

More than 175,000 Hindustanis (Indo-Surinamese) and non-resident Indians (NRIs) have made the Netherlands their home. In fact, Holland's Indian diaspora is the largest in continental Europe and a significant part of the Indian diaspora worldwide. The diversity of the groups and the complicated relations between Hindustanis and NRIs make the picture of the Indian diaspora in the country a multi-faceted mosaic. Yet, NRIs and Indo-Surinamese are united by their special relationship with the sub-continent.

Double migrants, diversity and diasporas:

A snapshot of the Hindustani and non-resident Indian community in the Netherlands.

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The Indian diaspora has become the subject of considerable academic and practical attention. Scholars speak of a global Indian diaspora or even diasporas (Oonk). In 2000, a high-level committee of the Indian Parliament, led by Dr L.M. Singhvi (former member of parliament and Indian High Commissioner to the UK, 1991-1997), conducted a general survey of people of Indian origin (PIOs) and non-resident Indians (NRIs) having combined these two population groups with Indian links into a single category of the Indian diaspora. While some academics doubt the validity of such a broad category (Markovits), there is arguably much usefulness in it now, as global travel and communication lead to a revival, re-establishment and re-assessment of old links.

Western Europe and North America remain two of the most important migration destinations for Indians and people of Indian origin. In Europe, the United Kingdom has the largest population of South Asians - two million - well over half of whom are Indian. The Indian diaspora in the Netherlands is represented by both PIOs (the Indo-Surinamese) and NRIs. The Netherlands has the second largest population of PIOs on the continent. The majority, approximately 160,000, are Hindustani (Indo-Surinamese), double migrants with Dutch citizenship. The remainder, some 15-20,000, are NRIs who came directly from India and hold Indian passports. (Their loyalty to India is expressed through cultural activities and political lobbying in favour of India). The number of both communities is rising. It is estimated that between two and three thousand Indians in Holland are illegal immigrants. There are also about 20,000 Pakistanis in the Netherlands, who are culturally close to India and share a common history with Indians.

The Lalla Rukh

Holland's Hindustanis are descendents of indentured workers transported to Dutch Guyana (Suriname) from the territory which today forms the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, historically known as Hindustan. The first ship carrying human cargo from India was the Lalla Rukh, and it landed in Suriname on the 5th June 1873, (making 2008 a special year for the Hindustanis in Suriname who celebrate 135 years since their forefathers made the journey to South America). Many Surinamese are familiar with the Lalla Rukh from their history books, but it has also given its name to a foundation for Indo-Surinamese in the Netherlands. Some of my informants claim to be descendents of the first wave of 249 migrants transported on this very ship. The Lalla Rukh was to be followed by seven more ships, and in all about 32,000 East Indians were delivered to Suriname before indentureship

was abolished. Interestingly, while several thousand East Indians returned to India, the family oral history of my informants tells of their forefathers' intention to return to India, but the last ship left for the sub-continent in 1920, and with all hopes of repatriation. However, the 'myth of return' was born.

Suriname gained independence on November 25, 1975. Subsequently, the period between 1975 and 1980 witnessed mass movement of the Surinamese, including those of Indian origin, to the Netherlands. This can partly be explained by economic reasons, but fears of Creole domination in Suriname are also cited as a reason for the massive Hindustani migration to the Netherlands. Interracial relations in Suriname are complex. Both competition and cooperation between ethnic groups occurs in Suriname and these traits have been inherited by the Surinamese community in Holland. For many years, the government of the Netherlands made no allowances for these ethnic differences between the Surinamese and dealt with the community as an homogenous unit. The consequences of this included a rise in competition between the Creoles and the Indo-Surinamese and attempts by the latter to establish their own representative groups such as 'the Lalla Rukh'. Today, the number of Surinamese in the Netherlands is estimated to be 360,000, more than half of whom are Hindustani.

Economic and welfare provisions were made by the government of the Netherlands for the newcomers from the former colony. They were helped to find housing and work. Many Hindustanis found jobs as government and municipal employees, while some of them started their own business, particularly as shop owners. The government's policy of offering the



newcomers accommodation in different parts of the country was designed to avoid a concentration of migrants' in Holland's cities, but in reality, this proved difficult to avoid, and it was not long before Hindustani communities emerged in Amsterdam (Bijlmermeer) and The Hague (Transvaal, Schilderswijk). These communities found themselves engaged in a process of searching for and constructing an identity. This process was itself complicated by the fact that the Hindustani community in both Suriname and in the Netherlands is both linguistically and religiously disparate. While some Hindustanis find themselves happy under the umbrella of Surinamese

identity, others prefer to stress their 'Indianness' instead.

Religion

Both the Hindustani and NRI communities in the Netherlands are multi-faith groups. The majority of Hindustanis are Hindus (80% or approximately 125,000). The remainder are Muslims (16%) and Christians (4%). In terms of the NRI community, there are approximately 2,000 Sikhs in addition to Hindus, Muslims and Zoroastrians (Parsees).

The Indian and NRI Hindu communities within the Netherlands are affiliated to

different sects (*sampraday*). The majority of Hindustanis are traditionalist Sanatan Hindus. Roughly 16% of them adhere to the 'Arya Samaj', a Hindu reform movement founded in India in 1875 by Swami Dayananda. Research by Choenni shows, however, that the differences among the new generation of Hindustanis in Holland are not that significant, and in fact many Indian and NRI Hindus are unaware of the nuances of traditionalist and reformist Hinduism. Another study (Lynebakke), claiming a significant divide between the Hindustanis and the NRIs in Amsterdam, admits the growing number of intermarriages between the young generation Hindustanis and Holland-born Indians of subcontinental origin. For the younger generation (especially for the Hindus) religion is more a matter of belonging, rather than active participation. There is however, some evidence that young Hindustani Muslims are increasingly influenced by the ideas of global Umma and Muslim brotherhood. My research suggests that among NRI Muslims in the Netherlands, there is considerable common ground between the Pakistani community and Sarnami Hindustani Muslims. For example, the Indian language of Urdu is one of the languages of religious instruction in their mosques.

The Hindustani Hindus are most eager to claim their links to India. The 1980s saw a significant number of marriages between Sarnami Hindu women and Indian men. This produced a significant number of children of mixed parentage but with strong Indian links. These families usually choose Standard Hindi as the language of communication at home. (For a period of time in late 1980s this trend stopped, but increasingly now there appears to be a renewed interest by Dutch-Indians and Hindustanis in each other). Despite these intermarriages, the Hindustanis and NRI communities remain wary of each other. Hindustanis from Suriname are often considered as being 'low caste' by the NRIs, while the Hindustanis often view NRIs as opportunists. Interestingly, a number of illegal immigrants within the community are Indians from India. So some Hindustanis see Indians as being of a lower social class. The existence of very influential Indian businessmen in the Netherlands and importance of the Brahman priests among the Indo-Surinamese perpetuates the stereotypes.

Language

It is apparent that for younger generations of Hindustanis and Dutch-Indians, the Dutch language and identity are important. Those Hindustanis who were born in the Netherlands are often not well-practiced in speaking and understanding Sarnami Hindi, also known as Sarnami. Sarnami Hindi is a derivative of local Indian dialects close to Awadhi and Braj, and it developed in isolation from the other Indo-Aryan languages (Damsteegt). There also

Surinamese grocery store in The Hague. Photo courtesy of the author.



appears to have been a general neglect of the oral traditions of Sarnami by those communities in the Netherlands. Although Sarnami literature exists, there has been a steady decline in the publication of books and journals in this language. That said, there are still many Hindustanis, and indeed NRIs, in the Netherlands who have retained their language and continue to be influenced by subcontinental Indian culture, not least through Bollywood movies. The Indian cinema has a huge impact on both groups in the community (Verstappen and Rutten 2007). Hindi, the state language of India is the main language of Bollywood productions, making the films a primary resource for Hindustanis or second generation Dutch-speaking Indians to learn Standard Hindi. There are also Hindi classes at local centres, as well as four Hindi schools in the Netherlands. Of note however, is the apparent shift from Surinami to the Dutch language. Also, the emergence of the English language as the *lingua franca* of Europe, suits the emergence of a culturally Indian but mostly English-speaking Indian diaspora. Bollywood movies, remain one of the most popular and important Indian exports, strengthening positive feelings of Hindustanis towards India. Their feelings towards Indians from India in the Netherlands are more complicated, however.

Despite a long history of Dutch-Indian relations, (including episodes of temporary Dutch colonial possession of the Hoogly, Cochi and Pulicat in India), until the last century Indians were rare guests in the Netherlands. In fact, Indians from the subcontinent of South Asia didn't really arrive in the Netherlands until after 1980. Up until then there were only 500 Indian families living in Holland (Madan, 1999). The Hindustanis community clearly outstripped non-resident Indians in the Netherlands in terms of number. However, the NRIs who arrived brought with them contemporary Indian traditions which were able to breath new life into those somewhat out-of-touch and out-of-date traditions and practices of the Indo-Surinamese. It is important to add, however, that the Hindustanis in Suriname were not entirely isolated from subcontinental Indian influences. For example, the previously-mentioned 'Arya Samaj' reformist Hindu movement established a branch in Suriname in 1912. 16% of Hindus in Suriname and an approximately similar percentage of Surinamese Hindus in the Netherlands adhere to the 'Arya Samaj' vision of Hinduism.

The first influx of newcomers from India to the Netherlands were diplomats, professionals and entrepreneurs invited by various institutions, government organisations or multinational companies. They brought with them the image of Indians as successful engineers, doctors, professors, lawyers or business managers. The second group of arrivals, those coming after 1980, were mostly Punjabis of rural origin (Madan, 1999). Those non-resident Indians who came to the Netherlands as professionals or businessmen tend to have closer links with India. For example, they often have their families in India; they watch Zee-TV and read Indian newspapers. However, the importance of NRIs in the Netherlands is not confined to their direct links with India. Among them is an active group of politicians, economists, lawyers and other intellectuals who devote their time to the service of India from the Netherlands. They have formed an association known as the Foundation for Critical Choices for India (FCCI). Founded in

1980, the FCCI is an independent, secular non-commercial, non-partisan think tank. It aims to identify, define and study critical issues facing India and to work towards long term, rational solutions. It also strives to mobilise moral, intellectual and financial resources of Indians abroad for the solution of critical problems facing India and to effectively project and promote the general interests of India and the Indian Diaspora in local communities. The emergence and effectiveness of an institution such as this in the Netherlands, puts the country with its significant Hindustani (Indo-Surinami) and influential Non-Resident Indian communities in an influential position in the global Indian diaspora.

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Chinese Confucianism gradually broadened its scope from traditional to modern owing to the influence of Ching Dynasty scholarship. Tai-Chen (1723-1777), in particular, believed that sentiments and desires are a valuable part of human nature, an idea in opposition to traditional Confucianism, notably to Sung-Ming's Neo-Confucianists, who claimed that rationality is good and emotions are evil. Modern Chinese scholars, however, continue to greatly value and appreciate Tai-Chen's work.

An 'aesthetic education': the role of 'sentiments' in the transition from traditional Confucianism to modern aesthetics

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Two such scholars were Liang Chi-Chao (1873-1929) and Tsai Yuen-Pei (1868-1940), who saw sentiments in particular as the foundation of aesthetic education. According to them, sentiments in an aesthetic context are a combination of elevated feelings, beliefs and attitudes related but not limited to altruistic personality. Aesthetic evaluations are made based on the sub-structure of sentiments. Thus they are different from emotions, desire, love, friendship or affection, and as a whole are elevated forms of thinking derived from the sublimation of the human spirit. They drive us to make contributions to our country and people.

Simultaneously, these two masters, under the influence of Western approaches to aesthetic education, responded to public yearnings by developing a new way to appreciate aesthetic values. Aesthetics here refers to more than mere art; it's a more general appreciation of beauty, of harmony and idealisation, or what is termed in many areas of art as composition. Liang Chi-Chao and Tsai Yuen-Pei created a sense of urgency to reassess the importance of aesthetic education so that it might play a constructive role in developing their beloved nation.

A means to a harmonious society

Liang Chi-Chao was an emotionally profound and colourful man. His ideas about sentiments were derived from his experiences, and also from the social value of sentiments towards the end of the Ching Dynasty: a social 'aesthetics' whose object is a harmonious society, well ordered like a work of art. Like art, it elevates us beyond the mundane and self-centred. He often emphasised that sentiments alone are what motivate people to live and to work. If a man vows to perform a great task, for example, sentiments are like a demanding emperor to which mere rationality should yield. If a man is aware of his sentiments and follows them to the end, then he can achieve great things. Thus Liang claimed, 'A good teacher should give judicious guidance to students according to their individual sentiments'. The most efficient instrument for learning about sentiments is art, such as music, painting and literature, since they embody aesthetic principles that are universal and elevate the human spirit.

Tsai Yuen-Pei divided human spiritual functions into knowledge, will and emotions. He emphasised the importance of sentiments in particular and, like Liang, believed that music, painting and literature can help restore a person's lost contact with sentiments. He coined the Chinese term *Mei-Yu* ('aesthetic education') and advocated it as a means of educating people to appreciate all forms of beauty. Ultimately, the practice of aesthetic educa-

tion aims to cultivate the sense of sentiments in order to experience the sublime of the human spirit. 'Man can be fearless in any "life or death" situation', Tsai stated, 'ignore the fact of whether he or she is blessed, treat anything with enthusiasm, share enjoyment with others, sacrifice himself for others, etc., if the instruction of aesthetic education is properly provided'. He was referring to art's moral aspect and sacrificing of ego; art, like society, takes us beyond the self or the limitations of the individual to the level of species. In this way it elevates us to the realm of the universal. Therefore, aesthetic education complements intellectual education, and subsequently ends with the completion of moral education. They are all linked in the sense of achieving a harmonious and satisfactory result.

Freedom from the phenomenal

Tsai's aesthetic views are not so much linked to Western aesthetics in general as to the aesthetic thoughts of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) in particular. According to Kant, humanity's sentiments are based on the nature of one's freedom. Anything, whether it's pleasant or not, is determined by whether it's beautiful. Beauty, to Kant, is defined by transcendence (with no external or secondary 'purpose'; art for art's sake); universality (human nature and things common to all people); spontaneity (determined by free will); and inevitability (led by human nature without effort).

Tsai held that all men experience love, hatred, fear, happiness, anger, sadness, etc., in the 'phenomenal world'. Our emotions rise and fall like waves in response to the phenomena of life, death, fortune, misfortune, gain and loss. Art can prevent us from being distracted by the phenomenal world and thus help us to maintain a purer aesthetic sensibility, 'to see the world in a grain of sand'. Art can dissolve prejudice against others and reconcile the differences between gain and loss. When a man frees himself from the 'relative' emotions of this phenomenal world, and sublimates his emotions to form an aesthetic wholeness, then he can realise the meaning of the world beyond the individual, mundane or corporeal.

It is, therefore, obligatory for an educator to lead us beyond the phenomenal world through the introduction of aesthetic education, whose aim is to cultivate one's disposition and soul. Tsai devoted himself to the promotion of aesthetic education, especially during the period of Japanese invasion. He thought the best way for people to love and help one another is by extending sympathy, and that the aesthetic function of 'empathy' is the key to uniting people. That is why Tsai tried so hard to promote aesthetic education. He thought aesthetic education should not only be provided in the form of art education in schools, but also within the family and

across society as a whole.

From theory to implementation: combining east and west

There was an inevitable contradiction between Tsai's theory and that of Kant. For example, in Kant's theory, sentiments are the essence of 'aesthetic sense', and the disinterested nature of aesthetic sentiments helps to make a man disinterested in gain or loss and even helps to eliminate the obsession of self-interest. Yet, to both Tsai and Liang, it's inevitable that sentiments as the foundation of aesthetic education had no subjective purpose, while aesthetic education as the tool of cultivating man's spirit includes the property of being purposeful.

According to Tsai, 'aesthetic sentiments' are derived from the interaction between a human's inner sentiments and his external environment. In Kant's opinion, however, aesthetic sentiments are neither inner emotions nor experiential, and they are certainly not concerned with the material objects in question. Rather, Kant believed that when people bracket physical sensations and practical utility derived from external stimulations, they will acquire a free mind capable of experiencing pure aesthetic sentiments.

In sum, Liang and Tsai claimed aesthetic sentiments were experiential 'products', whereas Kant stressed that they were transcendental and pure. The difference may lie in their focuses, with Liang and Tsai looking towards the source and Kant at the result. Yet, in spite of these differences, Tsai laid the foundation for modern Chinese aesthetic education by adapting some of Kant's viewpoints, and Tsai's theory of human sentiments injected new life into a traditional Confucianism that had always valued rationality and disparaged emotions.

Liang and Tsai initiated a series of plans to introduce lifelong aesthetic education to families, schools and society, to make aesthetic education a necessary tool for building the nation. Unfortunately, their plans failed to come to fruition, mainly because the Chinese were hard pressed by political unrest and economic hardship. But they undeniably made a great contribution by laying the groundwork for modern Chinese aesthetic education. Because of their efforts to promote the paramount value of human sentiments, modern Chinese thinking regarding aesthetic education can develop into a new and promising field.

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