The Possibility of Creating ChIndia:

Envisioning Cooperative Communication among China, India, and the U.S.

in a Post-Colonial and Global Era

(for review for publication in Rhetoric and Public Affairs)

In the summer of 2013, the current state of China-India relations received fanfare in a popular magazine in China called the Beijing Review. The coverage was triggered by Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh, making
a state visit to China to meet with his counterpart, China’s President Xi Jinping, following an earlier visit by Li Keqiang to India in May 2013. Singh’s visit was splashed across the Beijing Review, a weekly magazine equivalent to Time and Newsweek, which hailed Singh’s visit as the harbinger of new “cooperative relations” between the two most populous countries in the world. Such talk of peace is welcome, for the long China-India border has historically been a volatile and often shifting space of tension for these two ancient civilizations.1 To announce the new friendship between China and India, the Beijing Review’s cover page announced “Hand In Hand: Indian PM’s Visit seals enhanced cooperation.” A similar leitmotif of emerging international collaboration over trade was featured in the iconic Indian newspaper The Hindu, which in a recent series articles announced that “India and China have set a target of $100 billion in bilateral trade a year by 2015, which the two ministers (Chinese Foreign Minister and Indian External Affairs Minister) spoke about in their meeting.”2

Historically, the border conflict between the two nation-states can be traced to two contested territories: the Aksai Chin region and the state of Arunachal Pradesh. India and China claim both regions as their own.3 These conflicts were exacerbated by the 1962 border war, when China defeated the underequipped Indian army.4 Under the sign of globalization, the border issue is being revisited with an eye to establishing cooperative economic relations, with both nations turning to their neighbor in part as a means of shoring up markets now threatened by emerging regional economies (such as Vietnam, South Korea, Taiwan, and others) and increased flows of international trade. The idea of a China-India partnership is immensely complicated, however, not only for the historical reasons noted above, but also because of the Chinese annexation of Tibet, which, as Stephen Hartnett argues in Chapter Three of this book can be interpreted both as a form of internal colonialism and as a military gesture meant to intimidate India, which sits astride the China-Tibet border. While these long-standing tensions and emergent hopes between and in China and India are clearly of the utmost relevance and significance to the study of globalization, I am

particularly interested in approaching these nations, and their relationships, from a postcolonial perspective, as China and India embody different post-colonial trajectories (the one communist, the other democratic) that may now be merging into some new form of post-colonial, globalizing, super-capitalist formation.

![Image](image.jpg)

Seen from a postcolonial feminist perspective, the interested and invested rhetoric and practices of cooperation between China and India are characterized by overpowering forms of masculinist and instrumental communication. This is evident in their predominant emphasis on regional security and economic gain without concomitant attention to social justice. However I am also struck by the potential of the rhetoric of cooperation between China and India to serve as an antidote to the siege mentality, an epistemic if you will, that is prevalent in postcolonial studies. I add that the siege mentality in postcolonial studies is itself a symptom of the geopolitical environment from which such inquiry emerged and by which it is constrained in its effort to deliver emancipatory states, namely Western colonialism and imperialism. Therefore attentiveness to the rhetoric of cooperation between China and India can illuminate a path for postcolonial critics to travel in order to transform states of siege marked by practice of confrontational politics to invitational rhetoric on the premise that confrontations such as border incursions and threats are inimical to the global body politic. According to Foss, Domenico, and Foss, “A key feature of invitational rhetoric is that you enter an interaction open to the possibility that your perspective may change.” Simply put, I seek to both deconstruct and unpack the discursive practices of cooperation between China and India in contemporary times to probe the meanings, significance, and future of such cooperation. In the process,

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6. Ibid., 252.
I perform self-reflexive postcolonial criticism so as to turn this conjuncture into one of building and strengthening relationships among nation-states rather than treating it as yet another spatio-temporal site for resistance and opposition to dominant power structures.7

Also the essay combine intertextual and intercontextual criticism in the form of conjunctural analysis. While intertextual criticism can be conceived in poststructuralist terms as the mutual textual constitution of meaning, I take a more robust approach that brings the material divisions of the contemporary world into theorizing activities. Contextual criticism as conjunctural analysis, to extend Grossberg, can animate the deconstruction of meaning production in the intersecting contexts of political siege and siege-laden intellectual critique.8 As Grossberg says “…but I’m more interested in understanding the context in which we live. For me, cultural studies is not about the text, it’s about contexts.”9 He continues “Conjunctures are those contexts, those moments, comprised of multiple contradictions, multiple struggles, and multiple tensions, which are articulated together to create a kind of formation, a unique kind of formation, defined to a large extent by an “organic” crisis. Or, one also could think of conjuncture as a way of looking at the articulations and points of complexity in those contexts and moments.”10 However the envisioning intellectual ought to engage in critical practice in such a way that s/he is not held captive, in a manner of speaking, by the siege states that exist in the contemporary world. Instead intellectual work can be attuned to political rhetoric of the intergovernmental kind such as the rhetoric of cooperation between China and India so as to limit the instrumental motives of such a rhetoric toward a form of cooperation whose means and ends are participation, community formation, and environmental sustainability. Reciprocally the rhetoric of cooperation between India and China can function as a context for reflection about the paths postcolonial criticism has traveled and is yet to travel in order to secure human and environmental sustainability on a global scale.

8. “Interview with Lawrence Grossberg,” Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies 10, no. 1 (2013): 59-97. While I have thus far used context and conjuncture in interchangeable ways, I proceed here via the distinction made by Grossberg that context prima facie can be seen as a surrounding whole that is actually riven by the criss-crossing of discourses and practices that articulate with and contradict each other.
9. Ibid., 73.
10. Ibid., 89.
In current times, the context of globalization is marked by a number of conjunctures including the anti/counter-terrorist machinic containment and unintended production of terrorism and the tense border situation witnessed in the Sino-Indian region that make the task of seeking a sustainable form of cooperation at regional and global levels urgent. In the recent past, the global news milieu has been the site of the exorbitance of siege. Gruesome beheading spectacles, carpet-bombing-like maneuvers in the Ukraine, the containment of the power of the pro-Democracy movement in Hong Kong, and U.S. President Barack Obama’s pronouncements, in his speech delivered to NATO, that the transatlantic nations will be the “hub” of global security raise serious concerns about a global militaristic surveillance state where the only entity that is off the hook for heightened scrutiny is global capitalism and its footsoldiers. While I do not revisit the history and contentious debates about the “oil wars,” the power matrix of counterterrorism and global capitalism is producing a state of global siege that works by turning regional and local spaces into hyper-surveilled zones of rampant consumerism. In short, the regional space of China and India is rapidly becoming places of and for a secure capitalism with scant attention to sustainability conceived in human(e) and ecological terms. Another vexing factor is the shifting alliance among U.S., China, and Pakistan to combat terrorism, that exacerbates tensions with Pakistan’s rival India, and that between U.S., India, and other Asian countries such as Japan to keep China’s power in check which fuels tensions between India and China. Nevertheless I reiterate that the movements towards border-sharing by China and India occasion a postcolonial critical practice that can especially disrupt strategic regional cooperation for “unfettered capitalism,” to borrow a phrase from Hedges, and rearticulate cooperation to securing both a sustainable peace and environment. As such postcolonial criticism can no longer afford to feed off and into the energies of siege. Rather postcolonial criticism ought to turn this “exigency” into the reconstitution of the rhetoric of cooperation as peacemaking and peacekeeping practice.

My writing goal is three-fold. First, to explain the siege state as it has particularly taken hold of postcolonial studies. Second, to map postcolonial criticism onto a rhetorical-discourse analysis of the Beijing Review’s and The Hindu’s coverage of India-China relations. Third, to demonstrate how the rhetoric of cooperation as reported and espoused by the magazine and newspaper can serve as a

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corrective to both the study of this region and postcolonial critique of globalization. I do this by identifying pathways for an alternative writing practice informed by regional dynamics that have hitherto received scant attention in postcolonial studies, symptomatic of a siege epistemic that reduces postcolonialism to a unitary agon. While I endeavor to make these moves in a systematic manner, my political raison d’etre, is to show that both postcolonial criticism and the rhetoric and practices of China-India cooperation can be mutually informative in realizing the goal of irreversible cooperation. To encapsulate, I articulate the academic-activist field of postcolonial criticism and the rhetoric and practice of cooperation between India and China to one another so that postcolonial criticism can make substantial contributions to improving India-China relations just as the latter if done correctly can serve the needs of a postcolonial world.

The siege episteme is a mode of knowing that approaches relationships among individuals, groups, cultures, and nations, as constantly being under duress, always prone to other-and self-destruction, while positing the impossibility of reconciliation between a predominantly binary orientation to conflict and contestation. It is a state where incommensurability, in the manner explicated by Lyotard, colonizes the imagination and domain of material practices particularly relations between nation-states under the dark clouds of despotism, terrorism, and the politics of counterterrorism that seldom offer even a tentative and provisional answer to the question, “When will it be over?”

Despite the de rigeur rhetoric of undoing the binary, the siege epistemic manifests in a state of devastating stasis as a cancerous and toxic separation between “us” and “them” where those occupying the subject-position of “us” and others condemned to the positionality of “them” depend on the subject-position of purveyors and perpetrators of this psychological and political conflict. This episteme underwrites post-metaphysics politically-charged philosophical work, such as Spivak’s enormously influential concept of subalternity and Bhabha’s comparably significant notion of linguistic hybridity, founding concepts in postcolonial inquiry, and the field of postcolonial studies insofar as the latter defers analysis of intergovernmental communication such as negotiation, diplomacy, and partnership building. In short, the rhetoric of international cooperation.

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The concept of subalternity has engendered a vast corpus of criticism on the impossibility of speech by colonial and postcolonial subjects in geopolitical space. The hapless subaltern, whether the sati in colonial times or diasporic woman in postcolonial times, is rendered mute as she is caught up in the opposition between native patriarchy and Western power structures which is echoed by a number of postcolonial critics. The hybrid, whether the English-speaking Indian or the diasporic or globalizing third world subject, is constituted by the power relations between Western and non-Western nations and as such subject to the logics and excesses of this binary. The siege epistemic reduces the ramifications of colonialism in the aftermath to this founding binary between the West and the non-Western world. The siege epistemic impairs an emancipatory practice by reducing geopolitical conflict to the tensions between the West and the non-Western world. The siege mentality also impairs inquiry into the ways in which postcolonial nations seeking to mend border conflicts can negotiate their identities vis-à-vis colonialism in solidarity rather than in isolation of one another. The siege mentality further thwarts attentiveness to the emerging rhetoric and practices of communication among formerly colonized countries, communication that can be significantly strengthened through the realization that their enemity is a function of a siege cartography in colonial and global times. I now turn my attention to the reciprocal ways in which postcolonial criticism and the rhetoric of India-China cooperation can inform and strengthen one another.

The Promise of Regional Cooperation Under Globalization

The Beijing Review web archives contain numerous articles and commentaries on China-India relations. Hence I choose textual exemplars that clearly instantiate the rhetoric of cooperation to the point of using this term innumerable times. These can be direct and tangential accounts. Direct accounts can be found in a 2-part editorial in the print version and in the archives of the Beijing Review. Tangential accounts relate to references to cooperation in the context of BRICS and the reopening of the Silk Road for globalization-spurred regional trade in a global approach to regional economic and political as well as cultural relations and vice versa engendering a form of neo-regionalism. I limit my analysis to coverage between 2012 and 2014 because I have been following this rhetoric


15. Homi Bhabha, The Location of Culture (New York, Routledge 2004).

16. I reviewed articles between 2012 and 2014. However this topic gathered real momentum in 2013 and 2014 due to multiple state visits between the countries.
since relocating to China from the U.S. which has given me a vantage point as a postcolonial feminist critic who seeks to argue against the grain of conventional postcolonial criticism that focuses on U.K.-India relations and putative American neo-colonialism in the aftermath. Similarly I focus my attention on a recent series of articles in *The Hindu* on this relationship.

To these ends, I combine McGee's ideographic analysis with an open coding grounded theory method administered by Corbin and Strauss. McGee explains that the ideograph is a “God” or “Ultimate” term, a term that is part of a “vocabulary of concepts that function as guides, warrants, reasons, or excuses for behavior and belief” from which emanate a number of metaphorical and metonymic connections. Using Corbin and Strauss, I treat the ideograph as a master-category and break it down into macro-categories and micro-categories. I do this so that I can follow the ways in which the ideographic palimpsest of cooperation can be unpacked and reconnected to larger debates that have occurred in postcolonial intellectual discourse, particularly feminism, that complicate this move to cooperation by forewarning us that it could be patriarchal political grandstanding and gesturing in ways that mask the virulent and violent forms of annexation, occupation, displacement, and dispossession that have been witnessed both in China and India in global times. In the present moment, such forms of oppression leading to dispossession include the spread of, to reiterate Hartnett’s analysis, Chinese authoritarian rule in Tibet and globalization-spurred displacements of indigenous tribes and disadvantaged citizens in India. Speaking of the latter, Roy argues that “The Narmada Valley Development Project will displace approximately 1.5 million people from their land in three states (Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh). The environmental costs of such a project, which involves the construction of more than 3,000 large and small dams, are immense (Roy 16).”

I make two interrelated arguments in this section. First the discourse of Cooperation or the big “C” contains an oppositional dualism in the form of the tropes of “cooperation” or little “c” and “lasting peace.”

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19. I am referring to the postcolonial feminist suspicion of discourses of cooperation between nations when in fact the third world woman in particular is relegated to a discursive site of native and foreign patriarchal control.

are antithetical and render it into an uneasy, tenuous, and fraught discursive practice. In a related manner, in the majority of texts that I analyzed, cooperation to ensure border security leading to economic cooperation and lasting peace are treated as a cause-effect phenomenon to the extent that economic cooperation is the predominant meaning of Cooperation. Second, the meaning of Cooperation as lasting peace offers a way to keep the siege mentality in the world and in postcolonial studies in check. My differentiation between these two meanings of Cooperation is based on the differentiation between “negative and positive peace” made in Peace Studies research and activism. 21 Negative peace is absence of physical violence while positive peace is inclusive and lasting. Further Toohey argues that positive peace is distinct, in an ontological sense, from appropriations of peace to engage in structural practices that could perpetuate violence and inequality such as the “corporation of peace and militarization of peace.”

To elaborate upon my first argument, the macrocategory of Cooperation in this context signifies security-related and economically-driven communication as well as a more communitarian-spiritual communication about lasting peace. Seen in terms of establishing regional security and achieving profits, cooperation is narrated as regional security and generation of profits—pre-conditions for possibility for Cooperation as lasting peace. For example, an article in the Beijing Review states “The "Chinese Dragon" and the "Indian Elephant" are stepping up trade and investment engagement to forge a closer development partnership despite their border disputes left over by history.” 22 Another writer observes:

During his visit to India in April 2005, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said that energy cooperation is an indispensable part of the bilateral cooperation between the two countries. The joint declaration issued by the Indian prime minister and China's premier said that both sides agreed to cooperate in energy security and conservation, including encouraging relevant sectors to team up in exploring and developing oil and gas resources in third countries. 23 Another writer observes, “Jiang held that as China and India are respectively a global manufacturer and a major service provider, the mutual complementarity of the two economies provides

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great potential for them to jointly boost cooperation in trade, investment, financial services and new and high technologies.” According to another writer “He (Salman Khurshid, External Affairs Miniser) stressed that there are strong fundamentals that provide a base for the bilateral relationship, which include complementaries between the two economies and imperatives for the two countries to work together in handling global and regional issues of common interests.”

The limitation of such approaches to Cooperation is that they are entangled with siege states currently existing in the world. Mapping an ecologically-informed postcolonial feminist politics to this communication, I hold that such a form of cooperation undercuts itself because Cooperation conceived as the establishment of a global or regional security state and the realization of the profit motive may themselves be driven by and drive siege states in contemporary geopolitical and gaiapolitical space respectively. The fortification of regional security, as laudable as it is, intersects with the siege state of counterterrorist discourses and operations with its downward spiral of targeting perpetrators and retaliatory acts both of which entail acts of violence, albeit for different ends, perpetuating a binary between the Western and non-Western World. While the abeyance of acts of large-scale mass terrorism in countries like the U.S. and countries in Europe post September 11th speaks admirably to the efficacy of counterterrorist operations, cooperation to counter terrorism and strengthen security is different from communicating to achieve positive peace—lasting peace, an ethos of inclusive and participatory forms of communication and community formation.

Similarly, cooperation to achieve economic prosperity in its overemphasis on exploitation of resources for job generation and consumption can engender environmental devastation of this region. The conceptualization of space as places for economic activity and their destructive impact on the environment has been the subject of an incisive collections of essays. Speaking of this body of work, Goggin says that, “In focusing on regional


environmental issues, this collection offers a corrective to what appears an increasingly hegemonic discourse of globalization that conceives of the world as flattened.\textsuperscript{27} One of the essays makes a signal contribution by equating environmental destruction with colonialism.\textsuperscript{28} I extend this conceptualization in the direction of economic cooperation between China and India to argue that cooperation conceived in such terms runs the risk of a neo-colonialist usurpation of this regional space. In other words, if Cooperation is conceived predominantly in these terms as security and economically-driven cooperation, as it is now, it becomes entangled with the siege politics of the terrorism/counter-terrorism apparatus as well as material incursions into the environment which shows siege in this sense as being real, the planet under utilitarian siege. The masculinist dimensions of this discourse of Cooperation are only too obvious when we understand not only the agents of such communication as predominantly male leaders but the constitution of citizens in these countries as others in need of protection and upliftment by male leaders and a masculinist establishment. This is evident in the following excerpt in the magazine that dovetails the larger issues within which this magazine has been coded:

\textit{The Hindu} newspaper mediates between these two meanings with the micro-category of “trade talk” or economic cooperation.\textsuperscript{30} According to a headlining article in \textit{The Hindu}, “Trade and investment drove the first India-China talks under the new government as the meeting between visiting Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj stretched past three hours.”\textsuperscript{31} Economic cooperation underwrites Cooperation which still borders on the siege paradigm because global economic issues are fraught with anxiety and

\textsuperscript{27} ibid., 2.
\textsuperscript{29} Editor, “A Common Responsibility,” \textit{Beijing Review}, September 2013
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 1.
baleful competetiveness that have the potential to overwhelm an ethos of inclusion, supplanting it with the sum total of economic “rationality,” self-interest, and gain.

So even though the word cooperation is invoked, it is tied to larger concerns over instability and violence in the region rather than peaceful concerns *sui generis*. Based on *The Hindu* report, I observe that even the recently elected prime minister of India Narendra Modi appears to vacillate between a let us “emulate” China for “skills, scale, and speed.” and “lets' compete.” So the rhetoric of cooperation predominantly conceived as security and economic cooperation is a mask for a masculinist instrumental desire for secure profit generation, understood as the paradox of competition-to-cooperate, which can itself be implicated in a siege mentality.

On a more heartening note, lasting peace signifies the leitmotifs of trust, mutuality, non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs and interest in peace in the region. While cooperative rhetoric played out in economic terms is still mired in a siege epistemic, the lasting peace trope calls up and conjures a universe of symbolisms that “border” on the possibilities of pacifism on the other side of the Pacific ocean and on the side of the Indian ocean. The only exception to this is non-interference in each other's internal affairs which seeks to preserve some sort of nation-state autonomy in governing issues and constituencies, an autonomy that can run the risk of doubling as perpetuation of social injustices. The idea of global or cosmopolitan citizenship complicates such a posture of non-interference by opening up a space for environmentalists and feminists among other groups of activists in this region to form tactical alliances across each other's borders in order to avert the brewing environmental cataclysm in this region as well as ensure gender equality in a global economy. According to Stevenson, “problems such as HIV, ecological questions and poverty are increasingly globally shared problems.” Such alliances can only be formed by tapping into translocal communal energies and social movements especially in an era of social media.

The editorial in the *Beijing Review*, which I alluded to earlier, celebrates the steps taken by the Chinese and Indian governments toward establishing peaceful relations in the place of sworn enmity. The editorial titled “Partners, Not Foes” opines that:

32. Ibid., 1.

Sino-Indian relations have undergone twists and turns. Owing to similar past experience and a shared goal of national rejuvenation, the two countries remained friendly neighbors during the 1950s. Back then, *Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai, which literally means ‘India and China are brothers,*’ proved a popular slogan. After the 1962 border war, however, bilateral ties reached their lowest point, with hostilities and distrust lingering for decades...Times have changed. While vigorously pursuing development at home, China and India have formed a strategic partnership. Now both nations not only live in peace, but have benefited enormously from their bond...As the world's most important emerging economies, they now share identical or similar stands on a wide range of global and regional issues. Closer ties between China and India will surely help fulfill the common goal of rejuvenating the two ancient Asian neighbors.34

The editorial concludes with an exhortation to move away from volatile confrontations towards a more progressive discourse about partnership building that is of “best interest(s)” to the countries and the world. Such a refreshing emphasis on revitalizing erstwhile peaceful relations as neighbors ought not to fall on deaf ears despite the Utopian and hyperbolic praise for the two countries. This shows the maneuvering of “face proving”, to critically extend Ting-Toomey and Gudykunst's groundbreaking research on face saving, by India and China as they seek to overcome mutual suspicion by adopting a posture of mutual trust so as to reciprocally demonstrate their commitment to and belief that India-China Cooperation can be in the best interests of regional and global peace.35 Thus in its nuances and tonality, the rhetoric of Cooperation that is effectively produced through the signifier of lasting peace is a rhetorical step in the direction towards a Gandhian ethos.36 While resisting the totalizing impulse to debunk and reject the equation of prosperity and peace, I assert that the ideographic resonance of Cooperation as lasting peace can be progressively distanced from economic prosperity as its pre-condition by also embracing other figures of a spiritual way of life such as the Dalai Lama and Lao Tzu whose anti-materialist and non-action spiritual doctrines respectively speak to a more sustainable peace both internally and environmentally-speaking.37 While much of extant postcolonial criticism has elided discussions of spirituality because of the dangers of religious


37. The teachings of such spiritual figures have been inculcated in me.
fundamentalism especially in the Indian sub-continent, this writer has made it central to investigations of postcoloniality as the space and time of healing from trauma.\(^{38}\)

Retracing my reading of Cooperation as lasting peace, its import is best summed up in the following excerpt:

India was one of the earliest countries to start friendly communications with China. Back in the Eastern Han Dynasty some 2,000 years ago, Indian merchants arrived in the capital of Luoyang to do business. Buddhist thought, brought from India by Chinese monk and traveler Xuan Zang who went there seeking Buddhist scriptures during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), has had a profound influence upon the Chinese. The classic novel Journey to the West draws on Xuan Zang’s experiences, and has given a positive impression of India to the Chinese people...As such, China and India have similar histories. Both countries fostered ancient civilizations, now thousands of years old; both have suffered the invasions of colonial countries, and went down long paths seeking national independence and strength; and finally, both countries are now embarking on a journey of national renewal. As a result, people in both countries have a deeper understanding of and higher aspirations for peace. Thus, their processes of renewal are preconditioned on peace and progress.\(^{39}\)

In closing, I want to point to some ways to bolster and buttress the rhetoric and practice of Cooperation by China and India from a postcolonial feminist standpoint so as to not give into the intellectual malaise of throwing the


baby out with the bathwater. The rhetoric of Cooperation such as that being expressed by China and India has multiple meanings including security-related and economic cooperation and lasting peace that taken together produce a truncated narrative of colonial invasion without adequately drawing out the implications of China and India as postcolonial subjects whose discrete experiences of colonialism intersect as contemporary border conflicts. While this is admirable in the sense of keeping confrontation in suspension, it seems Cooperation in this context has to be a sequential discourse of understanding the precipitating factors for such a conflict before prescribing ways to ameliorate the conflict. One way is for both governments to fold a nuanced and phasic postcolonial sensibility into their self-realization as agents of Cooperative communication, a realization that currently evacuates the complex history of colonialism and war in this region, that have fuelled the border conflict, from their narration of it as having started in 1962.\footnote{40} Simply put, both governments need to come to terms with colonialism in a “difficult” dialogue with the Western and non-Western colonialism of these countries.\footnote{41} Therefore the rhetoric and practices of Cooperation by China and India need to become global by critically engaging both colonialism and potential and actual encroachments of globalization while identifying with each other as postcolonial subjects in a tense climate of counterterrorism coalition building. Only then can siege-like states be contained and averted in the future as capitalism and counterterrorism institutions seek to gain a tentacular hold on the destiny of the globe construed in anthropocentric and environmental ways. In a similar vein both governments need to keep their authoritarian tendencies in check or rather they need to be kept in check, a task that is more likely achievable in India than China given the former country’s approximation of a democratic way of life. Also both governments need to reexamine their complicity in reproducing a utilitarian and instrumental approach to political governance in the name of Cooperation. Short of such a check and reexamination, their “partnership” will be cosmetic as the desire to arrogate territory and amass wealth at the expense of equality and ecological longevity turns Cooperation into yet another empty signifier. The uneasy juxtaposition of economic and security-related cooperation and lasting peace is discernible in this ominous excerpt:

\footnote{40}{I elaborate upon this argument in the next section where I discuss the MacMahon Line.}

\footnote{41}{Gregory Jay at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee used “difficult dialogue” as a portmanteau for conversations about past oppression in the present between inheritors of such tragic legacies.}
Sino-Indian economic ties and border conflicts have grown simultaneously in recent years, prompting both sides to make managing tensions a priority. During Chinese Premier Li Keqiang’s visit to India in May last year, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh very directly stated, “The basis for continued growth and expansion of our ties [with China] is peace and tranquility on our borders” (*The Times of India*, May 21, 2013).

This demonstrates that the movements toward cooperation between India and China hailed in a florid style in the *Beijing Review* and in excited tones in *The Hindu* is in no way linear and secure, evident in the realistic admission of their relationship as one of “managing” rather than “resolving” border tensions. Such a disturbance reveals a rhetorical weakness which is communicating without establishing, to draw from Burke, common ground as postcolonial subjects. Cooperation has to be strengthened by prioritization of achievement of lasting peace as much as if not over economic cooperation. In a Deleuzian sense, the materiality of Cooperation can be construed as a becoming rather than a being state where conflict and confrontation along a spectrum of moderate to severe in its gravity ought not to taint the peacekeeping process. To define peace as the absence of conflict and violence or negative peace runs into a destructive deconstructive spiral in both semantic and material senses where peace can only be construed in opposition to conflict which seems antithetical to being peaceful. Therefore one has to approach the peaceful body from, at the very least, a phenomenological perspective as bodies-in-space-over-time which returns me to Buddhism and ascetic forms of Hinduism in this region that exist in tandem within a religious polyglossia. Such a non-conflictual peaceful state is what Gandhi can be said to have achieved when he was engaged in activities such as spinning the *chakra* or wheel for producing homespun cloth or retrieving salt from the Indian ocean as he strove for autonomy in both a political and personal sense.


Towards a Post-Nationalist Postcolonial Practice

Just as postcolonial criticism can and ought to shed light on the limitations and potential of Cooperative relations between India and China, the symbolic universe and accompanying practices of Cooperation particularly as lasting peace can be an effective site of intervention into the siege mentality in the academic scrutiny of China-India relations and postcolonial critiques of globalization. I ironically begin with a minor contribution to the extant literature on the state of China-India relations in the social sciences and humanities, that aggregate as international relations studies, as a criticism of the siege mentality that is prevalent across these studies. I use this critique to segue into the central focus of this section which is a critical engagement with postcolonial criticism as it pertains to the study of globalization. I argue that a productive extension of these interrelated lines of inquiry, can come about through a leavened approach to China-India relations that takes into consideration the spatio-temporality of ancient, colonial, postcolonial, and global aspects of their interconnectedness and rupture.

The siege mentality characterizes several significant studies of the future of China-India relations compiled in a special issue devoted to studying these relations within the axiomatics of competition or complementarity. Closer examination of the articles demonstrates the predominance of what I have earlier referred to as a siege mentality among researchers. Huang warns that the view of the relations between the countries as one of complementarity is a myth. According to Huang:

> It is now a part of conventional wisdom that both China and India are emerging economic, political and even military powers in the 21st century. Terms such as “BRIC” and “Chindia,” and phrases such as “not China or India, but China and India” have entered popular discourse and policy discussions. Such terms imply a synergistic relationship between China and India—an implication that belies the tension that has characterized Sino-Indian relations for centuries. My view is less sanguine than many others’ about the prospects of their relations. Relations between the two countries will be fraught with difficulties and will likely remain fragile. 44

In similar vein, Sikri echoes this sense of unease observing that “In recent years, China’s military buildup and infrastructure development in Tibet, as well as reported plans to divert or dam rivers that rise in Tibet and flow into India, have raised India’s anxieties. Conversely, China’s insecurity about Tibet is an important driver of its approach toward India. India has been unable to assuage China’s fears about its possible use of the presence of the Dalai Lama

in India and its large Tibetan refugee population of about 120,000 to create trouble for China in Tibet… India-China relations are unlikely to be on an even keel until this tangled knot is unraveled.”45 Frankel is more ominous arguing that:

Submerged tensions between India and China have pushed to the surface, revealing a deep and wide strategic rivalry over several security-related issues in the Asia-Pacific area. The U.S.-India nuclear deal and regular joint naval exercises informed Beijing’s assessment that U.S.-India friendship was aimed at containing China’s rise. China’s more aggressive claims to the disputed northern border—a new challenge to India’s sovereignty over Kashmir—and the entry of Chinese troops and construction workers in the disputed Gilgit-Baltistan region escalated the conflict.46

A related approach to relations between the countries as lurking in the morass of a geopolitical and nationalist rhetoric of contention is evident in other research on this topic. Even though Raghavan primarily attempts to defend civilian involvement in military affairs in India as a corrective to an erroneous reading of the “China crisis,” the rhetoric of rivalry between the countries overshadows his defense of an internal struggle in India.47 Singh offers a trenchant critique of U.S. media (mis)representations of India’s neutrality during the Cold War that took the form of a gesture of friendship toward China.48 Nevertheless this nuanced reading of affinity is undercut by a focus on the hawkish tendencies of American Cold War policy and communication that relegates the friendship to the shadow of siege by suggesting that such a friendship is doomed to be hijacked by superpower interests. What I am saying is that at both political and rhetorical levels, inquiry into China-India relations expresses a sober even somber tone and attitude. While such a skepticism may be well-founded, what I am saying about the need to revisit these relations across a broad swath of time is interestingly a response to a provocative argument made by Swaran Singh rather than some naïve romanticization of complementarity. According to Singh, “Their


relationship continues to be examined in simplistic dichotomies of competition or cooperation, rivals or partners, friends or foes, etc., ignoring the complex nature of their evolution and interactions.49 This essay is then a modest endeavor to undertake the daunting task of complicating their relationship from both standpoints of the intrinsic value of such a revisionist reading for apolitical scholarship on their relations and the transformative energies that can be gained by politically-engaged intellectual work such as postcolonial criticism.

The siege mentality in postcolonial criticism can be tempered by construing globalization as parallel trajectories in countries in the Asian continent that could benefit from making regional interconnections at the practical level while animating the study of and following such interconnectedness at an analytical level. As McPhail effectively demonstrates, “In the last two decades or so, media in Asia, especially in China, Japan, India, and South Korea have become more and more globalized. Both imports and exports of cultural products have increased dramatically. Asian countries are experiencing a wave of national media sensations much like the West did decades ago.”50 While neither cross-border regional cooperative relations that enable such exchanges nor the specific modalities, textual transmissions, and viewer/user effects receive adequate attention, the implication that this region is the site of such relations is worth pursuing in order to put the brakes on the runaway critique of globalization as the sole reassertion of Western imperialism.

To say this is not to discount the usefulness and relevance of “neo-colonialism” as a critical vocabulary that must be thought together with the nascent vernacular of Cooperative globalization. Rather it means a culturally-nuanced and inflected approach to globalization that thinks of new formations of power and new forms of resistance in tandem so that postcolonial studies does not succumb to the condemnation of countries like China and India to hapless victimization by the West; and secondly engages with the emergence of alternate sites of economic, political, and cultural agency as internal transformations in order to strengthen and guide these.

I use the term ChIndia to suggest the imaginative and actual spatial and cultural possibilities that could emerge if India and China work toward mending border relations and communicating about the effects of the global economy, establishing mutual cultural exposure as interchanges and exchanges that are already occurring, and

realizing social justice values by adhering to ethical covenants in a global age. Such spaces have been imagined albeit in an instrumental way by global capitalists as Free Trade Zones or Maquiladoras. I insist on a hybrid term such as ChIndia to refresh critical studies with actual political and economic discourses about cooperation at multiple levels between India and China. ChIndia as both imagination and confluent energy appears not far-fetched as another issue of the Beijing Review features the ideas of peace and mutual development saying “China and India are two of the biggest countries by land mass in Asia...Since 2005, high level exchanges of visits as well as exchanges and cooperation in all areas have been increasingly frequent.”

Also the term has appeared in economic analysis of cooperative business communication between the two countries. Additionally it is the name of a business, a restaurant in the Southern city of Chennai in India. Additionally I gleaned that this term is used to mark the identity of children of mixed Chinese and Indian parentage.

Hence the task of conceptualizing how China and India ought to proceed in the future by engaging with the present ironically returns us to the past. This return and forward movement via the present presents tremendous possibilities for uncovering abundant actual and potential interconnections between the two countries. It is this adventurous task of recovery of the repressed with a view to new discoveries that occupies the attention of the remainder of this essay. I designate this task as epistemic retrieval which is historical, economic, political, cultural, and ecumenical in the sense that it involves embracing the spiritual connections between the two countries.

Writing Postcoloniality into Old Identifications and Identities Anew:

As I have argued, there are several interrelated sets of relational forces that propel, govern, constrain, and energize communication between China and India in the 21st century. The rubrics of precolonial classics, colonial melancholy, and cultural reverberations can capture the economic, political, and cultural tectonic plate shifts occurring in this region. Such an exigetical and writing practice can serve well to shed light on the ways in which such culturally-laden, politically-charged, and aesthetically-imbued intercivilizational discursivity, to draw from

53. Such autoethnographic vignettes are part of a larger inquiry into the topic of China-India cooperation and in keeping with my specialization in ethnographic methods.
54. I gleaned this from a conversation with a colleague at an academic conference.
Pre-Colonial Classics: The civilizational exchanges between India and China present a fascinating tapestry of travelers and texts whose threads are the stuff of a repressed unconscious about intercivilizational relations. For instance, a steward of peaceful exchange between China and India was Xuanzang, born Chen Hui, of the Tang Dynasty. Xuanzang is credited with traveling overland to India on foot for 17 years in order to bring back translated Buddhist sutras to China that maintained fidelity to the Indian texts. Xuanzang was himself a historian of China-India relations and was inspiration for the world renowned novel “Journey to the West” and his travails and triumphs as a spiritual traveler has been documented in the classic Chinese text Great Tang Records in the Western Regions. A similar pre-colonial aspect of China-India relations and communication can be gleaned from the recent discourse about the renewal of interest in the Silk Road in Eurasia. As the editorial in another issue of the Beijing Review states “Last September, when he delivered a speech at the University of Kazahkstan, Chinese President Xi Jinping raised the suggestion that China and Central Asian countries should work together to build the Silk Road Economic Belt.

Even though the article accompanying the editorial focuses on the relations between Central Asia and China, the resurgence of interest in the spatial continuities and legacies of this region could be a harbinger of a similar civilizational reawakening between China and India under globalization. Such a revisiting of the past remains verdant with possibilities for understanding the exchange of religion and commerce between the two countries through this epic roadway through an engagement with dynastic rule as the purveyor of such exchanges. The intertwining of these two civilizations is as vast as it is deep and while an exhaustive and extensive exploration of these relations is not the particular aim of this essay, suffice it to say that such relations have existed in pre-global times and appear to be experiencing a renaissance as the regionalization of the global economy has unintended effects such as a renewed interest in the history of civilization. Also as an elliptical curve, digital images of “Chinese-looking” Indians abound that signal nation-state boundaries as oftentimes genetic gerrymandering as
borders are arbitrarily drawn around genetic pools in nation claiming, bordering on a sinister positive and negative eugenics. In other words, how is that people who resemble Chinese people are Indian citizens is a germane line of inquiry about human migration that can come about by turning our attention to travel and resettling in neighboring territories. To do this is to retell the relationship between China and India not as incommensurable cultures or as others of the West but rather as civilizations that are linked by space, artifacts, and people showing that border-crossing in this region is not the sole outcome of globalization but has been in process for millennia.

McMahon Mayhem as Colonial Melancholy or Vaulting Over the Epistemic Hump: Both China and India share an identity as colonized people even though the kind of colonialism differs along the axes of foreign, in the case of India, and regional, in the case of China. Treating China and India as colonized cultures can yield an understanding of both countries as emerging into modernity and globalization, via the detour of nationalism and cosmopolitanism, as asymptotic unfolding of history. In particular, the McMahon line symbolizes the grand travesty of amnesia over their identities as postcolonial countries because, like the India-Pakistan separating gash, this line was the dominant footprint of colonial redrawing of borders for conquest and consolidation. As an article in the *Beijing Review* states:

> For over 2000 years, the two peoples (Chinese and Indian) have respected this fixed borderline and developed a kind of permeable relationship. However, starting with British colonial rule in South Asia, the British Empire sought to expand the borders of its colony of British India to surrounding countries. British colonists also illegally signed a Simla Accord with China’s Tibetan local government and set the so-called McMahon Line to define the China-India eastern border.  

As the editorial in the *Beijing Review* states “The border between the two countries extends for about 1700 kms. Although the two sides have never officially drawn a boundary line, it was naturally formed to and adhered to by the two sides a long time back. However after India became a colony of the United Kingdom, the British Empire started to expand into along the border.” Their fates also became intertwined during World War II. According to Vestal “With Burma lost, the Americans began to perilously fly all war material “over the hump” of the Himalayas from India to Kunming...The end-game for the United States was to channel significant war supplies from India to China.” Mutual identification as postcolonial subjects can animate a peaceful resolution of the border conflict, now understood as an aftermath of external upheaval rather than some intrinsic tension between the two countries, a tension arising from viewing each other as hermetically-sealed cultures. Such acknowledgment and border-sharing as bridge-building gestures are conducive to and enable “dialogue” about cross-border economics, cultural flows,

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and social justice compacts without the spectral presence of exacerbated frisson, an energy that hinders genuine progress. Such mutual identification can move globalization along as a preservation of fast-becoming extinct indigenous cultures provoking the processes and practices of globalization to become intracontinental regional reterritorialization in ways that offer a buffer against homogenization. More importantly, lasting peace necessitates sharing of knowledge about regional histories, transformations, strategies, and experiences under globalization. The rhetoric of “emergent superpowers” and concomitant practices ought not to fuel fear, resentment, violence, and self-interest on any side of the border. Instead they ought to inspire a retelling of the story of nationhood as the opening up of borders, conceived broadly, while keeping in check the insidiousness of a winner-takes-all win-lose zero-sum game approach that is perpetually caught up in finding culpability for lives gone asunder.

62. Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz has pioneered a virtual intellectual exchange about dialogue in the context of intercultural communication theorizing and practice. Its indispensability to international conflict resolution cannot be overemphasized. centerforinterculturaldialogue.org/tag/wendy-leeds-hurwitz
Cultural Reverberations or “Chollywood” Craze: On a celebratory note, I want to begin the exposition of regional cross-border cultural flows across India and China with an autoethnographic vignette. I decided to attend Diwali celebrations, an Indian festival, at the Indian embassy in Beijing. I was struck by a colleague’s observation that the event was well-attended by as many Indians as Chinese people. Upon closer examination, I was especially struck by the sight of groups of Chinese women and young girls dressed in quintessential traditional Indian costumes. The event, that was packed to overflowing, featured traditional Indian dances in an indoor auditorium that did not even have standing room. Hence it was streamed onto a video monitor outside in the courtyard. I was mesmerized by the dancers who performed Indian dances to corporeal and symbolic perfection down to the hand gestures and head movements. Such an intermingling of cultures was a sight to behold and complicates the notion of hybridity as an uneasy coupling of Western and non-Western culture or for that matter any kind of mediation/interruption of single-axis identities by the West. 63

While such cultural experimentations appear beyond the pale of current cultural critique, they appear to have taken a life of their own. I have also had the opportunity to observe a similar embracing of Indian culture in a popular Indian restaurant in proximity to the campus where I have been teaching since 2012. The restaurant features a Bollywood dancer on weekends. The young Chinese woman who was similarly decked appeared to move to the music as if she had been raised in its cultural milieu. I was also energized and entertained by a student presentation in a class on global communication who charted Bollywood fandom through amusing video clips of older Chinese women approximating Bollywood moves in a public square. Recently I walked into a salon and when the hairdresser recognized me as an Indian, I heard the shrill rhythmic sounds of a Bollywood tune that galvanized the hairdresser to actually sing in Hindi and gyrate to keep the beat.

The gravitational pull exerted by Indian culture as performance and media fare can be attributed to the romantic plot twists of Bollywood among legions of Chinese fans. Bollywood’s hyperimaginative themes have a resonant presence in the imaginations of young Chinese women who are behind this phenomenon gaining traction in China. Gulati says “Bollywood cinema is bringing China a wee bit closer to India. Chinese women in particular are now becoming big fans of Bollywood due to the passionate romance, emotions, and family bonding they show on

63. Homi Bhabha, The Location of Culture.
screen. Gulati also notes that “Last year, official level talks between India and China were held in New Delhi on working out ways to screen more Indian films in China. Information and Broadcasting Minister Manish Tewari held talks with his visiting Chinese counterpart Cai Fuchao.” Similarly China appears to present a mise en scene for Bollywood dramatized in the hit movie Chandni Chowk to China. While being susceptible to reinforcement of an Orientalist perception of China as the fount of martial arts, the movie nevertheless shows a refreshing change in the genre of the Westernization of Indians that currently dominates the industry. As McPhail argues some critics and viewers spurn Bollywood films because of their ostentatious exhibitionism and rampant materialism in the theater of the ludic as they seek to appear fashionable in a constructed and contrived Western way.

I invoke these anecdotal examples to suggest that globalization does not have to equate with the import of popular culture from the West nor does it have to be solely perceived as cultural imperialism in the guise of soft power. Instead attentiveness to such emergent assemblages of culture can enable cultural critics to move away from the compulsion to read off the surface of texts or unabatedly repeat the critique of Western media monopoly and extrapolate to the domain of cultural practices and the dense materiality of cultural intermingling that occurs beneath the radar of predominant forms of globalization. Such cultural performances occasion the need to also treat globalization as the time and space of possibility for lateral exchange. Such cultural experimentations also open up a space for understanding globalization both as the proliferation of cultural practices, a leveling dynamic heterogeneity, and as a time for aesthetic experimentation in ways that treat the porousness of nation-state borders less as an effect of Western commodity and cultural flows and more as a portal for vibrant and lively cultural pastiche. While the argument of cultural synergy has been made, I am insisting on the specificity of the China-India region for expanding our multi-disciplinary consciousness about globalization.

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65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

Sacral Social Justice: Cooperation between China and India over pressing questions about distributive and nondiscriminatory forms of social justice is an uncharted territory. Both countries face challenges of income disparities, illiteracy, and disease, though different problems are magnified to a different degree. Both countries have internal histories of conflict along the axes of religion, ethnicity, and gender. While China is critiqued for suppression of dissension, India receives its fair share for a chaotic cacophony that results from a multiparty democratic system. Both countries have to confront the dangers of environmental devastation as they compete to stay economically afloat. While these problems may seem insurmountable and the culturally- and politically-variant ways of solving them incommensurable, new media technologies appear to offer the promise of creating ChIndia as a virtual space for shared problem-solving. While on-line tools have been harnessed toward designing green spaces, for instance video games such as Energy City and Energyville, it remains an untapped resource for engaging in creative problem-solving of the kind discussed above.68

Both countries have a highly technologically skilled workforce that has been the engine and catalyst for globalization through the outsourcing of jobs.\textsuperscript{69} Both countries have scores of youth who consume vast amounts of social media fare. Researchers have demonstrated that the time spent on social media directly correlates with a social justice consciousness.\textsuperscript{70} It falls to future generations of Chinese and Indians to piggyback social justice onto the structures and resources of globalization. And it remains the responsibility of higher education institutions to take globalization to its logical end which is to eradicate social ills to “flatten the world” so to speak, to modify Thomas Friedman’s global shibboleth, an incomplete project at best at this conjuncture.\textsuperscript{71} This means attaining a global consciousness about the region as more than discrete sites for job generation, material accumulation, cultural imposition, and resistance to the West. It means becoming global about the region in and through globalization rather than evacuating the region out of the global so as to think of the economy, culture, and social justice as inseparable and interrelated, always already intertwined. In short, it means a spiritualism that is suited to the new millennium that draws from the vast reserves of the Chinese notion of harmony or \textit{HeXie} and the Indian notion of infinite interconnectedness which is the telos of \textit{atman} so as to put the brakes on a runaway capitalism. Only thus can the old and new, the West and the rest, and the rest and the rest coexist as a cooperative globe.

In closing, I took a cue from recent political developments between China and India and concomitant media coverage to contribute to extant critical scholarship of globalization prevalent in postcolonial inquiry which is incarcerated by a siege epistemic. I endeavored to demonstrate that as it stands the discursive aspects of Cooperation show such Cooperation as being tenuous at best. I argued the need to articulate Cooperation away from a preoccupation with security-related and economic communication toward lasting peace. Further I argued for mobilizing the symbolic universe of Cooperative communication to complicate globalization as more than the relations between the West and the rest to include considerations of the actual and potential cooperative relations among the rest and the rest. As this essay goes to print I deeply mourn the loss of the great soul, Stuart Hall,


\textsuperscript{70} Qingwen Dong et al, WSCA Pre-Conference paper.

champion of British Cultural Studies and tireless crusader for global social justice. It is my fervent hope that my focus on the rest is about its spiritual attainment.

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