

MADHURIMA NAYAK¹

DOI: 10.15290/CR.2025.50.3.03

Chandigarh University, Uttar Pradesh, India

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8077-7239>

Breaking the Western Lens: Decolonial Imagination in Pankaj Mishra's *Run and Hide*

Abstract. This paper reads Pankaj Mishra's latest novel, *Run and Hide* (2022), as a decolonial novel that critiques Western modernity through the nourishment of life visions, which is negated by the 'modern/colonial' world order in post-liberalization India. The paper employs a decolonial theoretical framework to unravel the decolonial "praxis" of Mishra's protagonist, Arun, as he embarks on his life journey but is profoundly nostalgic about his spiritual and cultural roots. He seeks to reclaim the "life visions" that coloniality has sought to negate, suggesting that decoloniality is not merely a theoretical framework but an active engagement with alternative ways of being and knowing. Arun's life choices embody the rejection of the modernity that has been imposed upon him, particularly as he chooses to leave his 'modern' life in London and return to his roots in India. Situated within a nuanced critique of colonial legacies and global modernity, Mishra's novel foregrounds the lived experiences of non-Western subjects as they navigate a fractured modern existence. Arun's decolonial "practice and praxis" interrogates the imposition of Western rationality, secularism, and relentless economic progress upon societies marked by deep-rooted traditions and communal frameworks, situating Mishra's novel within a broader critique of how modernity's secular salvation myths mask enduring structures of psychic violence and self-estrangement. Ultimately, *Run and Hide* gestures towards the possibility of a decolonial "otherwise": an alternative space where relationality, selfhood, and intimacy remain unscripted by the seductive but hollow promises of consumer capitalism.

Keywords: decolonial; modernity; secularism; rationality; progress

Modern colonialism won its great victories not so much through its military and technological prowess as through its ability to create secular hierarchies incompatible with the traditional order.

(Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy* 8)

This paper reads Pankaj Mishra's latest novel, *Run and Hide* (2022), as a decolonial work that interrogates the tangled logics of Western modernity and its co-constitutive colonial foundations

¹ Address for correspondence: Department of Liberal Arts, School of Liberal Arts and Behavioral Science, Chandigarh University, Uttar Pradesh, Unnao-209859, India. Email: madhurima.1100292@culko.in

through the nurturing of “life visions,” which are negated by the ‘modern/colonial’ world order. Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine Walsh conceptualize this fundamental relationship between the modern and the colonial in the “Introduction” to their book *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (2018), asserting that there is “no modernity without coloniality” (4). The double term modernity/coloniality signals a complex structure of domination wherein modernity’s promises of progress and enlightenment are historically rooted in colonial extraction, epistemic erasure, and asymmetrical power relations. This interdependence reveals how modernity’s “naturalized fictions and imperatives” (3) continue to shape global imaginaries, even as they obscure their violent histories of plunder and subjugation. In their vision of “pluriversal and interspersal decoloniality,” Mignolo and Walsh advocate for radical epistemic disobedience which would challenge the hegemonic cartographies of Eurocentric modernity. They promote the preservation and reclamation of “local histories, subjectivities, knowledges, narratives, and struggles against the modern/colonial order” (3). Modernity/coloniality has always worked to “negate, disavow, distort and deny knowledges, subjectivities, world senses and life visions” (4). Mignolo and Walsh argue that “[d]ecoloniality” is “not a new paradigm or mode of critical thought. It is a way, option, standpoint, analytic, project, practice and praxis” (5), and that the goal of pluriversal decoloniality is to energize and reanimate suppressed ontologies—the “world senses” and “life visions”—not as exotic or archaic fragments, but as living epistemes with the power to reshape the political and ethical directions of the present. This paper employs interpretive textual analysis rooted in decolonial theory to explore the protagonist’s psychological, spiritual, and cultural journeys that resist and subvert the impositions of Western modernity. Drawing mainly on the decolonial frameworks of Walter D. Mignolo (2011; 2018), Catherine E. Walsh (2005; 2018), Ashis Nandy (1983), Edizon Leon (2005), Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2008), Antony Giddens (1991), Arif Dirlik (2003), Peter Fritzsche (2001), Sanjay Subramaniam (1998), Makarand Paranjape (2017), and Mark Freeman (2004), the study examines how the protagonist’s existential rupture becomes a center for decolonial praxis that amplifies alternative ways of worlding persistently suppressed by Eurocentric epistemologies. The theoretical framework situates Arun’s life choices within broader epistemological, ontological, and ethical debates surrounding coloniality and modernity. This paper views decoloniality not only as a theoretical concept but also as a rebellious life stance that critically engages with modernity’s ontological violence and seeks to reimagine the postcolonial subject—not as assimilated or hybridized, but as disobedient, fractured, and nostalgic for a non-modern, rooted past—a figure whose life choices underscore the ongoing importance of decolonial practice as lived experience rather than mere discourse.

Situated within a nuanced critique of colonial legacies and enduring logics of global modernity, Mishra’s novel foregrounds the lived complexities of non-Western subjects as they navigate the contradictions and fractures produced by the modern/colonial world system. Arun’s decolonial “practice and praxis” interrogates the imposition of Western paradigms of rationality, secularism, and relentless economic developmentalism upon societies, whose moral or cultural fabric remains deeply entwined with ancestral tradition, spiritual wholeness, and communitarian ethics.

In this regard, the novel enacts what Mignolo describes as the epistemic strategy of “delinking from [colonial] matrix, constructing paths and praxis towards an otherwise of thinking, sensing, believing, doing, and living” (4). When viewed through this decolonial prism, Mishra’s novel not merely critiques the modern/colonial order but posits itself as an imaginative proposition for a more inclusive and pluralistic reconfiguration of modernity.

The broader contours of Mishra’s intellectual project—evident in his non-fictional works such as *Temptations of the West* (2006), *Butter Chicken in Ludhiana: Travels in Small Town India* (2013), and *Age of Anger* (2017)—illuminate his sustained interrogation of the psychic cost of modernity. Mishra’s reflections in *Age of Anger* emerge from an autobiographical vantage shaped by his upbringing in a semi-rural urban milieu infused with myth, religion, and tradition. Mishra maintains that traditional religions and philosophies remain crucial foundations in Asia and Africa, furnishing the societies with cohesive worldviews that give their lives meaning and foster social coherence and communal values. These areas continue to have strong family systems and auxiliary organizations, whether religious or professional, that express both personal identity and the community’s well-being. Despite the possibility of structural oppression in these historic structures—whether patriarchal, feudal, or social—they nevertheless serve to promote some degree of social peace, however imperfectly, within their own cultural settings. Drawing from this intimate understanding of non-Western lifeworlds, *Run and Hide* dramatizes the psychic and cultural ruptures “in lived experience and historical continuity, the emotional and psychological disorientations, and the abrasion of nerves and sensibility that have rendered the passage to modernity so arduous for most people” (*Age* ch. 1). By digging into these complexities through the lens of fiction, *Run and Hide* gives this critique of Western modernity a deeply personal component, pushing for a perceptive assessment of world progress and development. The central research question that this paper attempts to address is: how does Mishra’s novel *Run and Hide* expose and critique the psychological and cultural disruptions engendered by Western modernity? How does the novel enact a decolonial praxis that resists the assimilative thrust of Eurocentric rationalities? In what ways does *Run and Hide* recuperate the “life visions” and “world senses” effaced by the modern/colonial order, positioning them as viable alternatives for reimagining ways of being, knowing and living in the contemporary world?

Arun, after his admission to the Indian Institute of Technology, becomes increasingly aware of the insidious consequences of falling behind in a system that privileges hypercompetitive individualism, even if it means disowning one’s past. Aseem, Arun’s friend, and the “mascot of triumphant self-invention” (3) has inculcated in him (Arun) Naipaul’s words that “[t]he world is what it is. Men who are nothing, who allow themselves to become nothing, have no place in it” (3). Yet Arun simultaneously harbors the desire to “sink” into an alternative world, using withdrawal as his only means to soften the abrasive demands of modern life. He chooses to work as an editor for a literary review and freelanced as a translator in Delhi, for which he has earned the title of “nikkama and muft khor, a wastrel and parasite” from his father for wasting his “expensive education in a lowly occupation” (64). However, in seeking refuge from these

tensions, Arun remains bound to the very hyper-individualistic cosmopolitan milieu—a world where success, dissent, and even creative rebellion are mediated through Anglocentric codes of legitimacy. It is this Anglocentric domain of Indian publishing and journalism that continues to shape India’s literary and journalistic practices, which Arun finds himself caught up in. Early in the narrative, Aseem emerges as a charismatic mediator of “globalization” and “information superhighway” fantasies, importing vocabularies that promise the dissolution of old provincial frontiers and the expansion of individual ambitions (67). His exhortation to “aspire to an adventure of the mind, spirit, and body laid down by Oscar Wilde” (67) is telling: it entwines the longing for material mobility with a symbolic accession to Western cultural ideals. For aspirants like Aseem, Westernization, and especially Anglicization, become the mode through which local class barriers might be crossed. Yet such a passage is never complete, for it is always shadowed by anxiety and contradictions.

Within the novel’s depiction of the Indian publishing world, Anglocentrism appears not merely as a practical linguistic necessity but as an entrenched gatekeeping apparatus for the “Lutyens elite[s]” (70). The narrator remarks on the tight circles of patronage that privilege mediocre but well-connected Anglophone writers while marginalizing genuinely innovative or socially rooted voices: “while books by prominent people were carefully assigned to their friends, the much superior work of socially invisible and inconsequential authors was slighted with either lack of acknowledgement or coarse hostility by dilettantish reviewers” (71). This succinctly exposes how the literary field reproduces colonial logics of legitimacy: the “proper” writer is the one fluent in the cultural idioms and mannerisms that mark them as part of the Anglophone elite. Mishra does not merely satirize this system; he also reveals its psychic cost. The narrator and Aseem stand as “two class fugitives breaking free of shameful origins by acquiring the language and deportment of the elite, but never less than uneasy in their adopted skins, haunted by a sense of fraudulence ...” (71). The alienation here is twofold: language, once a colonial instrument of subjection, becomes an aspirational ladder, but one that cannot be ascended without incurring self-doubt and estrangement from local rootedness. Anglocentrism thus breeds both mobility and mimicry, sustaining a constant dissonance between the writer’s background and the cosmopolitan spaces they inhabit. Even the promise of dissent is co-opted. In this way, *Run and Hide* suggests that the postcolonial Indian publishing remains paradoxically dependent on the colonial language for both its mainstream legitimation and its “radical” critique. The symbolic authority of English repeatedly undermines the dream of decolonizing knowledge as the standard for modernity and relevance. By tracing Aseem’s trajectory alongside the narrator’s own embeddedness in this world, Mishra demonstrates how Anglocentrism in India’s publishing industry survives as a subtle yet powerful inheritance—not simply a linguistic preference, but a structuring condition that governs who can speak, who can be heard, and who remains on the margins of India’s global literary imagination.

Arun, disillusioned with Delhi’s urban chaos, retreats to Ranipur, a village whose decolonial stance is epitomized in its holistic and tradition-bound existence, which is in stark contrast to

Delhi's relentless competition and consumerist ambitions, offering Arun a sanctuary of spiritual and communal renewal. Ranipur's deliberate departure from the competitive and commercial spirit is the point at which Mishra's critique of Western modernity starts. The scholarly pursuits of the owners of the rented house at Ranipur (where Arun began living with his mother), Devdutta and his father, Panditji, eschew commercial gain in favor of intellectual and spiritual enrichment, a philosophy that starkly contrasts with the market-driven ethos of modern capitalist societies. This rejection of materialistic ambition is further demonstrated by Panditji's choice to forgo a prestigious post to start a Sanskrit institution, emphasizing a respect for tradition and knowledge over financial gain. The broken clock and deteriorated public telephone are two of Ranipur's symbolic components that serve as reminders of its opposition to the linear, progress-oriented temporality that Western modernity espouses. Arun's immersion in an environment that rejects the market-driven logic of capitalist modernity makes Mishra's criticism clear. The village's social and spiritual character contrasts sharply with capitalism's atomized, transactional interactions. Ranipur is, to borrow Walsh's words, "radically distinct from that of savage capitalism, imposed Western modernity, domination, and oppression," here the urge is for "renewal, restoration, revival or a continuing after interruption—of knowledges, life practices and re-existences ..." (18). This ethos resists the dehumanizing logics of the modern/colonial world order, offering an alternative vision rooted in cultural continuity and ancestral wisdom. Ranipur's "decolonial attitude" (Maldonado-Torres 105) challenges the readers to reconsider what constitutes authentic progress and fulfillment. Arun's journey suggests that spiritual wholeness, cultural continuity, and communal bonds offer a more meaningful and enduring conception of modernity than the shallow materialism of Western paradigms. The community's appreciation for ancestral occupations is exemplified by Devdutta's dedication to the apple orchard where "spent hours planting, budding, and pruning, was a link to his ancestral occupation rather than a commercial enterprise" (135), indicating Devdutta's profound connection to heritage and continuity, in stark contrast to the rupture and dislocation frequently wrought by modern developmental projects. Devdutta, in particular, and Ranipur at large, embody

... an essence, an attitude and a collective consciousness of thinking aimed at reconstructing existence, freedom, and liberty in the present but in conversation with the ancestors. It denotes a politically and culturally subversive thinking ... that confronts dehumanization and non-existence that coloniality has marked and, in so doing, works towards a "decoloniality" of knowledges, power and being. (Leon and Walsh 2006)

Arun's incorporation into Ranipur's traditional ethos, with its emphasis on non-commercial scholarship, offers a counter-narrative to Western modernity's crucial demands, instead advocating for a more holistic and culturally embedded understanding of progress, one that prioritizes human connection, intellectual pursuit, and spiritual well-being over purely economic and technological advancement. Mishra's description of Ranipur presents a powerful critique

of the ethos of Western modernity, advocating for an alternative mode of existence that is harmonious, rooted in tradition, and resistant to the homogenizing forces of global developmental paradigms. Through Arun's journey, Mishra calls for a re-evaluation of what constitutes true progress and modernity, suggesting that the answers may lie in the wisdom and practices of non-Western, pre-modern cultures.

Arun's friend Aseem embodies the enthusiasm for the idea that India has nearly reached the zenith of Western modernity, envisioning a future where India could compete on equal footing with America. Aseem, unlike Arun, accepts European modernity as the "point of reference of global history," to which he believes the entire world is destined to arrive. Aseem is excited about the fact that

... many well-educated, upper-caste Indians were now demanding respect and attention from the white rulers of the world. A corporate dynasty from Mumbai had recently bought the Pierre and was ostentatiously seeking to purchase the company that makes the Jaguar, two of many trophy acquisitions in what Indian newspapers hailed as the 'Global Indian Takeover'... (88)

Aseem's acceptance of Western modernity as a pathway to genuine progress, and as a submission to a global narrative that prioritizes material success and cosmopolitanism over the rich, complex traditions of local cultures, exemplifies "Eurocentric critiques of Eurocentrism," or what Ashis Nandy calls an "official dissent." In *The Intimate Enemy*, Nandy warns that modernity's psychic grip extends even to its carefully sanctioned forms of rebellion: "'Westernization' has become a pejorative term, yet there have reappeared on the stage more subtle and sophisticated means of acculturation. They produce not only models of conformity but also models of 'official' dissent ... Even when in opposition, that dissent remains predictable and controlled" (64). Arun's counter-narrative offers "decolonial critiques of Eurocentrism" (Walsh and Mignolo 3) that stage a quiet yet radical departure from this 'predictable dissent.' Arun rejects both the allure of Western modernity and its sanctioned modes of counter-narrative—coloniality, which confines even anti-colonial thought within modernity's epistemic boundaries, displacing the standpoint that considers "Western rationality as the only framework and possibility of existence, analysis, and thought" (Walsh 17). In fact, Arun is deeply afraid of the "thought of faraway rich lands, and of becoming one of the innumerable millions from our part of the world that awaited impatiently to flood into them, and then waited much longer to be treated with dignity by their new neighbors" (61).

As Nandy observes:

If there is the non-West which constantly invites one to be Western and to defeat the West on the strength of one's acquired Westernness—there is the non-West's construction of the West which invites one to be true to the West's other self and to the non-West which is in alliance with that other self. If beating the West at its own game is the preferred means of handling the feelings of

self-hatred in the modernized non-West, there is also the West constructed by the savage outsider who is neither willing to be a player nor a counterplayer. (xiii)

Arun's withdrawal to Ranipur, leaving behind the chaotic and hyper-individualistic career and life in Delhi, precisely embodies Nandy's second stance: he rejects both assimilation into Eurocentric modernity and the reactive desire to defeat it on its own terms. Instead, his withdrawal signals a quest to reconstitute a "West's other self"—a moral universality that can align with indigenous visions of relationality and spiritual plenitude.

In this connection, it may be apt to point out that Arun's psychological and emotional connection to his mother, who literally metamorphoses into an epitome of tradition and religiosity, offering in the process a stark counterpoint to the Enlightenment ideals of progressive change and scientific reasoning. In the midst of deprivation and suffering, the story shows how Arun's mother established a stable and meaningful world with her modest but profound religious rituals—a stability that Western modernity tends to disregard in its attempts at progression. Arun's vivid remembrance of his mother's daily rituals, infused with the aroma of agarbatti and the cadence of morning prayers, offers a touching witness to the continuing relevance of familial and spiritual traditions. This tableau, replete with sensory details and imbued with tender nostalgia, highlights the transcendent aura that traditional practices bring to domestic life. The juxtaposition of Arun's life in Ranipur, characterized by simplicity and contentment, against the backdrop of his mother's devout practices, underscores a profound critique of Western modernity's fragmented and secular existence. For Arun, as for Samar in Pankaj Mishra's first novel *Romantics*, the mother stands as the paragon of certainty—a beacon of unwavering faith whose religious convictions imbued her with an unassailable sense of assurance. Samar's mother dies while living in an ashram in Varanasi, and when Samar goes there to perform the last rites of his mother, he notices

the cloth-bound volumes of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and the collected works of Saratchandra and Tagore, her diary with its accounts and laundry lists, old issues of the religious magazine Kalyan, rosary beads in a frayed velvet pouch, small idols of Krishna and Rama. ... These things had accompanied her all her life; they had made up her world; but it was not until I came across the heavily annotated Hindu calendar she kept hung in her room all her life that I realized how inviolably whole that world had been to her. It had been a realm of existence over and above her sorrows and disappointments on the material plane, a world with its own rhythms and seasons, virtues and habits ... How hard it was in that room, facing that calendar, my mother's possessions all around me ... to deny the knowledge that the past that had given shape and coherence to my parents' lives was no longer available to me. (70–71)

Both Arun and Samar's struggles to reconcile the past with the demands of modern living reflect a broader cultural shift away from deeply rooted traditions and toward a secular, fragmented

lifestyle. Their musings on the disintegration of cultural continuity highlight the fleeting nature of modern existence, which deprives people of the deeper, stabilizing meanings that tie them to their ancestral heritage, resulting in the breaking of the traditional bedrock beneath their feet. The demise of Arun's mother thrusts him into a state of profound dislocation, casting him into existential liminality. Deprived of the certainties of his past, Arun finds himself unmoored in a world where rapid modernization continually undermines the foundations of his identity:

That life eternal of humility and prayer, in which nothing was felt as too frightening or shocking, since it was all divinely ordained, and the pageantry of religion offered both drama and mystery, had come to an end with the generation of our parents. But who were we to scorn it? Brought up into a life with little meaning, we had convinced ourselves that meaningful ways of being existed, and we would find them. In reality, this amounted to running this way and that, uncertain of our destination, and looking back enquiringly all the time. (140)

The amalgamation of the idea of tradition with stability, religion, and maternal presence in Arun's life signifies the deep interconnectedness of these elements. The erosion of these traditional moorings leaves him adrift, highlighting the inherent tensions and disorientations wrought by the relentless advance of modernity. Arun's peace and comfort with the traditionalism associated with Devdutta's life and the religiosity of his mother, contrasted with his unease at having lost them, position him in direct tension with the demands of the globalized world he inhabits. Arun emerges as a character who, through his nostalgic defiance against the normative values of modernity, rejects the imperative to "imitate the West" and refutes the notion that "European modernity was the point of arrival of human history and the model for the entire planet" (Mignolo, *Darker Side* xiv).

Arun's choices illuminate the fissures in Aseem's worldview, exposing the emptiness of a cosmopolitanism that severs individuals from their cultural roots and reduces identity to mere participation in a global market. Counternarratives are articulated by those "groups whose marginality defines the boundaries of the mainstream, whose voice and perspectives (and consciousness) have been suppressed, devalued and abnormalized" (Delgado, qtd in Andrews 1–2), thereby serving to highlight the repressed and marginalized narratives. These narratives challenge the dominant hegemonic discourses and offer alternative perspectives that enrich our understanding of the world. Arun's nostalgia for a traditional and religious world thus becomes a profound counternarrative, foregrounding the suppressed narrative that "every life, to be meaningful, must have a touch of transcendence. That transcendence may come directly from spirituality, or indirectly through some form of social endeavours that are undertaken with a touch of moral compassion" (Nandy, *Talking Back* 5). The longing for spiritual fulfilment and connection to cultural roots underscores a fundamental human yearning for transcendence, which is often neglected in the discourse of Western progress and rationality.

Arun's narrative also underscores the persistent presence of religious and traditional values that continues to co-exist with the ideals of Western modernity: progress and secularism. As Anthony Giddens observes, Western modernity has not succeeded in eliminating the category of religion, highlighting the continued desire for the solace provided by religious belief in private spaces, even if not in public ones (195). Mishra, through the character of Arun, illuminates the "fundamental blindness" of Western modernity to the "persistence of religion in everyday life but, even more importantly, to the ways in which modernity itself might contribute to the persistence of religious ways of thinking in its ceaseless production of cultural incoherence and its evacuation of the realm of the spiritual" (Dirlik 149). Arif Dirlik further observes that "[r]endering science and reason into secular faiths provides at best a partial remedy to the moral and spiritual impoverishment of society by capitalist modernity, limited in appeal to restricted (and privileged) social groups" (149)—a limitation that Arun's experience encapsulates. Mishra's depiction of Arun challenges the reductionist perspective of modernity, which conflates development with economic and technological success while ignoring the moral and spiritual aspects of human life that are necessary for life to be renewed. According to Mignolo, the prioritization of "regeneration of life" over "primacy of recycling the production and the reproduction of goods at the cost of regeneration of life is the first step toward decolonization or de-westernization" (*The Darker Side* 121–22). By expressing his longing for tradition, Arun rejects the totalizing narrative of Western modernity, highlighting a significant contradiction between the superficial adoption of Western contemporary values and the more profound, fundamental values that still influence people's identities on a personal level. By highlighting the limitations of the secular and rationalist framework of Western modernity, this dissonance fosters a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of progress that acknowledges the spiritual and cultural dimensions of human existence.

Nandy diagnoses how colonial modernity tempts the colonized self to reclaim dignity through an aggressive counter-masculinity. While dwelling on Kipling, he maintains that "the only India [Kipling] was willing to respect was the one linked to her martial past and subcultures, the India which was a Dionysian counterplayer as well as an ally of the West" (35). Figures like Nirad C. Chaudhuri and V. S. Naipaul, Nandy argues, reproduce this fantasy of a 'hard India' that could mirror the West's virile modernity and redeem their wounded sense of self. In *Run and Hide*, Mishra stages a subtle critique of the hyper-masculine modernity that India performs for itself and for the West. This performance, as Nandy has argued in *The Intimate Enemy*, stems from a colonial anxiety: the non-Western subject internalizes the colonial image of a feminized, backward India and attempts to counter it through aggressive assertions of muscular nationalism, technological prowess, and conspicuous sexual modernity. The result is a paradoxical compulsion to be "Western" in order to outdo the West — to "beat the West at its own game" (70). Within Mishra's narrative, this paradox finds contrasting embodiments in Arun, Aseem, and Alia. Aseem, Arun's charismatic friend, and Virendra are the archetypal "counter-player[s]" that Nandy describes—the figures that flaunt economic ambition and sexual bravado as proof of their

triumph over inherited small-town limitations. As Arun observes, Aseem “urged the small-town strivers to follow his example and aspire to an adventure of the mind, spirit and body” (67), echoing Oscar Wilde’s call to “cure the soul by means of the senses.” Aseem’s worldliness and flamboyant relationships are not simply personal traits but calculated performances of modern masculinity that align with India’s desire to project a virile, competitive self-image to the West.

Alia, too, is entangled in this performative modernity. As a cosmopolitan woman who drifts into and out of relationships, her sexual freedom mirrors global neoliberal values of fluid identity and autonomous choice. Yet, her casual disengagement from Arun is less an assertion of radical liberation than an absorption of a Western script of “freedom” as emotional detachment and disposable intimacy. In embodying this liberalized, urban sexual ethos, Alia affirms the very Anglo-centric standards that India’s globalized elite internalize as markers of modernity. Arun, however, stands apart as a figure of quiet refusal. His retreat from the transactional, hyper-competitive masculinity of Aseem—and his disillusionment with Alia’s non-seriousness in love—signal an alternative way of being male in a modernizing India. Rather than assert his wounded pride or reclaim Alia as proof of sexual conquest, Arun withdraws. His withdrawal is not mere diffidence but a subtle decolonial gesture. By choosing renunciation over assertion, Arun disrupts the dominant script that equates masculinity with aggression, accumulation, and sexual conquest. In this sense, he aligns more closely with the “non-players” Ashis Nandy describes, i.e., those who “construct a West which allows them to live with the alternative West, while resisting the loving embrace of the West’s dominant self” (14). Arun’s sexual restraint thus becomes part of the novel’s larger challenge to Western modernity’s values. In a society where “hyper-masculinity” is wielded as a defense against colonial emasculation, Arun’s refusal to compete on those terms opens a fragile space for vulnerability, rootedness, and selfhood outside the paradigms of conquest. His reticent masculinity invites us to imagine a postcolonial subjectivity that neither capitulates to the West’s dominant codes nor replicates them in reverse. Instead, Arun’s quiet exit from the cycle of conquest and consumption gestures towards an “otherwise,” an ethics of being that remains stubbornly outside the empire’s anxious gaze. Sanjay Srivastava’s *Passionate Modernity* offers a compelling lens for unpacking the intersection of sexuality, consumption, and neoliberal modernity in contemporary India, providing a framework that richly illuminates the affective and erotic economy in *Run and Hide*. Srivastava argues that in post-liberalization India, sexuality has become deeply intertwined with consumption and self-making—not as an incidental phenomenon, but as a deliberate project that signals modern subjectivity itself. He contends that “sexuality-as-consumption” operates as a powerful adjunct to India’s aspirational modernity, where sexual imagery and practices are mobilized to assert urban sophistication, class mobility, and cosmopolitan belonging (Srivastava 176–77). In this paradigm, the display of sexual agency becomes evidence of one’s insertion into global circuits of consumption and lifestyle modernity.

Debra Curtis, in her essay “Commodities and Sexual Subjectivities: A Look at Capitalism and its Desires” (2004), theorizes how consumer culture, desire, and sexuality are entangled within

capitalist economies that rely on the commodification of sexual subjectivities for profit and the production of identity. She draws on thinkers such as Laqueur, Deleuze, Guattari, and Haug to argue that desire is not simply an innate human trait, but is continually produced, reshaped, and mobilized within the market economy. Haug's sharp insight that "sexual enjoyment becomes the commodity's most popular attire" (Curtis 56) clarifies how the advertising industry borrows its seductive power from intimate human desires, reversing the relationship so that desire itself is refracted through commodity logic. This framework can illuminate the sexual subjectivities of characters in *Run and Hide*. Mishra's novel, when read alongside Curtis, reveals how modern Indian elites like Aseem and Alia are entangled in neoliberal scripts that eroticize success, consumption, and bodily freedom. Aseem's hyper-entrepreneurial, performative masculinity and Alia's liberated sexual choices reflect the logic Curtis describes—where desire is commodified and becomes an aspirational lifestyle. Their sexual autonomy and excess mirror the market's incessant generation of new 'scripts' for subjectivity—sexuality as both spectacle and self-making.

In contrast, Arun's comparative reticence complicates this script. His quiet withdrawal from Alia when he senses her non-commitment suggests a refusal to fully perform the hyper-masculine, consumption-driven self that neoliberal modernity encourages. He neither commodifies nor spectacularizes his sexuality as his peers do. If, as Curtis writes, consumer culture continually remakes sexual practices by shaping what is desirable and how it is staged, then Arun's rejection of these codes shows a subtle resistance to the regime of commodified desire. Beyond his own dilemma, Arun's life is marked by tension—his oscillation between his mother's conventional world and Alia's cosmopolitan allure—symbolizing a larger battle to integrate two highly disparate worldviews. The conflict arises from the incompatibility between the recent, secular ideals imposed by Western educational and professional institutions and the long-standing cultural traditions that have historically defined the identities of the people on the non-Western world. He veers between tradition and modernity, representing the "painful reality" of being "split between the conflicting demands of tradition that rules a large part of his life and the modernity of his training and work" (Heesterman 238). The character of Alia, whose secular, global identity symbolizes the pinnacle of contemporary, Westernized achievement, further complicates this ideological struggle. Her disengagement from traditional and familial ties, which writers such as V. S. Naipaul have praised, stands in sharp contrast to Arun's innate desire for a closer link with his roots. Alia's character exemplifies the mainstream narrative of modernity, which associates progress with the rejection of the past, a stance that Aseem strongly endorses. However, this viewpoint downplays and minimizes the counternarrative that Arun represents, which emphasizes the significance of tradition and spirituality in creating a meaningful life. However, Arun's counternarrative is "in tension with dominant stories, neither fully oppositional nor untouched" (Tore et al, qtd in Andrews 2). Arun's growing fondness for Alia and his subsequent separation from his mother signal his attempt to break free from tradition; Arun contrasts "the musty darkness of my mother's room" (182) with the allure of modernity represented by the "brightness and glamour of Alia" (183). Arun's relationship with Alia and his estrangement

from his mother not only highlight his personal struggle but also critique the broader societal shift towards a homogenized, glamorous modernity. The dissonance he experiences—moving from the comfort and security of his mother’s traditional world to the disorienting allure of Alia’s modernity—serves as a microcosm of the larger cultural and intellectual tensions within contemporary Indian society.

Arun experiences the unsettling repercussions of uprooting himself from his cultural and spiritual grounding, which results in profound detachment and existential liminality after his immersion in Alia’s culture and subsequent transfer to London. Initially, Arun feels liberated and committed, seeing his move to Alia’s cosmopolitan world as a step toward modernity and personal growth. However, this apparent freedom soon gives way to a pervasive sense of estrangement. When confronted with the harsh realities of the English-speaking circumstances, Arun endures an identity crisis that boils up in his persistent search, “What am I doing here?” (271). Beyond simple confusion, this question represents a more profound ontological collapse. The subtlety of self-betrayal is highlighted by Arun’s revelation that Alia has shaped his life to fit into her world while showing little regard for his cultural background. Alia’s disregard for Arun’s heritage is a metaphor for the larger marginalization and repression of non-Western identities in the context of global modernity. Arun’s subsequent “fear of having lost a world” (241) signifies more than a mere geopolitical or political dislocation from the nation; it denotes an ontological rupture, a severance from the historical continuum and the erosion of spiritual epistemes that had provided the foundational ground of his being and cultural memory. Arun’s predicament exposes the fallacious ideals of Western modernity and illustrates how its fragile acceptance can lead to profound psychological fissures. Arun’s plight critically illuminates the hollow promises of Western modernity, revealing how its superficial adoption can lead to profound inner voids. This existential liminality renders Arun as one of the “hollow men” (267), a poignant reference to T. S. Eliot’s depiction of individuals who, devoid of spiritual and cultural substance, lead lives marked by a sense of emptiness and fragmentation. The moment Arun realized that he has completely lost his entire world, he had lost all his connection and anchorage to his past and tradition and was drifting in the sea of rootless existence and without the stability and authenticity provided by twin towers of past and tradition, he leaves Alia’s London and goes off to Tibet to regain the stability of his mind: “Perhaps I could now finally set aside this laboured character who had lived in a foreign country, speaking a familiar language that fit him like a second skin without ever being intimately his...” (285). Arun’s predicament highlights the sociocultural tensions faced by non-Western intellectuals in general and Indian ones in particular, as they navigate the dichotomy between tradition and modernity. Arun’s journey from the comfort of traditional values to the disorientation of modernity and back to the quest for spiritual solace in Tibet exemplifies the plight of the postcolonial population caught between these two worlds and a desire to reconnect with a more straightforward, harmonious way of life of the premodern era that stands in stark contrast to the relentless demands of modernity. The serene environs of the Tibetan gompa allow Arun to contemplate the sense of liberation

one achieves by relinquishing modern self-promotion and by reconnecting with the spiritual traditions that once grounded him. Heesterman's insights are pivotal in understanding Arun's journey as he grapples with the erosion of traditional values under the onslaught of alien modernity. His eventual retreat to Tibet signifies a profound critique of modernity's inability to fulfill the deeper spiritual and cultural needs that tradition once met.

Moreover, Aseem, with his modernist sensibility, appropriates from V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* (1989) the notion that one must "trample on the past" to gain a worthwhile existence (131). Reinhart Koselleck asserts that the modernist temporality characterizing the past two to three centuries is defined by the "continual reproduction of the new and different" (Fritzsche 1589). During the early modern era, contemporaries perceived the present and past as interconnected within a shared historical continuum, often invoking classical exemplars to address contemporary dilemmas. The politics of this period, although diverse, operated within a relatively stable framework of institutional and economic constants, rendering history relatively static and predictable. The French Revolution, however, upended these entrenched notions of continuity of the present with its past. This upheaval fragmented the legitimacy of historical experience, severing the present from the past and fundamentally altering perceptions of historical time (Fritzsche 1589–90). Aseem's appropriation of Naipaul's credo, however, as Arun too realizes, is fraught with irony. Aseem echoes the aspirations of Indar in Naipaul's novel, who initially harbors the hope that he can integrate himself into an alien world and emerge as a global citizen. Yet, Indar's narrative arc is one of ultimate failure in his endeavor to attain a cosmopolitan status. Indar's experience is a testament to the inherent difficulties of constructing a coherent identity amidst the disjointed and transitional realities of the globalized world and the disillusionment that results therefrom. His ultimate failure highlights the futility of attempting to completely divorce oneself from the past and the perils of such a disconnection. Instead of achieving a liberated, global identity, Indar is left grappling with a profound sense of loss and fragmentation. Aseem quotes Indar's initial sentiment and not his ultimate realization. Arun and, later to some extent, Aseem too realized that espousing this radical sentiment meets a tragic end. This realization serves as a critical commentary on the dangers of disregarding the past, underscoring that identity cannot be constructed in a vacuum devoid of historical and cultural context. By eschewing the corrective mechanisms inherent in communal discourse and intergenerational dialogue, we exacerbate the potential for ethical and ontological malaise. To efface these interpellations in favour of a romanticized vision of untrammelled agency, a vision courted by the Western concept of the modern, is to court the specter of solipsism and ethical nihilism—a realization crystallized in the poignant imagery of awakening with horror to the disfigured semblance of the self: "our self-awareness would narrow, the distortions in our characters would go unnoticed, until the day we awaken with horror to the people we had become" (4).

Arun's journey in *Run and Hide* underscores a profound critique of the notion that modernity can be attained solely by emulating Western paradigms. For Arun, and indeed for many societies grappling with the pressures of globalization, true fulfilment and a sense of progress are

not achieved by mimicking the West but by developing an indigenous form of modernity that matures from a nation's own unique historical processes, cultural heritage, and traditions. This perspective is reinforced by Sanjay Subrahmanyam's assertion that "[m]odernity is historically a global and conjunctural phenomenon, not a virus that spreads from one place to another. It is located in a series of historical processes that brought hitherto relatively isolated societies into contact, and we must seek its roots in diverse set of phenomenon" (99–100). Arun's yearning for rootedness and continuity with his familial and religious past presents a compelling counter-discourse to the dominant narrative that to be modern, one must abandon one's traditions. This view challenges the underlying assumption of Western modernity that progress necessitates a break from the past. Instead, Mishra suggests that the historical processes and traditions of a nation are not impediments to modernity but foundational elements that shape a nation's authentic modern identity. In critiquing the wholesale adoption of Western modernity, Mishra's delineation aligns with Subrahmanyam's notion that modernity is historically a product of global interactions and that the imitative modernity leads to a superficial and often dissonant societal structure, where the imposition of foreign ideals disrupts the intrinsic cultural and spiritual fabric of the society. Arun's disillusionment with the Western model of progress, symbolized by his experiences in London and his relationship with Alia, underscores the existential void and cultural alienation that can result from such an approach. This approach not only preserves the cultural integrity and continuity of a nation but also enriches the global tapestry of modernity, highlighting the importance of pluralism and the multiplicity of paths to progress.

In non-Western contexts, particularly in the case of India, the binary opposition between 'tradition/religiosity' and 'modernity'—a dichotomy promulgated by the Western conceptualization of the modern—loses its cogency. Western modernity, as a construct emerging from the European Enlightenment, is predicated upon the assumptions of rationality and individual autonomy. But these features do not necessarily resonate with or adequately address the collective and spiritual dimensions that are integral to many non-Western cultures. In the context of a nation like India, the concept of modernity extends beyond the mere adoption of a "post-traditional order" (Giddens 2), as elucidated in existing Western paradigms. Rather, it encompasses a nuanced interplay of divergent ideologies, including the indigenous notions of local rootedness, religious/spiritual underpinnings, and a collective adherence to tradition. As Makarand Paranjape rightly observes, "Indian modernity is janus-faced, even schizophrenic. On the one hand it looks to the West and to the future, but on the other hand, it looks to India and its past... [India has] neither pure tradition, nor uncontaminated modernity" (Paranjape). Any attempt to 'arrive' at Western modernity forsaking the "culturally-rooted aspects of one's history" results in psychological traumas which Arun faces (Freeman 298). Although Giddens in his *Living in a Post-Traditional Society* believed that traditions are "unthinking rituals, necessary to the cohesion of simpler societies... [and] will not work [in the modern day]" he himself points out in his Reith Lecture that such an observation was simply the "creation of the Enlightenment and its hostility to tradition and thus represents a 'shadow side of modernity', modernity defining

its Others vis-à-vis itself” (Walliss 84). Therefore Arun’s journey and realization there presents an alternative idea of the modern and counters the idea of the universal applicability of Western modernity. Though it apparently seems that Western modernity was “destined to lead and save the rest of the world from the Devil, from barbarism and primitivism, from underdevelopment and despotism, and to turn unhappiness into happiness or all and forever,” it is actually not so. In a world dominated by Western modernity, that scornfully looks at these ideas, in a world where “the irrepressibly glamorous god of materialism has superseded the religions and cultures of the past in the life and thought of most non-Western peoples, most profoundly among their educated classes” (Mishra *Age of Anger*, ch. 2) Arun can only be stifled and suffocated in this modern world while at the same time looking back and yearn for the lost world when religion, tradition, continuity with past did held a significant sway. He is horrified to think

...what we would be like, when we were in our seventies and eighties, when meaning leaks away from sex, beauty, art, family and nation; when we grow dull, old and sour, tormenting and boring everyone around us, with no connection to our long religious past, and no future to look forward to. (140–141)

Arif Dirlik observes that the termination of this binary between tradition and modernity aid the recognition of the temporal co-presence of all those who inhabit the world, accepting the interlacing nature of modernity within traditions and traditions within modernity, thereby reanalyzing what is perceived as ‘backward’ as an inherent element of the modern (156). In the process, Dirlik confronts the linear, hierarchical model of progress that positions Western modernity as the pinnacle of human development and views other cultural frameworks as remnants of a bygone era. Dirlik’s perspective and also Mishra’s novel, which foregrounds the importance of tradition and religion in this modern world, therefore dismantles the simplistic dichotomy that relegates traditional societies to a lower rung on the ladder of civilization. It reveals the complexity and dynamism inherent in all cultures, emphasizing that modernity is not a monolithic construct but a multifaceted phenomenon enriched by diverse cultural inputs.

Run and Hide lingers in the ruins of that modernity, staging a quiet, wounded search for a fragile “otherwise”—an uncommodified selfhood, a masculinity unhooked from conquest, an occupation unscripted by the global definition of profit. Mishra deftly employs Arun’s experiences to challenge the hegemonic ideals propagated by Western modernity, revealing a nuanced critique of its fundamental premises. Western modernity, with its emphasis on relentless progression, rationality, and individualism, often invalidates the enduring value of tradition, spirituality, and community. The splendour of metropolitan life, marked by its ceaseless flux and impersonal communication, fails to provide Arun with the deep-seated contentment and stability he craves. His journey back to the silence of a Tibetan monastery signifies a rejection of the external world’s chaos and a return to the insular solace he finds in places like Deoli and Ranipur. This retreat, viewed with consternation by characters like Alia and Aseem, who

equate insularity with stagnation, can be seen as an “act of atonement” (Achebe 67) on the part of Arun and a resistance against the Western colonial erasure of non-Western history. Placed within the continuum of Indian English fiction, *Run and Hide* may be read as both an echo and a divergence from the imaginative terrains mapped by R. K. Narayan and Aravind Adiga. If Narayan’s mid-twentieth-century Malgudi novels register the early stirrings of modernity’s quiet encroachments and Adiga’s *The White Tiger* confronts its full-blown neoliberal excess, Mishra’s novel dwells in the melancholic afterlife of this modern project—charting the psychic wreckage and moral disorientation it leaves behind. R. K. Narayan’s fiction, especially *Swami and Friends*, *The Bachelor of Arts*, or *The English Teacher*—represents a narrative world in which colonial modernity is an undeniable presence yet not an omnipotent totality.

Malgudi’s inhabitants navigate the bureaucratic machinery of British India, the discipline of English schooling, and the small humiliations and tentative freedoms of an incipient middle class. Yet these negotiations unfold within an enduring local moral world of kinship, religious custom, and everyday smallness that refuse to be entirely devoured by modernity’s abstractions. Narayan’s characters, while occasionally seduced or bemused by the new, rarely enact the aggressive, performative self-fashioning that modern neoliberalism demands. Instead, their troubles and minor rebellions often illustrate what Dipesh Chakrabarty calls the “alternative, multiple, and vernacular modernities” (665) where multiple temporalities—sacred, kinship-based, communitarian—coexist with the colonial clock of rational modernity. *Run and Hide* signals the collapse of that fragile coexistence. Mishra’s narrator mourns how India’s encounter with global capitalism, Anglocentrism, and technological acceleration has severed these continuities. Arun’s longing for Ranipur’s timeless spiritual rhythms—his mother’s prayers, his retreat to a Buddhist landscape—registers a desperate attempt to recover the kind of rootedness that Narayan’s India still afforded its middle-class youth. However, Mishra’s narrative acknowledges that this recovery is neither guaranteed nor unproblematic; it is always shadowed by belatedness, as Naipaul calls it, a “wounded civilization” haunted by its partial mimicry of the West.

In sharp counterpoint stands Aravind Adiga’s *The White Tiger*, which exposes how India’s entanglement with neoliberal modernity produces an altogether more ferocious figure: Balram Halwai, the cunning, self-fashioned entrepreneur who embraces moral ruthlessness as a survival strategy. Where Narayan’s world still holds the village teacher, the mother’s shrine, or the harmless local gossip as gentle correctives to unbridled modern ambition, Adiga’s protagonist embodies modernity’s rawest promise: that the ‘Rooster Coop’ can be broken only through radical betrayal and hyper-masculine assertion. Balram’s narrative voice is jagged, irreverent, brash — the rhetoric of a man who internalizes the global logic that equates mobility with aggression and sees human ties as expendable obstacles. In this, Balram stands closer to Mishra’s Aseem: both emerge from India’s hinterlands, both eager to inhabit the cosmopolitan corridors that modernity opens for them, both performing an urban masculinity that signals their distance from provincial constraints. Yet Mishra’s fiction turns sharply away from the bleak triumph that *The White Tiger* celebrates. Arun—unlike Balram or Aseem—chooses not to instrumentalize his

marginality as a weapon for ruthless advancement. Where Balram narrates a success story that devours kinship, loyalty, and moral restraint, Arun narrates a retreat: a refusal to convert intimacy, education, or sexuality into commodities for self-promotion. In this sense, *Run and Hide* performs an inward turn that resembles Narayan's affective landscapes more than Adiga's. But crucially, Mishra's novel is not an elegy for a bygone moral wholeness alone—it is an inquiry into whether any space of ethical refusal can survive within modernity's totalizing structures. His insularity is not an escapist retreat but a reaffirmation of values that provide a stable anchor in a modern world perpetually in flux. The critical essence of Mishra's narrative lies in its articulation of an alternative modernity, one that does not adhere to the totalizing narrative of Western enlightenment ideals. Instead, it advocates for a form of progress that is inherently rooted in cultural continuity and spiritual depth. Even those initially captivated by the allure of Western modernity, such as Aseem, ultimately find this enchantment heart-wrenching. Aseem sadly observes: "Life was simpler and richer. I am homesick for that simplicity. Life is too full of distractions and anxiety now. The world is too much with us, as the poet said" (209). Arun's story highlights the importance of incorporating these dimensions into our understanding of modernity, thereby challenging the dominant discourse that often marginalizes and devalues non-Western perspectives. *Run and Hide* transcends a mere personal narrative of loss and longing, positioning itself as a profound critique of Western modernity that "interrupt, transgress, and fissure or crack modernity/coloniality's matrices of power, and make evident concrete instances and possibilities of the otherwise" (Walsh 20). By privileging roots, traditions, and religiosity over the paradigms of progress and rationality, Mishra's text effectively engages in the process with "de-westernization" putting the dominant, western-centric epistemologies in parentheses (Mignolo, *The Darker Side* 73). Arun takes up the "decolonial option" through his "definitive rejection of 'being told,' from the epistemic privileges of the zero point, what 'we' are, what our ranking is in relation to the ideal of humanitas, and what we have to do to be recognized as such" (121).

Run and Hide emerges as a decolonial critique of Western modernity, accentuating the inherent value of non-Western sensibilities. In stark contrast to the hegemony of Eurocentric modernity we have "our modernity" (Chatterjee 263) and Arun's quest epitomizes an alternative condition of being, one that is modern but not Western, which provides a captivating arraignment of the homogenizing tendencies of Western modernity and, at the same time, urges for a more pluralistic and empathetic approach towards navigating the complexities of contemporary existence. Arun has "cherished as valuable elements of our modernity [those ideas], others do not consider to be modern at all" (263). The novel challenges the binary dichotomy of tradition versus modernity, advocating instead for a holistic understanding that recognizes the coexistence and interdependence of both. Arun's retreat from the cosmopolitan chaos into the sanctuary of his cultural heritage exemplifies a decolonial stance that privileges rootedness and continuity over the relentless pursuit of progress defined by Western paradigms. In doing so, *Run and Hide* not only questions the universal applicability of Western modernity but also

validates the diverse, intricate pathways through which different societies navigate the modern world. Arun's decoloniality validates the idea that the concept of modernity is a "contextually located" idea. Mishra's narrative is a potent reminder that pluralism is the current that carries modernity beyond narrow shores, allowing diverse cultural experiences and perspectives to flow together into a vast, living sea of human development.

Works Cited

- Achebe, Chinua. "Named for Victoria, Queen of England." *Imperialism in the Modern World: Sources and Interpretations*, edited by W.D. Bowman, F. M. Chiteji, and J. M. Greene, Routledge, 2016, pp. 165–68.
- Andrews, Molly. "Counter-Narratives and the Power to Oppose." *Considering Counter-Narratives: Narrating, Resisting, Making Sense*, edited by Michael Bamberg and Molly Andrews, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004, pp. 1–9.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "The Muddle of Modernity." *The American Historical Review*, vol. 116, no. 3 2011, pp. 663–675. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23308220> Accessed 17th June 2025.
- Chatterjee, Partha. *A Possible India: Essays in Political Criticism*. Oxford UP, 1998.
- Curtis, Debra. "Commodities and Sexual Subjectivities: A Look at Capitalism and Its Desires." *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2004, pp. 95–121.
- Dirlik, Arif. "Modernity in Question? Culture and Religion in an Age of Global Modernity." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2003, pp. 147–68. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.3138/diaspora.12.2.147. Accessed 8 June 2024.
- Freeman, M. "Charting the Narrative Unconscious: Cultural Memory and the Challenge of Autobiography." *Considering Counter-Narratives: Narrating, Resisting, Making Sense*, edited by Michael Bamberg and Molly Andrews, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004, pp. 289–306.
- Fritzsche, Peter. "Specters of History: On Nostalgia, Exile, and Modernity." *The American Historical Review*, vol. 106, no. 5, 2001, pp. 1587–618. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2692740. Accessed 21 May 2024.
- Giddens, Anthony. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Polity, 1991.
- Heesterman, Johannes C. "Tradition in Modern India." *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, vol. 119, no. 3, 1963, pp. 237–53. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/27860423. Accessed 21 May 2024.
- Maldonado-Torres, Nelson. *Against War: Views from the Underside of Modernity*. Duke UP, 2008.
- Mignolo, Walter D., and Catherine E. Walsh. *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*. Duke UP, 2018.
- Mignolo, Walter D. *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Duke UP, 2011.
- Mishra, Pankaj. *The Romantics: A Novel*. Penguin Books, 1999.
- . *Temptations of the West: How to Be Modern in India, Pakistan, Tibet and Beyond*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006.

- . *Butter Chicken in Ludhiana: Travels in Small Town India*. Penguin Books, 2013.
- . *Age of Anger: A History of the Present*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2017. E-book.
- . *Run and Hide*. Juggernaut, 2022.
- Naipaul, V. S. *A Bend in the River*. Picador, 1979.
- Nandy, Ashis, and Ramim Jahanbegloo. *Talking Back: Ashis Nandy in Conversation with Ramim Jahanbegloo*. Oxford UP, 2006.
- Nandy, Ashis. *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*. Oxford UP, 1983.
- Paranjape, Makarand. "Torn Between Tradition and Modernity." *Swarajya*, swarajyamag.com/magazine/torn-between-tradition-and-modernity. Accessed 8 June 2024.
- Srivastava, Sanjay. *Passionate Modernity: Sexuality, Class and Consumption in India*. Routledge, 2007.
- Subrahmanyam, Sanjay. "Hearing Voices: Vignettes of Early Modernity in South Asia, 1400–1750." *Daedalus*, vol. 127, no. 3, 1998, pp. 75–104.
- Walliss, John. "The Problem of Tradition in the Work of Anthony Giddens." *Culture and Religion: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2001, pp. 81–98. *Taylor & Francis Online*, doi:10.1080/01438300108567164. Accessed 6 June 2024.
- Walsh, Catherine, and Edizon León. "Afro-Andean Thought and Diasporic Ancestrality." *Shifting the Geography of Reason: Gender, Science and Religion*, edited by Marina Paola Banchetti-Robino and Clevis Ronald Healey, Cambridge Scholars Press, 2005, pp. 211–24.

* * *

Madhurima Nayak is an Assistant Professor of English in the Department of Liberal Arts, School of Liberal Arts and Behavioral Sciences, Chandigarh University, Unnao, Uttar Pradesh. She holds a Ph.D. in English from Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India. She has presented papers at numerous national and international conferences, and her works have been published in journals such as *Journal of Dharma Studies* (Springer), *Public Humanities* (Cambridge University Press) and *Journal of Global Postcolonial Studies* (University of Florida Press), *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* (Taylor and Francis), and *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics*. Her forthcoming research paper and book chapter have been accepted for publication in *Archiv Orientální* and by Bloomsbury Publishing, respectively. Her research interests include Postcolonial Studies, Indian Writing in English, Decolonial Studies, Literature and Historiography.