“CULTURAL SCHIZOPHRENIA” IN SOME DIASPORIC INDIAN WOMEN WRITERS, AND THEIR QUEST FOR UNITY

Mª Luz González & Juan Ignacio Oliva

Postcolonial literature is especially involved with the subject of self-representation, from an artistic and political attitude. Writers from former colonies represent themselves through their writings, telling their stories, dilemmas, and concerns; and often alluding to the invasion of the empire and its tremendous consequences. One of these consequences is the learning of how to live with, quoting the African American writer W.E.B. Du Bois, “a double consciousness,” “the ability,” Innes states, “to live within and between two cultures and two perspectives” (5). Nonetheless, “everyone’s exile is different,” as Aciman states, “and every writer has his or her own way of groping in the dark” (Foreword 9). The aim of this paper is to analyse the different problems that the common experience of colonisation provokes in the immigrant psyche. Migration will then be studied as an existential condition (and not as a political reality) in the works (poetry and fiction) of several women writers of Indian origin or descent, who currently live in Canada, or in the case of Meena Alexander and Bharati Mukherjee, in USA.

The inflow of Asians to Canada began with the beginning of the 20th century. From 1903, Canada became a homeland for Chinese, Japanese and Indians (mostly Sikhs).[1] The number of arrivals of emigrants to Canada of Indian descent increased more and more: “By 1908 they were over 5000,[2] and by the 1950’s the number peaked to 282,000 as a result of the demands of post-war Canadian economy, for professionals and skilled trade people” (Abrahim H. Khan 23). However, that was not always the case. The Canadian government’s immigration policy was not in favour of Asians and restricted the number of emigrants to a great extent. In September 17th 1907, anti-oriental riots broke out in Vancouver, probably developed by the increasing spirit of Canadian nationalism. The riots were mainly aimed at the Japanese and Chinese; the Sikhs, however, were severely affected both in terms of human lives and property.[3] The restrictions towards the flow of Asian immigrants were even greater with the 1910 Immigration Act which imposed severe

---

[1] Soodabeh Salehi explains the beginnings of Indian diaspora in Canada: “The early Indo-Canadian community was mostly composed of young Sikh men from Punjab, who came to British Columbia with the hope of finding the better economic opportunities….Canada became first known to East Indians in 1897. Stopping in Canada en route in their journey home from Britain to India, a Sikh regiment of the British Indian Army participated in a parade to celebrate Queen Victoria’s Goldon Jubilee in London. This regiment visited British Columbia…and subsequently recommended North America to the other Sikhs who were seeking employment opportunities abroad….Jobs in big Canadian companies such as Canadian Pacific Railway and the Hudson Bay Company as well as in the resource industries were guaranteed for East Indians (10).

[2] The racist problems towards Indians in Canada started when the number of Asian emigrants increased progressively: “At the beginning, India, like Canada, was a Bristish colony, Indians did not need visa to travel to Canada. With increasing the number of immigrants white Canadians felt that the Indians would take over their jobs in factories, mills and humberyards. Hence, anti-Asian riots started against the Chinese and Japanese, and soon included the Indians in the unwanted Asian ethnic groups. Fear of labour competition was followed by racial antagonism and demand for exclusionary laws. In British Columbia, attempts were made to pass stringent laws discouraging the immigration of Indians to Canada” (Salehi 10-11).

[3] See B. Rahamathulla ,”Canadian Immigration Policy in the Context of South Asia: a Perspective of Indian Diaspora in the New Millenium” in Anil Dutta Mishra & Govin Prasad, eds. 33-42.

conditions, as for example, the obligation to possess two hundred dollars on landing and the compulsion of doing continuous journey to their home country. The latter, nonetheless, was practically impossible to fulfil, since there was no direct steamship service between Canada and India at that time. All these restrictions made most of the Sikh immigrants to return to India. The few who decided to stay were not allowed to have their families in Canada until 1956. After the end of the Second World War, Canada, in its practically new independent and sovereign role and its growing economy, demanded both skilled and unskilled labour forces which confronted the Canadian Government to ease the previous restrictions on the immigrants (Khan 23-35). By 1951, the Canadian Government signed agreements for a quota system per year. As Anil Dutta Mishra and Goving Prasad explain: "In 1951, the Canadian government signed agreement for a quota system whereby 150 Indians, 100 Pakistani and 50 Sri Lankan immigrants per year were allowed to be admitted to Canada" (3). It was in 1967 when the condition for future Indian emigrants to Canada really improved, though from 1962[4] the Canadian government began to initiate some changes in immigration policy. The so-called "Points System" was introduced in 1967 whereby the individual's skill and not his/her country of origin was what really mattered. "The result," as Rahamathulla explains, "was a large scale exodus of South Asians and other Asians into Canada. Thus, the percentage of immigrants rose from 20% to 60%" (37). Finally, by the end of the 1960s, Canada witnessed an increment in its economy and efforts were made to frame a non-discriminatory Canadian immigration policy. In 1971, the policy of Multiculturalism was introduced by the then Primer Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

Half of the Indian population in Canada is Punjabi. The rest of the Indian ethnic communities include Gujarates, Tamils, Keralites, Bengalis, Sindhi, among others (Salehi 14). Today, Indian diaspora is occupying an important position in Canada, and already, by the eighties diasporic Indian writers had produced enough literature to voice their experiences as immigrants or as children of immigrants. Let's now continue with the study of such experiences.

Once the immigrant moves away from the place of his/her original culture and begins the process of adapting to another culture, he/she undoubtedly broadens his/her perceptions. However, sometimes immigrants find themselves in the necessity of negotiating between self and culture. When culture does not fit with personal identity, then social identity becomes a trouble for the experience and the forging of the self. Cultural schizophrenia arises out of a reaction to the prevailing social order, (in this immigrant context) that of the dominant race and colour. The result is the presence of contradictory or antagonistic beliefs, social forms and trends within an individual who is in relation (either through memory or ghettoization) with his/her native culture while living in another. Certainly, intercultural dialogue, both at a social and individual level, may favour the defeat of cultural schizophrenia. But, why are we, human beings, so concerned with cultural identity? Is it because of our imperious need and wish to belong? Probably yes. As will be remarked later on, neither place nor culture can be avoided from the sense of identity.

1. Autobiography and Self-Representation.

[4] In fact, "prior to 1962, most of the immigrants from India were mainly from Punjab region, but thereafter the influx was more balanced between men and women. Besides the Sikhs from Punjab, Hindus from Gujarat, Bombay and Delhi, Christians from Kerala and Parsis from Bombay too immigrated to Canada" (Salehi 13).

Franz Fanon insisted that the postcolonial writer has to restore his past in order to envision a future (qtd. in Innes 10-11), history must be rescued from the colonizer's hands, but he also recognized that the recovery of memories is never enough to achieve it. In a similar way, but in a much more personal and individual quest, Meena Alexander, in her short story "No Nation Woman," admits that the telling of her memories will never be sufficient to restore her fragmented self: "Why is it so hard to tell my story?" Alexander writes at the very beginning, "Is it because my life has been so torn up, and when set out in the heart's space makes nothing but bits and pieces?" (143). Meena Alexander was born in the North Indian State of Uttar Pradesh, in the city of Allahabad, also known as Prayag, in 1951. Although christened "Mary Elizabeth," she has always been called "Meena" since birth, and at fifteen she officially changed her name to Meena in an act of liberation and personal decolonization. Remembering that moment she writes: "I felt I had changed my name to what I already was, some truer self, stripped free of the colonial burden" (*Fault Lines* 74). At five years of age, she moved to Khartoum, in the Sudan. There, she started writing and publishing poetry in Arabic translation. And from age five to eighteen, she continually lived between the Sudan and India, between Khartoum and Kerala, and between her immediate family and her grandparents. At the age of eighteen, Alexander moves to England to continue her studies, but her tie with India was by no means broken. After receiving her PhD at Nottingham University, she returned back to India to teach at Delhi University. There she met her husband and moved to New York where she currently lives.

Meena Alexander's main concerns in literature have always been migration and its impact on the writer's mind, and the different events, frequently violent, that make people cross borders. Her work, then, deals with personal as well as national concerns. In fact, she frequently reflects her multicultural experiences in India, The Sudan and the United States. While poetry is probably her best-known and recognized work, her career also covers a variety of literary genres: short story, novel, criticism, and non-fiction.

Alexander starts her story "No Nation Woman" from the self as the central point of reference, establishing a dialogue with an imaginary reader. The subjects here explored may be reduced to three: language, memory and the importance of place. Many postcolonial autobiographies start in childhood as a way of metaphorically conveying a pre-colonial condition, an innocent world anterior to the impact of foreign impositions. On other occasions, the author, in telling his/her life, becomes the representative of his/her culture or nation. Neither of these two examples is present in "No Nation Woman." Instead, we read an autobiographical story in which the author starts a personal journey through the impressions her life has left on her mind. The aim of Meena Alexander here seems to be no other than to ask herself the question "Who am I?" Through the stream of consciousness technique, showing the uninterrupted flow of her thoughts, impressions and feelings, the reader gets only a fragmented vision of what her life has been like. Her narration often descends into disorientation and it seems that Alexander ends up where she started. There is no evolution, as implied in the title of the story. Her position is not that of the subaltern, borrowing Spivak's concept, at least attending to gender,[5] though she feels that if she were

[5] With this term, Gayatrik Spivak refers to the minorities, those who do not belong to the ruling class, who live subordinated by the dominant class: the working class, women, members of a lower caste, etcetera. The study of subaltern groups has been especially significant in India, in part due to the publication of Spivak's essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" included in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988, pp. 271-313. This book also analyses the ignored voices of colonized women in literary texts such as Charlotte Brönte's *Jane Eyre* (1847).

a man things would have been different. In a half-serious, half-mocking tone, immersed in a process of self-discovery, Meena Alexander writes:

> If I were a man, I might have turned myself into something large and heroic, a creature of quest and adventure, a visionary with power in his grasp. Instead, as a woman, the best I can be is something small and stubborn, delicate perhaps at the best of times, but irrefutably persistent. After all, when has my life gone according to plan? It seems a poor thing to say, but the best I have learned has had to do with unlearning the fixed positionings I was taught, trusting my own nose, diving into the waves. ("No Nation Woman" 143)

In other words, in "No Nation Woman," the protagonist's quest for identity is not so much a question of gender (which it is, of course) as of personal necessity; the need to tell a story to herself, first of all, that may compile all her different selves. Her struggle to achieve an identity is, then, also her quest for unity. Meena Alexander's story is that of the subaltern, but from a different perspective: the impossibility and impotence of not knowing how to start, where to begin her story makes her feel inferior, to belong to a minority, to feel lost with respect to other people who have not experienced a similar multicultural status. But she is also aware of the artificiality implied in any autobiographical telling, in which any beginning will automatically eradicate the remaining special moments, that is, other possible points of departure, and in which the only means of turning them back will be through that vague remembering that can only be partially recovered through memory and imagination. In a moment of the story that immediately reminds us of Tristram Shandy's problems in narrating his life, the protagonist states:

> A beginning? Surely that is where the difficulty lies. The never-returning bit. What to do with a beginning to which you will never return? Conceive of a life, the story of a life in which the "I" keeps moving away from a womb, room, house verandah, balcony, street, city, province, nation, never returning. The "I" reduced in all her travels to the sheerest dot, black ink on a crumpled sheet, spilt menstrual blood, a spurt of semen, dribble of milk. ("No Nation Woman" 148).

Certainly, her old homeland exists nowhere but in memory and in the realm of her own imagination. This is the "traveller's baggage" (Arun P. Mukherjee, 1985: 121) which she must learn to live with, because as Sarup observes "an important aspect of the construction of identity is the past-present relation and its reconciliation" (40).

2. The Journey towards Self-Identity: Water Mindscapes.

In any self-identity process, echoes from texts like *Alice in Wonderland* or *Through the Looking-Glass* and different myths, like that of Narcissus familiarly and frequently recur in the pages of many contemporary books. After all, literature is one of the "doubles" of reality, often subjectively used as the mirror image which does not deceive. Throughout the story "No Nation Woman," Meena Alexander recalls both Narcissus and Alice. The protagonist (and obviously the writer) becomes a sort of Narcissus-like-figure in the sense

that she writes to *find her self* reflected in the text, in the language; to understand her world and reality. The water images which redundantly appear throughout this text act, then, as a metaphor through which the writer sees her self in her writing mirror. This same idea of doubleness and mirror reflections is attractively underlined by André Aciman to talk about the frequent hybrid condition of exiles, a condition which also evokes the myth of Narcissus:

> With their memories perpetually on overload, exiles see double, feel double, are double. When exiles see one place they're also seeing –or looking for— another behind it. Everything bears two faces, everything is shifty because everything is mobile, the point being that exile, like love, is not just a condition of pain, it's a condition of deceit. ("Shadow Cities"13)

On the other hand, Meena Alexander's inquiries into her own identity also parallel those of Alice in Wonderland. The same as Lewis Carrol's popular character, Alexander worries that her identity has been displaced; her fears parallel that of Alice's uncertainty about her location in the world. At different moments in the story and through the metaphor of shrinking back in size, and therefore in time, Alexander attempts to recover her previous selves in her struggle for unity. For instance, in the following excerpt she makes indirect references to both Alice and Narcissus, only to finally realize that she will never be able to join all the pieces of her life:

> I do not see her but she who once listened at the keyhole shrinks back against the outside wall as I enter the white room. Once I am in the white room we become one, fusing as water and sky in a child's eye as she gazes down into a pool from a great height, or even as fire and the wood it consumes on a funeral pyre become one, one and the same. Then we split again in two. She becomes me, I she. All around us, houses shatter and fall, shards of them, bits and pieces of them. Nothing sticks back together again, nothing holds in innumerable broken houses. (146)

The protagonist neither feels colonized by place nor by a question of nation. These, though essential in any process towards self-identity, are only beginnings in her never-ending stage of her search for identity. She feels singularly colonized by her own rememberings. The multiple places and countries where she has lived and the impressions and emotions she has experienced are the result of her fragmented self: "When I try to look back at my life, there's no backness to it. It's all around, a moistness like sweet well water, the houses crumbled up inside. How many houses have there been? When I try to count it, it sears me: a hot dry wind that destroys generations" (143). After all, as Eva Hoffman remarks, "in a way, we are nothing more –or less—than an encoded memory of our heritage" (50).

The sheltering image of the house appears recurrently throughout the story, as may be observed in the two previous quotations. Of all the multiple meanings that this archetype may have: as the centre of the world, an image of the universe, a symbol of civilization, etcetera, it is its Junguian application the one that seems most appropriate to the interpretation of this text. In Jungian psychology, what happens inside a house happens

inside us.[6] Reading the following quotation from "No Nation Woman," it is not a sheltering image that we find, but just its opposite, an image of disintegration, a reflection of her fragmentary self:

> Houses to be born in, houses to die in, houses to make love in, with wet sticky sheets, houses with the pallor of a dove's wings, houses fragrant as cloves and cinnamon ground together. Ah, the thickness of this tongue that will not let me be, will not let me lay out saying: I was born here, I lived here, I did this, I did that, saying it all out in the way that people do, or like to try. (144)

Her colonization, then, is more mental than political. As a result, multiple voices of her past, present and even imagined future coexist in her mind. Instead of "writing the nation," (Fraser 53) as many postcolonial writers attempt to do, she is concerned with writing her self. The process of writing in this context is always painful because it starts by recognizing a sense of non-belonging, but it is also relieving, because it "conjures up forms, figurations of desire;" as Alexander argues: "Everything hurts with writing but everything works with it too" ("No Nation Woman" 147).

At the end of the story, the reader reaches the conclusion that what the protagonist really pursues in "No Nation Woman" is to forge a sense of identity independent of her surroundings. But is that really possible? Can we talk about identity without taking into consideration the places where we have grown up? Human stories are intimately tied to the landscape in which they are told. Landscape is full of stories that connect a place and its dwellers, because "place is a story", as Laurie Ricou affirms.[7] The construction of self goes often together with a search for home, and home is always attached to a place. Again, in her autobiography *Fault Lines* (1993) Meena Alexander expresses the same feeling and sense of non-belonging when she writes: "I am a woman cracked by multiple migrations. Uprooted so many times she can connect nothing with nothing." (3) Therefore, in spite of the fact that as Aamer Hussein states, "memory is [normally understood as] the glue that links all the fragments together" (qtd. Assissi), memory in Alexander's case is precisely what keeps her mind split. In fact, in analysing the title of her autobiography, *Fault Lines*, the reader notices how much she is concerned with margins and boundaries. A fault line, in geology, is the divergent plate boundaries which produce earthquakes; a good metaphor to suggest definitions of the self; the lines, markings, scars our experiences in life leave on us.[8]

The feeling of having no nation or home found in the story is again expressed in *Fault Lines* when Alexander writes: "I am a poet writing in America. But an American poet?...An Asian-American poet then?...Poet tout court?...A woman poet, a woman poet of colour, a South Indian woman who makes up lines in English...A Third World woman poet...?" (193). Unfortunately, Alexander seems to look for her own identity and self-creation in a

---

[6] See C. G. Jung, ed. et al. *Man and His Symbols*. 1964. New York: Laurel, 1968.

[7] An idea developed in his seminar "Place is a Story: Writing Canada's West Coast," presented in the XIII Curso Superior de Estudios Canadienses, University of La Laguna, 15-17/XII/2003.

[8] Such a vision is also beautifully expressed by the Canadian poet Gwendolyn MacEwen in her poem "The Astronauts:" "His body," she writes, "has become a zodiac of bones/its own myth, a personal cosmology" (*A Breakfast for Barbarians* 18).

world too interested to define, describe and judge people by labels. These definitions of race and nationality prove difficult to defy and impossible to deny.

Uma Parameswaran's view of hybridity is much more optimistic. Though, she, the same as Alexander, was born and raised in India, she currently lives in a country very different from her own: Canada. Parameswaran is a first generation immigrant in this country. She was born in Chennai, formerly known as Madras, in 1938. Chennai is the capital city of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, in the southern part of the Indian Peninsula. In her work, poetry and fiction, as well as in her task as a critic, the writer aims at the union of the two cultures which she metaphorically represents through the merging of two different rivers, the Assiniboine and the Ganges. The Assiniboine runs through the prairies of Western Canada in Saskatchewan and Manitoba; the more universal Ganges, on the other hand, is a major river in the Indian subcontinent, a primordial element of India's civilization and culture:

> Every immigrant transplants part of his native land to the new country, and the transplant may be said to have taken root once the immigrant figuratively sees his native river in the river that runs in his adopted place: not Ganga *as* the Assiniboine or the Assiniboine as the Ganga, both of which imply a simple transference or substitution, but Ganga *in* the Assiniboine, which implies a flowing into, a merger that enriches the river. ("Ganga in the Assiniboine" 71)

This image of two rivers flowing together is especially sacred for the Hindu ethos as a symbol of enrichment. Through it, Parameswaran proposes assimilation as a possible alternative to hybridity, but she insists that this process of assimilation must be bilateral. In other words, it is not only the immigrant who has to change his/her attitude, but also the host country which has to expand the borders of its vocabulary and mind in order to listen to its immigrant imagination. The immigrant, therefore, has the double task of assimilating and being tolerated in the new culture (Hand 82). Literature, moreover, according to Parameswaran, becomes, in this context, the perfect tool not only to reflect all the changes that happen in society from a socio-cultural perspective, but also the receptacle that allows Canadians to appreciate its multicultural and ethno-centred nature.

Parameswaran moved from the United States to Canada because she and her husband wanted to start a new life and believed Canada was less racist than the United States. Due to different job offers they had to decide between Alberta and Manitoba. They finally chose the latter and in spite of the cold weather (Winnipeg may be the coldest city in the world) they felt totally welcome, but she recognizes that now the situation is completely different. "In the 60s and 70s it was the professionals who came from India, and we had no trouble getting jobs. Times have now changed, and people who came today do have trouble finding work" (qtd. Joyce Scane). This is a problem essentially racist or gender related. Parameswaran, moreover, affirms that the Indians who emigrate to Canada do not feel the sort of security that other ethnic groups seem to experiment when arriving in this country. As a result, they frequently express in their literary works the social and economic dislocation they suffer; an opinion which Arun Prabha Mukherjee also supports when she writes: "Even an immigrant from an affluent background, might have to undergo the humiliation of becoming 'lower class.' As a result, immigrant writing in general is more class conscious than the rest of Canadian poetry." (15)

Another example of optimistic assimilation, in this case in the United States, is Bharati Mukherjee, who we will analyse in-depth and separately. Bharati Mukherjee was born in Kolkata, formerly known as Calcutta, in 1940. She, like Parameswaran, also migrated to Canada in 1968, but as she felt endlessly marginalized by white Canadians because of her race, finally moved to the United States in 1980 and proudly became an American citizen (*Darkness* 2). Mukherjee is especially concerned with foregrounding the positive side of immigration. Although, her characters go through many problems and are often victims of different types of social injustices, they soon learn how to survive in their host culture.

3. Indian Women's "Double Colonization."

Indian women writers are often said to suffer from "a double colonisation,"[9] because they are discriminated in terms of both gender and ethnicity, first, as women in their patriarchal local cultures[10] and then by the colonizers because of their colour. Such is the story told by Sherazad Jamal, the youngest of the writers studied here, in her long poem "Making of a Cultural Schizophrenic." Jamal was born in London in 1965, to Muslim parents of Indian origin and moved to Canada, in 1972, at the age of seven. She is an interdisciplinary artist, with experience in the visual arts, architecture, creative writing, graphic design, etc. She is very concerned with self-discovery processes and transformation, through the fusing of concepts, forms and story-telling. In "Making of a Cultural Schizophrenic," Jamal describes the gradual transition she and her family suffer, from a utopia –the longing of the American dream with its hopes and fancies of living in a new country full of possibilities—to a dystopia in which she finally discovers the true racism of white Canadian society towards South Asian peoples. The poem begins in a very optimistic tone, with words such as "excitement," "new place," "new beginning," "illuminating," the view of a child overwhelmed by what awaits her across the Atlantic Ocean and the enormous illusion of meeting her parents again. However, when such an encounter takes place, she asks herself why is her father crying? And "why do they both look so tired?" The first disappointment occurs when she and her brothers see their new home:

> …my parents have warned us
> It is not our home in Nairobi
> A three bedroom bungalow
> Floating in the sea of land
> Room enough for the tropical three
> To play cricket and soccer
> To run among the trees laden with passion fruit and
> Tangerines
> To dig up white ant queens

[9] See Kirsten Holst Petersen and Anna Rutherford, eds. *A Double Colonisation: Colonial and Post-Colonial Women's Writing*. Sidney and Oxford: Dangeroo Press, 1986.

[10] For further information about the situation of women in India, see Verena Esterbauer, *The Immigrant's Search for Identity in Bharati Mukherjee's* Jasmine *and* Desirable Daughters (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2008), especially the chapter "A Clash of Traditions," 55-72.

To catch chameleons
To create worlds of our own.
…
And now home
A high-rise tower
Where are the open stretches of land?
We have never lived fifty feet in the air before
A one bedroom apartment for five
Dingy dark brown melancholy
Floors covered in ochre carpet
The colour of diarrhea. ("Making of a Cultural Schizophrenic" 122-123)

All the same, her parents feel they have really been fortunate to find a place where other Indians live. "The others", that is, white people, do not accept Indians presumably because of the smell of their cooking. Slowly, the true story comes out. Finding a job is really difficult. They demand "Canadian experience," another way of saying "you are the wrong colour for the job." The immediate result is, as mentioned before, the economic dislocation suffered by immigrants. As we read in the poem, "my father once ran restaurants/now he slices onions/he, too, is forced to weep" (124). The situation at school is also revealing, all the children coming from India, no matter where the place, are insulted and bullied. The poetic voice feels as a small insect being slowly tortured.

Then in the playground
It begins
"Hey, Paki! Go home!
What was it like in the African jungle, Paki,
Swinging with Tarzan?
…
i am numb in shock
i don't even know what "Paki" means
i feel only hostility and hate
alone alone alone
an island in a sea of faces
confused hurt brown ones
and sneering jeering white ones
taking pleasure in tearing off our wings
one by one. ("Making of a Cultural Schizophrenic"125)

Gradually, her tone becomes more cynical, the pacific, excited attitude she had when leaving her home country is now totally absent. Her personality changes, "the first lesson of survival" they learn is to "stick with your own kind/and run like hell;" they must "meet abuse with abuse/violence with violence/not with reason" (127). In order to survive they join with their kind, "become/more religious, more traditional/than ever back home" (127). This tendency towards "ghettoization"[11] is contended by Uma Parameswaran in her critical

[11] A term used by Uma Parameswaran in her essay "Dispelling the Spells of Memory. Another Approach of Reading our Yesterdays." (318)

writings. She has observed that, generally speaking, "when any group becomes large, there is a tendency to become closed and insular." In addition to this, two opposite movements seem to coexist: "the older generation becomes more rigid and the younger generation becomes more experimental. This naturally creates a vast distance between generations" (Parameswaran, "Parallels between Manitoba Realities and Diaspora/India Issues" 255). Therefore, the idealistic perceptions of India which immigrants create abroad (especially first generation immigrants) remain suspended in time, frozen in that moment they left their home. And while they continue living according to these old canons in the host country, their original homeland evolves as any culture does. In her novel *Mangoes on the Maple Tree* (2006), Parameswaran, through the voices of some of her characters, complains against this natural tendency, among diasporic Indian, of forming ghettos wherever they go. For instance, what follows is an excerpt from the novel in which members of a younger generation of Indians, living in Canada, discuss this claustrophobic situation:

> …we're all too goddam alike. We look alike, we speak alike, we think and feel like each other. The whole lot of us. It's like being in a goddam house of mirrors. Wherever you turn you are bumping into yourself, your own thoughts and guilts and loves and pains staring at you. That's why I'm glad about Jyoti and Pierre, that she's getting away from this pool of Narcissus. (91)

In "Making of a Cultural Schizophrenic," we observe how the characters gradually learn how to split their personalities, dressing differently,[12] speaking with different accents, changing their names to make them sound more occidental, in one word, they become "cultural schizophrenic." Of their former selves, only shadows remain, sharing humiliation, dislocation, alienation, pain/and loneliness" (128). Their old country is no longer their home, and the poetic voice asks herself "will we ever feel at home here?"(128). She feels on the outside, but "wishing hoping craving/to be accepted as one of them/and knowing it will never be so" (129). Being "just Canadian," Prabha Mukherjee comments, "is a privilege only white people enjoy in Canada" (10). This idea of displacement and feeling of non-belonging or even disorientation is beautifully expressed in Surjeet Kalsey's poem "Migratory Birds:"

> We
> the migratory birds
> are here this season
> thinking
> we'll fly back to our home
> for sure.
>
> No one knows
> which invisible cage imprisons us?
> And the flight begins to die slowly
> in our wings.

[12] "The desire to act and dress like everyone else is one way for visible minority children to make themselves invisible" (Parameswaran, "Home is Where Your Feet are" 214).

Some of us are drawn with
the chain
some lag
in the swamp.
No sun no earth
where to look? What to look for?

How shall we reach the threshold
of our home with crumbling self?

…The next season is never our own
and every season
makes mouths at us. (*Shakti's Words* 40)

Surjeet Kalsey was born in Amritsar, Punjab, in the northwestern part India, in 1944. Thirty years later, in 1974, she emigrated to Canada. There, she has become a poet, dramatist, short story writer and translator and writes in both Punjabi and English. In "Migratory Birds," Kalsey deals beautifully with the existential dilemma and psychological pressure memory and nostalgia play in the immigrant's quest for self-renewal. This poem relates the bittersweet homesickness that both captivates and entraps immigrants and impedes a sense of belonging in the host country, no longer certain of its bonds to the home country any more. However, coming back to Jamal's poem and to the issue of Indian women's "double colonization," we can assert that certainly the female poetic voice in "Making of a Cultural Schizophrenic" feels "doubly colonized," and doubly marginalized. In her attempt to become "Canadian," she becomes influenced by feminism, but her parents do not understand these "Canadian ways" and "gaps" begin to grow between them. All she should do, according to her parents, is to respect the authority of the "blond-blue-eyed creamy-white-skinned" race. "At least in Canada," they sadly state, "they let us talk/ on the same side of the street with them/eat in the same restaurants with them/ and shit in the same toilets as them" (130). In Keya Ganguly's opinion (qtd. Sarup 40-41), the past for postcolonial immigrants, has a different effect on men and women. For men, the immigrant experience is, generally speaking, rewarding. Immigration gradually provides them with the financial security that they did not possess before. For women, on the other hand, the past is emphasized as a better time when their family ties were still intact. Outside the house, these women signify their difference and otherness by their appearance, dress and accents. "Mixing with white people," Sarup states, "is difficult. The presence of the past offers a way for these women to say what otherwise cannot be said: that emigration has brought with it a betrayal of the promise of equality" (41). As strikingly expressed in "Making of a Cultural Schizophrenic," when immigrant writers have lived for a time in the host country their dream of a better life, of acquiring a prosperous economic situation, gradually disappears. In the new land they will probably belong to a "visible minority,"[13] and as members of a minority they can react, as Sarup suggests, in several ways towards the hostile forces they have now to face. One of these reactions, as seen in the poem, is to join a

[13] "Visible minority" is the term used, specially in Canada, as part of its multicultural policy, to refer to people who do not belong to the majority race, in a given population, that is, non-Aboriginal, non-Caucasian in race, or non-white in colour. For further information see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visible_minority.

group in order to construct a collective identity, another is that with the passing of time they try to assimilate and accommodate to the new culture, but such is not always the case (3). Uma Parameswaran in a historical study on the phenomenon of immigration in Manitoba and Minnesota accurately describes the first circumstance as "a natural expression" of the immigrant's need to feel protected among his/her people:

> Most newcomers chose to settle close to their compatriots, and thus the concept of colonies that had been resisted when imposed from above and outside, came into existence as a natural expression of an immigrant's need for the security of numbers, the security of being among his own people. (Parameswaran, "The Why of Manitoba's Mosaic" 64)

4. Language.

Moving to a different, but quite related subject, the issue of language is one of the most passionately debated among postcolonial writers, scholars and readers. Returning to Meena Alexander, she has written in French, Hindi and Malayalam throughout her career, however, most of her work is predominantly written in English, a theme of no little concern in her as revealed by the following words: "There is a violence in the very language, American English, that we have to face, even as we work to make it ours, decolonize it so that it will express the truth of bodies beaten and banned. After all, for such as we are the territories are not free" (*Fault Lines* 199). According to Stella Sandahl, language is predominantly "an expression of culture," a way of perceiving the world (136). Similarly, Raja Rao in the foreword of his first novel *Kanthapura* writes: "[English] is the language of our intellectual make-up –like Sanskrit or Persian was before – but not of our emotional make up. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and English. We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians" (vii). Uma Parameswaran, on the other hand, thinks of language, with its contextualized nuances and subtleties, as the means through which the immigrant faces and adapts to his/her new reality:

> There is a relationship between the language one uses and the way one looks at life. One of the challenges to both a writer and a reader of immigrant literature is to acquire a sensitivity to changes in the language and diction of the immigrant as he gets acculturated.…The nuances and overt connotations of the words we hear and use, our idiosyncrasies of speech and gestures, not only express our sensibility but influence and transform it. ("Ganga in the Assiniboine" 78)

In other words, language, as a functioning system of arbitrary signs, continuously transforms itself and the culture(s) to which it belongs, and simultaneously alters the person who employs it. Parameswaran, as an example of this process towards multicultural assimilation quotes the already mentioned poem by Surjeet Kalsey "Migratory Birds." The final line that reads "and every season/makes mouths at us" is, as Parameswaran explains, a literal translation from Panjabi: "its meaning is clear – every season sticks its tongue out at us, but the phrase 'makes mouths:' is certainly an idiom worth adopting…" ("Ganga in the Assiniboine" 79) Fascinating is also the intermingling of mindscapes, and therefore, of

imagery, in writers who emigrate to a completely different country from their own, from India to Canada, for example: "When I write poetry, the landscape around me is cedar and pine, brilliant expanse of sky and snow, endless winter and blowing wind, but in the farther stretches of memory are other sounds and smells and colours, of temple bells and mango blossoms, white jasmine and flaming gulmohur" (Parameswaran, "Ganga in the Assiniboine" 79).[14] All in all, English will always be considered in India as a leftover of colonialism, an imposition from their colonial past, but it is also a double-edged sword as Mikhail Bakhtin suggests when he states that

> Language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's….the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language…but rather it exists in other peoples's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word and make it one's own. (293-294)

Otherwise stated, language is one of the means we have to communicate, if these postcolonial women writers wish to have a voice, to be heard and understood, to get their works published and be internationally recognized, they better use the most cosmopolitan language of the world, because "writing…is not just a matter of putting one's thoughts on paper. Writing is also about social power.[15] Similarly, Parameswaran points out that India became a modern nation on account of English being the main language of communication: "India came together as a modern nation because English was the sole language of government and higher education for a century" ("The Why of Manitoba's Mosaic" 66). Such uneasiness and difficulty in dealing with different languages and cultures is wonderfully expressed in Kamala Das' poem "Introduction:"[16]

> …I am Indian, very brown, born in
> Malabar, I speak three languages, write in
> Two, dream in one. Don't write in English they said,
> English is not your mothertongue. Why not leave
> Me alone, critics, friends, visiting cousins,
> Every one of you? Why not let me speak in
> Any language I like? The language I speak

---

[14] The inevitable intermingling of different landscapes in the immigrant's psyche is a constant concern in Parameswaran's fiction and non-fiction, as seen in her novel titled *Mangoes on the Maple Tree* (2006).

[15] As A. P. Mukherjee sustains: "How I write depends a lot on who I write for" (xiii).

[16] Kamala Das was born in Kerala in 1934 and died in Pune in 2009. She wrote both in English and Malayalan, her native language. Though she travelled extensively to Germany, London, Jamaica, Singapore and Montreal, and her works have been translated into French, Spanish, Russian, German and Japanese, Das is the only writer of all the studied here who never emigrated to other countries. She remained living in India during her whole life. However, far from being a traditional and submissive woman, Kamala Das was always ahead of her time. She defied conventions, celebrating teenage rebellion and explored female sexuality in an open and honest way. Though she was born in a Hindu family of Nair lineage, one of the forward castes from the Indian state of Kerala, at the age of 65, Das decided to convert herself to Islam, which also caused much controversy in her country. For further information about her character and work see N. V. Raveendran's *The Aesthetics of Sensuality. A Stylistic Study of the Poetry of Kamala Das*. New Delhi: Atlantic, 2000; and/or A. W. Dwivedi's *Kamala Das and Her Poetry*. New Delhi: Atlantic, 2006.

> Becomes mine, its distortions, its queerness
> All mine, mine alone. It is half English, half
> Indian, funny perhaps, but it is honest,
> It is as human as I am human, don't
> You see? It voices my joys, my longings, my
> Hopes, and it is useful to me as cawing
> Is to crows or roaring to the lions, it
> Is human speech, the speech of the mind that is
> Here and not there, a mind that sees and hears and
> Is aware…[17]

From Kamala Das' words we realize that language is not only grammar and syntax, but also "buried culture," as Prabha Mukherjee defends (22). And if such is the case in using the language of the colonizer, in this particular case English, postcolonial writers "are working with words and syntax which express the perception and characteristic modes of thinking of a culture which scorned their own," that is, every word does not only carry a set of associations, it also reveals particular ways of thinking and perceiving (Innes 98). As structuralists and poststructuralists, such as Barthes, Derrida and Foucault state, and Kamala Das suggests in her poem, we are enclosed in the language we inherit and cannot think outside of it.

The feelings of dislocation, disorientation and self-division are also very present in the cross-cultural process of immigration, especially when the language of the host country is not even the second language of the home culture. Such was the case of the Polish writer Eva Hoffman (1945-) when she emigrated to Canada at the age of thirteen. Her testimony, however, may also be applied to a wider context to illustrate how human beings are, first of all, "creatures of culture," and how lost we feel when we do not have external and internal parameters to interpret, and, therefore, apprehend the world we live in:

> For a while, like so many emigrants, I was in effect without language, and from the bleakness of that condition, I understood how much our inner existence, our sense of self, depends on having a living speech within us. To lose an internal language is to subside into an inarticulate darkness in which we become alien to ourselves; to lose the ability to describe the world is to render that world a bit less vivid, a bit less lucid. And yet the richness of articulation gives the hues of subtlety and nuance to our perceptions and thought. (48)

5. Homesickness.

Tales of memory, loss, fear, the sense of non-belonging and the nostalgia towards their native homeland are frequent leitmotivs in diasporic Indian women's writing. In poetry especially, their voices blend into and turn one with the land or it becomes, as in the following example, the most appropriate vehicle to write about the immigrant condition; to express what it means to be on the periphery. In the very intense poem "Terror," Himani Bannerji evokes the city of Toronto to express her sense of fear and fragmentation:

---

[17] "Introduction" belongs to her collection *Summer in Calcutta* (Rajinder Paul, 1965).

> choked in my apartment, in this peaceful city, with its
> atmosphere of hospital, prison and department store, I go out in
> the street silent, stand at a corner, stalled by the red finger
> of law and order. People stand or walk by with their faces
> swathed in transparent plastic. I catch the eye of a black woman,
> we recognise each other, the plastic begins to crack but order
> tells us to walk and we go our separate ways. (44)

Himani Bannerji was born in Bangladesh in 1942 when it was still a part of India. She received her studies in Kolkata before emigrating to Canada in 1969. There, she worked in the Department of Sociology at York University until quite recently; she retired in the year 2009. Bannerji has been especially involved with issues of Marxist, feminist and anti-racist theory from a class, gender, race perspective. Her criticism towards Canada's policy in this poem is quite evident. "Terror" belongs to Bannerji's second collection of poems *Doing Time* (1986). With this slangy expression for spending time in jail, Bannerji deals in the whole collection with the concept of prison, from a metaphorical, emotional and physical perspective. In "Terror," the other constitutes the "visible minority" in contraposition to those who constitute the norm, "wrapped in transparent plastic." According to Vevaina and Godard, Bannerji is one of the "most outspoken critics of racism in Canada" (34). In her essay "The Paradox of Diversity" (1998), the writer verbalizes her vision of Canadian multicultural discourse in the following terms:

> …colour was translated into the language of visibility. The New Canadian social and political subject was appellated "visible minority," stressing both the features of being non-white and therefore visible in a way whites are not, and being politically minor players. (2000: 30)

Bannerji coincides with Homi Bhabha's definition of the "other" as a subject marked by his/her colour and specially by his/her visibility in racial terms.[18] Her vision of how Canada receives non-white emigrants plays a major role in how they deal with homesickness. M. Laura Arce Álvarez explains:

> Bannerji subverts language and uses its power to create the language of the minorities, to give a new perspective of truth, order and reality, and particularly to create the space that this new language can describe. The poetic voice of Bannerji's poetry is the voice of the diasporic individual, the immigrant who lives in the fissure between two worlds: the past and the present. (15)

Judging by Bannerji's words in the poem which gives title to the collection "Doing Time," as a "diasporic individual" who "gives voice to the margins of society" (Álvarez 15) the emigrant to Canada will always remain suspended in time between two different worlds, just because of having a different colour: "If we who are not white, and also

[18] Idea developed by Bhabha in his work *The Location of Culture* (1998).

women, have not yet seen that here we live in a prison, that we are doing time, then we are fools, playing unenjoyable games with ourselves." (1986: 9)

Likewise, the speaker in "Terror" will never be absorbed by the centre, she will remain an "immigrant always", as Lakshmi Gill expresses in her so-titled poem:

> Immigrant Always
> We carry
> our spices
> each time
> we enter
> new spaces
> the feel
> of newness
> is ginger
> between teeth (McGifford & Kearns 33).

Myrna Lakshmi Gill, of East Indian and Spanish parentage, was born in Manila, Philippines, in 1943. Gill studied in the United States and came to Canada in 1964. She currently resides in Vancouver. As the writers previously mentioned, Gill's poetry (and also her fiction) carries a strong personal element, being her works pseudo-autobiographies in disguise. "Immigrant Always" expresses the complexity associated with defining and articulating identity in the diaspora, in the crossing of boundaries of space, race, language and culture. A sense of alienation may also be noticed in this poem, but it is presented in an ambivalent way. On the one hand, the idea of inseparably carrying, wherever the immigrant goes, his/her culture, which constitutes a sense of national proudness, on the other, the immigrant's consciousness of being alienated and marked as the other, precisely because of the former. As Roshan G. Shahani argues in his study of Indian immigrant writing in Canada:

> The sense of desolation, so much a part of the immigrant psyche, is dramatically illustrated in the poet's evocation of the Canadian ethos: its geography, climate and cityscape image a sense of desolation, perceived even more sharply when juxtaposed against the home environment. This is not to say that immigrant poetry is nostalgic reminiscence of the world left behind. Instead, it reflects the experience of being in no-man's land. (93)

However, when an immigrant arrives in a new country, he or she firstly experiences a sense of wonder at the new landscape, the illusion of living something completely new, and different, but that same exhilaration gradually turns into a kind of disenchantment and weariness in the "second phase" of the immigrant's experience. Uma Parameswaran distinguishes four different phases in the immigrant's experience. As she explains:

> In the first phase, an immigrant experiences on the one hand a source of wonder and curiosity at the new environment and on the other a deep sense of nostalgia and fear….The second phase in the immigrant's experience is that of establishing oneself, of climbing up professional and social ladders, of preoccupation with one's immediate and personal welfare…. In the next

> phase one again starts looking outward. One gets involved in politics or in community work –school committees, voluntary organizations…. In the fourth phase, one grows emotional roots in the new land that is now 'home.' ("Ganga in the Assiniboine 85-90)

As Parameswaran sustains "the inventory of losses and gains is not easy to tabulate, but the losses are often more poignant than the gains are joyous" ("Ganga in the Assiniboine" 87). Lakshmi Gill in her "Letter to a Prospective Immigrant" warns "her people" against this utopian perception. The two first stanzas of the poem read as follows:

> And what about that tired myth: Canada the Cold?
> Not a myth, I assure you. Don't come naked.
> In ten years your proud figure
> will bend like natives hunched under coats.
>
> Here the body must deny nature
> stay virginal or abort, no womb-issues.
> Housewhores are mad, in league with perverse
> Witches, cripples and wild dogs.
> Make no mistake: divided, you fall. (McGifford & Kearns 34)

Bharati Mukherjee's vision of nostalgia, however, again makes a difference. If as Eva Hoffman claims "in exile, the impulse to memorialize is magnified" (51), Mukherjee's heroines defend just the opposite: the annihilation of homesickness in pursuit of a gradual rebirth in the host land. The language of nostalgia slowly disappears. India sometimes comes to their mind, but mostly as an ideal recreation rather than as a real home. Sometimes, comments on the characters' previous home are even avoided when living with a new partner in the host country. In *Jasmine*, for instance, the protagonist, referring to her life with one of her American lovers, Bud, affirms: "He's always uneasy with tales of Hasnapur….It's as though Hasnapur is an old husband or lover. Even memories are a sign of disloyalty." (231)

Certainly, diasporic Indian writers attempt, especially when they have been in the host country for a short time, to reconstruct their home abroad, but as Aciman rightly points out "what makes exile the pernicious thing it is not really the state of being away, as much the impossibility of ever *not* being away—not just being absent, but never being able to redeem this absence" (Foreword 10). Probably, the instinctual "compulsive retrospection" will never end for these writers, "they are in permanent transience" (Aciman 13), if not they, at least their minds are. Uma Parameswaran refers to this kind of Indian expatriates as "The Nowhere Men," or "Trishankus." Their identities remain suspended in mid-air for ever, they "neither wholly repatriate themselves nor can they wholly impatriate themselves into their adopted country" ("What Price Expatriation" 27). It is said that it is much simpler to keep one's identity in a situation of constant pressure and misery than in an environment of freedom and comfort. Anyhow, one interesting area of study that may be explored is the possible difference, "in the kind and degree of nostalgia" in diasporic Indian men and women. According to Parameswaran this gender difference probably does exist and it is a direct consequence of Indian culture: "Perhaps women, with centuries of cultural

indoctrinations and expectations are able to adapt more quickly and to accept and love two homes without conflict or ambivalence" ("Home is Where Your Feet are" 210).

On the whole, the search for identity must be understood as an individual construction, a process in which everyone shows his/her own particular interpretation of the past. But there are also many other factors which might not be overlooked, for instance, the fact that identity cannot be studied in an abstract context, but in a given space and time, and obviously some issues such as class, nation, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, history which are directly connected with what we feel we are and how we are perceived in society, because identity is undoubtedly also a social construction.

Individual experience and psychological introspection characterize the writing of our century. Through their female voices these diasporic Indian writers denounce gender, class and race oppression. Their tones and shapes are consistent and homogeneous. Melancholic and sorrowful melodies frequently emerge from trapped birds metaphors. However, Parameswaran wonders if this apparent victimization, this insistence on the pains of discrimination and alienation is more a question of marketability than a real account of what it really happens: "…while publishers look for marketability, reviewers and editors tend to highlight the victim or exotic (home is elsewhere) syndromes in work by diaspora writers."[19] On another occasion and in a much more recent essay, initially published in 2000, though also compiled in *Writing the Diaspora* (2007), Parameswaran discusses the different pressures which diaspora writers, and artists in general living in Canada, are forced to face:

> "[T]here is a neo-imperialist ploy in Canada to encourage diaspora writers to occupy a safe space of the original homeland, and to ride roughshod over the few who choose to talk about the here and now. Write about India, negatively if possible, and you win kudos and awards, but write negatively about immigrant's life in the new world, and you are sent to stand in the corner with a dunce cap on your head. At the same time, there is an academic fervour in India that comes down unfavourably on diaspora writers who occupy the safe space of their original homeland. So what are a diaspora artist's options? ("Contextualizing Diasporic Locations in Mehta's *Fire* & Krishna's *Masala*" 285)

Furthermore, female experience is often articulated within the framework of family life and expressed in terms of loneliness, dislocation, isolation, non-belonging and imprisonment of the body and, especially, of the mind. Through first-person narrations, these women show the complete awareness of their situation. Telling their lives and centring their works on individual experience they find the path to discover their true selves. Because whenever we ask someone about their identity, a story appears.

Of all the writers discussed throughout this chapter, Meena Alexander, Uma Parameswaran, Bharati Mukherjee, Sherazad Jamal, Surjeet Kalsey, Himani Bannerji and Myrna Lakshmi Gill, two stand out for their optimistic view and defence of assimilation: Uma Parameswaran and Bharati Mukherjee. While frequently assimilation holds negative connotations of mimicry and cultural betrayal, these two writers are only concerned with

[19] For further information see her interesting essay "Home is Where Your Feet Are, and may Your Heart be There Too!" (208-217).

the positive aspects of assimilation. That is to say, they both praise the immigrant's urge for adaptation and resilience in the host culture rather than stagnating in the cultural, psychological and political ties of the home culture. All these seven women writers from the Indian diaspora in Canada and the United States come originally from different places of the vast and varied India, with two exceptions. Sherazad Jamal, the youngest, was born in London, but her parents are of Indian origin, and Lakshmi Gill was born in Manila, Philipines, also descendant from an Indian father. Nonetheless, the conclusion to which the majority of them often arrive is that rather than an individual self they, because of their postcolonial condition, must learn how to accept their multiple identity; their "schizophrenic" state. Sahgal defines the schizophrenic imagination as "a state of mind and feeling that is firmly rooted in a particular subsoil, but above ground has a more fluid identity that doesn't fit comfortably into any single mould." In other words, these women are unable to forget and leave behind their Indian roots, but they are also unwilling to conform to the labels society puts on them.[20] By writing out their stories, women rediscover who they really are, but probably the best solution to their problems of "cultural schizophrenia" is, as Uma Parameswaran points out, to keep in mind that "Home is where your feet are and may your heart be there too" (*Sisters at the Well* 14).

Works Cited

Aciman, André. Foreword. *Letters of Transit. Reflections on Exile, Identity, Language and Loss.* By Aciman, ed.: 9-14.

---. ed. *Letters of Transit. Reflections on Exile, Identity, Language and Loss*. New York: The New Press, 1997.

---. "Shadow Cities." *Letters of Transit. Reflections on Exile, Identity, Language and Loss.* By Aciman, ed.: 15-34.

Alexander, Meena. *Fault Lines*. New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1993.

---."No Nation Woman." *Her Mother's Ashes and Other Stories by South Asian Women in Canada and the United States*. By Nurjeham Aziz, ed.: 142-154.

Arce Álvarez, María Laura. "Too Visible: Race, Gender and Resistance in the Construction of a Canadian Identity in the Poetry of Himani Bannerji." *A Journal of English and American Studies* 36 (2007): 11-23.

Assissi, Francis. C. "Meena Alexander: Poet and Daughter of the Indian Diaspora." Copyright 1995-2009 Indolink.com, Inc. Web. 19 March 2009. <http://www.indolink.com/displayArticleS.php?id=120105041513>.

Aziz, Nurjehan, ed. *Her Mother's Ashes and Other Stories by South Asian Women in Canada and the United States*. Toronto: Tsar, 1994.

Bakhtin, M. "Discourse in the Novel." *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. By Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson, eds. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

Bannerji, Himani. "Terror." *Doing Time*. Toronto: Sister Vision Press, 1986. 44.

---. "The Paradox of Diversity." *The Dark Side of the Nation. Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Gender*. Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press, 2000.

Beck, Brenda. E. F. "Indo-Canadian Popular Culture: Should Writers Take the Lead in its Development?" in M. G. Vassanji, ed.: 121-132.

[20] However, as Parameswaran writes: "Resisting labels is far more complex than changing usages because labels arise from perceptions of selves, one's own and others" ("I See the Glass as Half Full" 173).

Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1998.
Das, Kamala. "Introduction." *Summer in Calcutta*. New Delhi. Rajinder Paul, 1965: 3.
Fraser, Robert. *Lifting the Sentence: A Poetics of Postcolonial Fiction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000.
Hand, Felicity. "Challenging the Centre: The Response of British Asian Writers". *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses* 28. 1994: 81-93.
Hoffman, Eva. "The New Nomads." *Letters of Transit. Reflections on Exile, Identity, Language and Loss.* By Aciman, ed.: 35-63.
Innes, C. L. *The Cambridge Introduction to Postcolonial Literatures in English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
Jamal, Sherazad. "Making of a Cultural Schizophrenic". By Rafiq, ed.: 119-130.
Jung, C. G. et al. ed. *Man and His Symbols*. 1964. New York: Laurel, 1968.
Kalsey, Surjeet. "Migratory Birds". By McGifford & Kearns, eds.: 40.
Khan, Abrahim H. "Indo-Canadian Religiosity and the Challenge." By Mishra, Anil Dutta & Govind Prasad, eds.: 23-32.
Kumar, Amitava. *Away. The Indian Writer as an Expatriate.* New York: Routledge, 2004.
MacEwen, Gwendolyn. "The Astronauts". *A Breakfast for Barbarians*. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1966.
McGifford, Diane & Judith Kearns, eds. *Shakti's Words. An Anthology of South Asian Canadian Women's Poetry*. Toronto: TSAR, 1993.
Mishra, Anil Dutta & Govin Prasad, eds. *India and Canada. Past, Present and Future*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2003.
---. Introduction. By Mishra, Anil Dutta & Govin Prasad, eds.: 1-22.
Mukherjee, Arun Prabha. Introduction. By Nurjehan Aziz, ed.: 10-20.
Mukherjee, Bharati. "A Four-Hundred –Year-Old Woman" *The Writer on Her Work: New Essays in New Territory*, ed. Janet Sternburg. Vol. 2. New York: W.W. Norton, 1991: 33-38.
---. Introduction. *Darkness*. Markham: Penguin, 1985: 1-4.
---. *Jasmine*. 1989. London: Virago Press, 1991.
Nelson Cary and Lawrence Grossberg, eds. *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988.
Parameswaran, Uma. "Contextualizing Diasporic Locations in Deepa Mehta's *Fire* and Srinivas Krishna's *Masala.*" In *Writing the Diaspora*. By Parameswaran: 284-294.
---. "Dispelling the Spells of Memory. Another Approach to Reading our Yesterdays." In *Writing the Diaspora*. By Parameswaran: 311-328.
---. "Ganga in the Assiniboine: Prospects for Indo-Canadian Literature." In *Writing the Diaspora*. By Parameswaran: 70-83.
---. "Home is Where Your Feet are, and may Your Heart be There Too!" In *Writing the Diaspora*. By Parameswaran: 208-217.
---."I See the Glass as Half Full." In *Writing the Diaspora*. By Parameswaran, 170-191.
---. *Mangoes on the Maple Tree*. New York: Universe, Inc., 2006.
---. "Parallels between Manitoba Realities and Diaspora/India Issues." In *Writing the Diaspora*. By Parameswaran: 247-258.
---. *Sisters at the Well*. New Delhi: Indialog, 2002.
---. "The Why of Manitoba's Mosaic." In *Writing the Diaspora*. By Parameswaran: 54-69.
---. "What Price Expatriation." In *Writing the Diaspora*. By Parameswaran: 20-36.

---. *Writing the Diaspora. Essays on Culture and Identity*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2007.

Rafiq, Fanzia. *Aurat Durbar. The Court of Women. Writings by Women of South-Asian Origin*. Toronto: Second Story Press, 1995.

Rahamathulla, B. “Canadian Immigration Policy in the Context of South Asia: a Perspective of Indian Diaspora in the New Millenium.” By Anil Dutta Mishra & Govin Prasad, eds.: 33-42.

Rao, Raja. *Kanthapura*. New York: New Directions, 1938.

Sahgal, Nayantara. “The Schizophrenic Imagination”. *Unbecoming Daughters of the Empire*. Eds. S. Chew and A. Rutherford. Sydney: Dangaroo Press, 1993.

Salehi, Soodabeh. “Building Bridges: The Role of the Indian Diaspora in Canada.” December 1998. Web. 03 August 2010. http://www.gordonfn.org/resfites/IndianDiaspora_LitReview. polf

Sarup, Madan. *Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996.

Scane, Joyce. “Uma Parameswaran.” Section 15. ca. Rebels without a Clause. November 13, 1998. Web. 19 March 2009. http://66.102.9.104/search?q=cache:BWxwPk71M6YJ:section15.ca/features/people/1998/11/13/uma_parameswaran/+uma+parameswaran&hl=es&ct=clnk&cd=8&gl=es

Shahani, Roshan G. “In Quest of a Habitation and a Name: Immigrant Voices from India.” *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 6. Fall 1992: 87-98.

Spivak, Gayatrik. “Can the Subaltern Speak?” By Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds.: 271-313.

Vassanji, M. G., ed. *A Meeting of Streams. South Asian Canadian Literature*. Toronto: Tsar, 1985.

Vevaina, Coomi S. and Barbara Godard. “Crossings”. By Vevaina and Godard, eds. *Intersexions: Issues of Race and Gender in Canadian Women’s Writing*. New Delhi: Creative, 1996: 1-54.