

*Alka Kurian* [alka.kurian@sunderland.ac.uk] is a Ph.D candidate at the University of Sunderland, UK where she is a senior lecturer in the Film, Culture and Media Studies Department. (She is revising her recently defended Ph.D). Her doctoral research investigates the power of South Asian film and fiction as critical discursive spaces of cultural contestation and the ways that these cultural practices can become tools for challenging monolithic representations of the average third world woman. She teaches South Asian and third world film and literature, and feminist, postcolonial and cultural studies. Although she is currently on leave from the University, she is working as a research scholar on South Asian cinema at Syracuse University's Women's Studies Department, NY. She has also taught a focus group course on South Asian cinema at the Comparative History of Ideas Department, University of Washington. Ms Kurian is currently writing a book titled: *South Asian Cinema: Gender, Justice and Dissent* (Routledge, forthcoming in 2009), which performs a post-colonial, gendered exploration of South Asian films and investigates the oppositional consciousness of feminist dissent. It looks into the question of South Asian women's disenfranchisement due to the pervasiveness of patriarchy, caste, and class; the impact of under development; forces of globalization and imperialism; post-colonial communal, nationalist and ethnic struggles; and race and sexuality. Her work is partly based on a substantial piece of creative writing culminating in a 150,000-word novel. Ms Kurian is the principal editor of the newly launched journal *Studies in South Asian Film and Media* that looks at the media and cinemas of South Asia in their social, political, economic, historical, and increasingly globalized and diasporic contexts in relation to class, caste, gender, race, sexuality, and ideology. She is one of the co-directors of Tasveer, a Seattle-based independent South Asian film and media organization.