreover, in this excerpt the author claims the liminal space between opposing epistemes as their own. “I'm an Indian-American writer... but I don't want to feel like those are the only stories I'm allowed to tell. I grew up in America, and that's a part of my background too.” Being South Asian does not contradict being American. Modernity's binary is rejected in favor of more decolonial options that offer nuanced complexity. In diaspora, South Asian youth face continual demands to assimilate into a culture that marginalizes them. At the same time, they are embraced by family that seek to maintain a culture they do not fully know.

A sense of ontological security (Kinnvall, 2004; Mitzen, 2006) for diasporic South Asian youth is undermined by these epistemic entanglements. Consider the rejection of ethnic cultural practices, cuisines, and behaviors in the next exemplar.

...I did my best to hide my Indian culture, often masking myself with foundation that was three shades too light, furiously practicing my English to get rid of remnants of my Indian accent and refusing to discuss anything about my identity. The terror of being ostracized for my cultural and racial backgrounds was debilitating...It was almost easier, not to mention safer, to be culturally invisible to avoid being a victim of bigotry. As a result, I traded plates of buttery *roti* and chili *paneer* for bubble tea and mac & cheese, an exchange which I strongly believed would make me more “American” and less “Indian” (Shah, 2019).

This exemplar demonstrates one way that racism, internalized racism, and the commodification of cuisine are entangled in daily life. The rejection of cultural expressions— traditional food, accents, and religious practices— is a significant source of ontological *insecurity* for South Asian youth. Cultural insecurity manifests in efforts to render one's self culturally invisible through the erasure of embodied cultural markers. This epistemic violence further disconnects youth from their ancestral South Asian homelands. Here again is a recruitment into whiteness. Further, the power of coloniality is evident in self-censorship in the name of ontological security.

The correct pronunciation of personal names is also a site of cultural struggle for South Asians living in the North Atlantic. Yet, names can be markers of unwelcome difference. Consider this exemplar:



...conforming is typically the easier and sometimes safer path to take. Anjali becomes Aanjali, Ramya becomes Rumya, and Revati turns into Revethi, Ravathi, Reveethi, Raven, and the occasional Rachel. I don't blame anyone for going this route, as it's a pain to keep correcting people. Some have even been teased for the actual pronunciations of their names. What I do worry about is what we are losing as a community every time we allow another name to go butchered by our friends, teachers, and bosses (Mahurkar, 2019).

Since names are a primary source of identification, it is no leap from understanding one's name as an inconvenient presence to understanding ones' *self* as an inconvenient presence. It is especially distressing that students become accustomed to the idea that their names are not worth the trouble. To expect and require correct pronunciation of one's name is a disruption to the culture of whiteness, which can be intimidating, especially for youth. South Asian youth find their identities reinscribed by whiteness as mispronunciations become the accepted pronunciation. In diaspora, South Asian names are more than personal—they also indicate a sense of kinship within South Asian communities, and mispronunciations can result in a feeling of “losing as a community.” For South Asians in diaspora, this sense of community is often a life line and linguistic continuity is a form of keeping that life line intact (Sridhar, 1997). Yet here again, South Asian youth are caught in a liminality produced by multiple erasures.

## **Conclusion**

In diaspora, South Asian youth live through the entanglements of colonial, South Asian, and North Atlantic epistemes. These entanglements produce conflicting and often contradictory identities, knowledges, and expectations. As the children of immigrants, they do not share their parents' connection to, or understanding of, South Asia. Yet neither are they entirely at home in the North Atlantic. Consequently, youth work to create their own sense of ethnic identity in order to build ontological security.

This study examined how dominant discourses in *Brown Girl Magazine* challenge coloniality, traditional South Asian, and North Atlantic epistemes through their own discursive mix of feminist anti-racism. The study's narrow focus on articles published in 2019 is both a strength and a limitation. This is a strength which enabled the careful textual analysis essential to grounded theory work. With that said, we are interested to understand how the discourses that we identified develop over time and that would require a larger study. In our analyses the discourses circulating in *Brown Girl Magazine* illustrate how the coloniality of power circulates in commonplace every-day behaviors and how it is resisted and at times subverted through these very same behaviors. The articles we examined also demonstrate how youth recognize their own participation in cultural erasure and their efforts to challenge it (Bansal, 2019; Mahurkar, 2019; Shah, 2019). Epistemic agency emerges in decolonial practices that are as fundamental as they are ordinary—such as correcting the pronunciation of one's name, embracing cultural cuisine and clothing and challenging sexism in their families.

Finally, across our data, there is a rejection of Western modernity as the solution to problems within the South Asian community. Recall the discursive assertion that feminism was to be enacted within South Asian culture rather than something juxtaposed against it. Spaces, like the one provided by *Brown Girl Magazine*, allow for the development of mobilizing discourses that could lead to effective strategies of cultural resistance and development. In this sense, the decolonial practices illustrated in *Brown Girl Magazine* offer an inspired mix of struggle and accomplishment. Importantly, we see traces of another episteme emerging organically in *Brown Girl Magazine*—one that is an expression of embodied knowledges produced in diaspora and

as a result challenges the epistemes of coloniality, South Asia, and the North Atlantic. We close with anticipation of further research into the experiences of diasporic South Asian youth and the everyday practices of epistemic disobedience that enable them to thrive as South Asians living in the North Atlantic.

## Discussion

Diasporic movements intended to increase opportunities for a better life often bring encounters with new forms of oppression as people move across epistemic as well as national boundaries. Since all forms of oppression and resistance to oppression arise first in language, sociological studies of language offer an opportunity to examine relations of power as they are constituted by and expressed in everyday experience. In this sense, *Brown Girl Magazine* is an important venue in which South Asian youth explore relations of power that circulate within and across epistemes.

As is evident in the review of literature, current scholarship on South Asian diasporic experience draws primarily from interview and survey data. Textual analysis enabled us to connect the very productive theoretical work on the coloniality of power done by Quijano (2000) and Mignolo (2000, 2002, 2003) and Lugones (2010) to daily practices. The combination of textual analysis, grounded theory, and theories of coloniality enabled us to make an original contribution to existing literature—both in terms of content and methodology. In this sense, it is both an analysis of how epistemes function in daily life and a provocation for further scholarship in sociological analyses of language that can capture the circulation of power in daily practices.

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