MEMORY AND IDENTITY: THE INDIAN DIASPORA IN VASSANJI'S *NO NEW LAND*

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

HIMADRI ROY

CENTRE OF LINGUISTICS AND ENGLISH
SCHOOL OF LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND CULTURE STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI - 110 067
INDIA

1999

CENTRE OF LINGUISTICS & ENGLISH
SCHOOL OF LANGUAGE, LITERATURE & CULTURE STUDIES
जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067 INDIA

21 July 1999

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **"MEMORY AND IDENTITY: THE INDIAN DIASPORA IN VASSANJI'S *NO NEW LAND*"** submitted by **HIMADRI ROY** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** (M.Phil) of Jawaharlal Nehru University, is his original work. This has not been published or submitted to any other university for any other purpose.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

PROF. H.C. NARANG
(CHAIRPERSON)

Professor Harish Narang
Chairperson
Centre of Linguistics & English
School of Language, Literature & Culture Studies,
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi 110067

PROF. H.C. NARANG
(SUPERVISOR)

Professor Harish Narang
Chairperson
Centre of Linguistics & English
School of Language, Literature & Culture Studies,
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi 110067

Gram: *JAYENU* **Tel:** 6107676, 6167557/Ext. 2231, **Fax:** 91-011-6165886, 6106025

DEDICATED TO

PROFESSOR H. C. NARANG,

my quintessential guru.

Guided me to the path of enlightenment,
But with love and care.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like, first of all, to express my deep gratitude to Professor H.C. Narang, who gave time and thought to my research. He encouraged my labour with caring support, and assisted me with substantial informations, unsolicited insights and suggestions.

To Professor Shyam M. Asnani, of Department of English, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla, I am highly obliged for providing me with some of his materials.

I am grateful to Mrs. Kanta Kapoor, the `caring' librarian of Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute. Besides her, I am whole-heartily obliged to the Library of Jawaharlal Nehru University, American Centre Library, and Sahitya Akademi Library.

To my brother, Kukku, and to my sister, Didon, I express indebted appreciation for being so much considerate and concerning.

I wish my gratitude to my dearest friends, Ajay and Pushkar, for providing me moral and emotional support.

Last but not the least, I am deeply appreciated and thankful to my parents, who as usual shared my excitement with keen consideration and concern.

HIMADRI ROY

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

TO A DIFFERENT SHORE: INDIANS IN CANADA

Sad was the day , we said farewell,
Dear native land, to thee;
And wander'd forth to find a home
Beyond the stormy sea.
Hard then our fate; fast flow'd the tears,
We tried to hide in vain,
At thought of those we left behind
At might ne'er see again.

- ***Ronald Takaki***[1]

The ships signalled with the semaphore, and the eyes of the boarding Indians twinkled with dismay as they saw their own landscape disappearing. A sense of loss - loss of one's own land, own identity - enveloped them. An acumen of hope, an expectancy of prospect, and a dream of fulfilment took the place of pains of parting. Aspirations designing the future - filled with illusions, yet, joy - built up every moment. Thus, a migration took place, a crossing of borders to a different shore.

According to Weinberg, migration is "the changing of the place of abode permanently or, when temporarily, for an appreciable duration as example, in the case of seasonal workers. It is used symbolically in the transition from one surrounding to another in the course of human life".[2] The concept helps best to understand migration is that of "push and pull" factors, the idea put forward by Lee in 1966. Most individuals have a permanent residence and this is the normal

state of affairs even if each is involved in a number of circular moves around this place. If, however, it is believed that needs can no longer be satisfied at this place, then a move somewhere else may have to be considered, if psychological strain is to be avoided. Thus a 'push' factor appears. Otherwise, an individual can be satisfied with the present situation, but new information may persuade that a move elsewhere will offer new and attractive opportunities. This can be termed the "pull" factor.[3]

Major overseas migration from India had hardly taken place before the British took over the authoritative power of India in their hands. New industrial and commercial ventures, especially plantations, created the need for large supplies of labour. The colonialists and the planters found it impolitic and immoral to draw the native population for this purpose. With the ban of African slavery in the first half of the nineteenth century, India became one of the alternatives for the supply of labour. This became the main "pull" factor. However, the colonial supreme authority and the European imperial scenario created severe economic and social disturbances among the labour society of India. This was the "push" factor.[4] Due to this pull and push factors of the European domination, the seeds for personal enhancement abroad was sowed since a belief of greener pastures on the other side of the shore, had always been there in the hearts of the Indians. Not only the economic conditions but Indian migration was stimulated by situations such as higher studies, marriages, employment offers, etc., and factors instrumental in

choosing a destination for example, cost of living, presence of relatives and/or friends, hearsay informations, and others, now drove them decade after decade to different shores. Indians began to spread themselves throughout the globe.

In the nineteenth century, the migration was organized by the indenture system. Indenture was "a contract by which the emigrant agreed to work for a given employer for five years, performing the tasks assigned to him on a specialized wage. At the end of the five years, the emigrant was free to reindenture or to work elsewhere in the colony; at the end of ten years, he was entitled to a subsidised return passage".[5] The British administration introduced this indentured labour emigration system in India in the first half of nineteenth century. Most of the immigrants during this period were unskilled or semi-skilled labourers from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Rajputana, Maharashtra, Bengal, and central and southern coastal districts of Madras. Simultaneously, significant numbers of the itinerants, mostly from Gujarat, were also engaged in trade, commerce and other similar activities.

In the early years of the nineteenth century, the socio-economic conditions in India - particularly in rural India - were very harsh, and the capacity of the land to support the people dependent on it was dwindling. Despite the innate conservatism of the rural population and their belief in taboos against travelling abroad, there were people in India, who responded to the indentured labour system happily. From the 1820s, the first few years were marked by new opportunities

brought about by the shrewd policies of the colonial administrators.

To begin with, migration was periodic or seasonal, haphazardly organized to the neighbouring countries. Ceylon, Mauritius and the Malay Peninsula became the initial targets of these colonists. There was no uniform system of control applied to all prospective recruiters of labour. Under the indenture system, a prospective employer of labour placed an order with a recruiting agent based in India for the supply of a stipulated number of labourers. The recruiting agent thereupon sent his subordinate contact-men into the villages, and picked up the required number of men. These men became indentured labour to their employment agencies. The charges for recruiting, and the expenses involved in the transport of the labourer, were borne by the employer, and the wages were calculated with due allowance for this initial expenditure. Their wages were fixed at the time of recruitment and were not subject to any change.

The conditions of impoverishment encouraged indenture. The organization of the indentured labour recruitment for emigration to Ceylon began during the third decade of the nineteenth century. The migrants were recruited by a headmen known as "*kangani*".[6] Each *kangani* recruited a score or more of men belonging mainly to his own caste and kin group. Often the *kangani* was a man with some capital who lent his followers the expenses of travelling to the country for labouring and settling down on a plantation. He negotiated with the white overseer about wages and working conditions and could remove his followers to another

plantation if the terms were not satisfactory. Most of the Indian labourers were employed on the tea and rubber plantations in Ceylon.

In Mauritius, Indian labourers were quite substantial in numbers, hence it is sometimes referred as "little India".[7] But the survival of these communities was much more problematic for the tyrannical, and entrenched white-settler's regime and the colonial government. Most of the indentured migrants were rural and lowly educated. They were appointed to work hazardously on the sugar-cane plantations.

A large proportion of Indian labour coming into Malaya as indentured labourers was absorbed on the sugar plantations. Sugar became a lucrative plantation crop in this equatorial region. Sugar cultivation expanded till the end of the century, when the rise of rubber put an end to its prospects. Of secondary importance was coffee, which also had to give way before the phenomenal progress of rubber. The *kangani* recruit system was also followed over here, but in more legalized and regularized manner than in Ceylon. From the second decade of this century, there were also the labour requirements of governmental undertakings like the public works, municipal services, and road and rail constructions. For these, the Malaysian Government recruited on its own, directly from India. The indentured labour that migrated to Malaya Peninsula comprised overwhelmingly of South Indians. However, the Indian community that exists today in the present Malaysia is a heterogenous one.

Debarred by white prejudice and legal discrimination from access to the dominant group, the Indians were discriminated even in Latin American countries. They were forced into the position of an intermediate stratum because they were indentured labours there too. The Indian labourers occupied a vulnerable position far across from their homeland. Despite their hazardous lives, the indentured migrants readily accepted the offer for prosperous economic opportunities, rather than live in conditions of impoverishment back in their own homeland. And for the colonists, importing Indian cheap labour became profitable. So the British government adopted the expedient of importing labours from India.

The warm and humid climate of Fiji enhanced the growth of sugar, and the colonial government imported labours from India. The "coolies"[8] had to serve the white-skinned regime at very low wages for a term of five years, after which they had the option of returning to India, reindenturing themselves for a further period of five years, or settling in the colony as free men. The majority of Indians preferred the last alternative. For the sugar plantation, the recruitment was often made under false or misleading pretenses. After a long sea voyage under crowded and unsanitary conditions, the workers were housed in extremely primitive dwellings, consisting typically of rows of mud or corrugated-iron barracks. Often, entire families were housed in a single room. Flogging by white overseer was a daily occurrence.

Africa was another important destination where Indian indentured labourers were exported by the British colonial overseers. South Africa had been a British colony for a long time. The native people of the country were pushed away from this region to the central parts of Africa, after the discovery of gold and diamond mines. Huge numbers of illiterate, destitute, and rural people of India were employed on the sugar-cane plantations. South Africa secured a vastly disproportionate number of emigrants from northern part of India, especially from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. Indians met with mistrust and hostility from the whites. Official discrimination was a usual phenomenon. Natal became the central attention of the white regime because of the concentrating Indian immigrants there. When immigration from India to South Africa was stopped due to political disturbances caused by apartheid, the Indians in South Africa lost touch with their homeland. Albeit in precarious isolation, the Indian migrants nevertheless remained an encapsulated community in South Africa till the immigration policy of the British government was relaxed. But in East Africa, the scene was filled with bizarre events. The immigration rules in East Africa were "so difficult that no alien was admitted unless he could fill a post that was for the benefit of everybody".[9] Most of the Indians were employed as indentured labourers to work on the Kenya-Ugandan railways being developed by the colonial administration. But the conditions were the same as in the other British colonies. Social privileges and benefits were taken away from the Indian labourers.

Their positions were no better than those of slaves. But it has been noticed that when the immigrants from India were released from their positions of pseudo-slavery, they seemed to have improved their socio-economic position within a short span of time.

In the Caribbean Islands, the Indians had to face similar conditions and discrimination under the domination of the whites.The same sugar-cane cultivation had taken these Indian labourers there. The Indian migrants were secluded in the plantations, which was followed by a relatively restricted freedom to enter all strata of the wider society. For these Indians, there were impediments and obstacles at every step.The most interesting trait of the indentured Indians was their interaction with different races in the colony. This was because the migrants moved as individuals, and the scarcity of women disrupted the structure of preservation of traditional, folk, rural and cultural elements.

Promiscuity aboard the ships and later in the sugar estate barracks made the observance of the rules of cultural and caste purity impossible. Random assignments to various estates destroyed the traditional caste hierarchy. To add to such a rapid change, many low-caste persons were as valued as their higher caste counterparts. There were drastic changes in domestic organizations, linguistic demarcations and perpetuation of the traditional values with which they migrated. This cross-section of the communities and its geographically dispersed nature, residential segregation and concentration in inner city areas led to the formation

of "ethnic ghettos"[10], an illusion of home orientation and the myth of returning to the homeland. The ethnicity among the Indian communities in these British colonies had elements of orthodoxy for maintenance of culture.

The whole scenario of immigration changed after the post World War-II era. This second phase of immigrants were strikingly different from the earlier immigrants. The immigrants now went to the developing countries like Britain, United States and Canada.They belonged to the educated professional groups of the cities,in constrast to the farmers and rural folk of the past. They were engineers, scientists and college teachers as well as accountants and entrepreneurs.

> "The first Indian immigrants and the post-1965 Indian immigratns are two separate worlds. It is a class thing. They came from the farming, the lower class. We came from the educated middle class. We spoke English. We went to college".[11]

But like the early Indians, the second wave immigrants had come to the developing countries mainly for economic reasons. The new immigrants of India were not becoming railroad workers and plantation labourers. While their non-English speaking predecessors were employed in the economy they found in the British colonies, the recent immigrants of India did not face English language barriers in the general labour market. They also, perhaps, view employment possibilities much more than did the first wave people, for they migrated as settlers and not as sojourners. Employment prospects for them had been severely limited in India. The second wave immigrants had found economic opportunities in the developed countries to be much greater than in their home country.

Most of these Indians immigrants were employed in skilled or semi-skilled jobs. In many cases, wives and children also worked. The lifestyle of the new immigrants had little in common with that of the early Indian community with its agrarian orientation and predominance of illiterate males. The traditional, agrarian ethos of the previous Indian immigrants faded with the full participation in the materialistic culture of the developed countries by the new immigrants.

Between the 1950s and early 1960s, individual males from India went to Britain and found work, lived together in shared houses, or made some arrangements for their accommodation. Such migration patterns often laid particular beginnings of a new community in a new land when one pioneering individual, family or group of families decided to try their luck overseas. Once established, immigrants from a particular village, or region became sources of highly localized information about the new country, and often provided tangible help in moving and resettlement. Thus 'chain migration'[12] took place and this became a key feature of the transplantation of the Indian communities in Britain. The migrants, who were already settled, gradually brought their families, friends and villagemates. Most Indians arriving in England during this period were basically Sikhs, from the regions of Punjab, Haryana and their adjacent areas.

Employment for Indian immigrants was easily available in construction works, factories, transportation, and communication, in return for low wages. Although, construction works did not have the security as did the factory work, it paid more

money and soon earning more money became an important criterion. As a result, some chose difficult, insecure work over steady employment. They would not hesitate to take up a demeaning job like cleaning latrines and sweeping cigarette butts. This was because they wanted only money and enhancement of social position back in their home society and not in Britain. Even religious and caste rules were overlooked. For expediency, many Sikhs migrants discarded their turbans and shaved their beards because finding employment could become easier. Men lived in crowded conditions - thirty or more men lived in a three-bedroomed apartment, often slept in shifts, when one left for work another took his cot. Their social centre was the pub, where they quenched their thirst with a glass of beer or ale. Their arrangements were "meagre, but it was temporary and there was promise of greater prosperity and power upon returning to Punjab".[12] Therefore, their primary goal was making money which led to an enhancement in prestige back in India.

Emigration to the United States of America began prominently in this century. Though there was a trickle of Asian Indians entering the United States from 1820 onwards, the immigrants from India were still a very negligible number till the end of the nineteenth century. They were described as having:

> "hair varying in hue from brownish-black to purplish or intense raven-black... . The hide of the Hindoo varies from the dull, pale, sallow-brown of a Mexican to the extreme black of an African. The man who hails from the highlands of north-western Hindustan is a shade darker than olive. A few coming from Kashmir have fair skins, light hairs and blue eyes. Those who come from the low plains have darker complexions and an extremely sun-burnt appearance... . They have intelligent faces, keen eyes, compressed lips determined chins".[13]

Majority of the Indian immigrants were Sikhs. As they wore traditional headdresses, the newcomers from India were described as "the tide of turbans".[14] In the census of 1997, Asian American population statistics showed that Indians occupied a significant position after the Chinese, the Filipino, and the Japanese, respectively. The naturalization of the Asian Indian community in the United States shrank steadily after the World War I. In 1913, it was held by the courts that Asian Indians were Caucasians and hence entitled to be considered "white persons"[15], eligible to citizenship under the 1790 law. In 1922, the Supreme Court, in a case involving *Tadeo Ozawa*, a Japanese immigrant who was denied naturalised citizenship, declared that "white person" was synonymous with Caucasian. But it created a furore when in 1923, the Supreme Court denied citizenship to a Sikh, *Bhagat Singh Thind*, who was ethnically a Caucasian. The United States government made the Asian Indian ineligible to naturalized citizenship. The granting of citizenship through immigration for Indians became difficult. For instance, a certain Bengali from India, Prafulla G. Mukherji emigrated to the United States in 1905 as an undergraduate. He worked as a hydraulic engineer in New Jersey, after graduating from the University of Pittsburgh in 1911. He was then given citizenship only after four years of his graduation, in 1915. However, the immigration laws of the United States continued to discriminate the Asian Indians.[16]

The second-wave of immigration to the United States was strikingly different from the first-wave. As mentioned earlier, the new immigrants of India came here with economic prospets. They started taking professional and technical jobs. They could be found operating travel agencies, sari shops, and luncheonettes featuring pizza, souvlakia, and Indian 'fast food'. They are also newstand operators in the subways of Manhattan. Asian Indians have also found a niche in the motel business.[17]

Asian Indians had been trying to define who they are in their adopted society. The second-wave immigrant generation was too busy trying to survive after they have arrived in United States. The issue of their identity had already been questioned before, but became prominent in 1975, when the United States Civil Rights Commission declared:

> "... It is undeniable that Indians are different in appearance; they are equally dark-skinned as other non-white individuals. ...While it is commonly believed that the majority of Indians working in this country are well-educated and employed in jobs of a professional nature. ...Vis-a-vis other professionals, Indians are disadvantaged for reasons of racial discrimination".[18]

A year later, the Bureau of the Census in United States agreed to reclassify immigrants from India as "Asian Indians". As the laws have become strict now, immigration by the Asian Indians have decreased in number in recent years.

But in Canada, the experience of the Indian immigrants had been something very different. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Asian Indians or East Indians - as the Canadians called them - saw in Canada a land of opportunities for

fulfilling their desires, accomplishing their dreams, and achieving their material goals. Hence the number of East Indians entering Canada increased very rapidly between 1905 to 1907. While only 45 East Indians had landed there in 1905, their number jumped to 387 in the following year and in 1907, the numbers of immigrants from India reached 2124.[19] Until then the numbers of immigrants from India had increased at a very slow pace. Most of the Asian Indians were entering Canada through the western part of the country, mainly through Vancouver. The vast majority of Asian indian immigrants who came in the first decade of the 1900s were from Punjab and most of these were Sikhs.

As Canada had already been a land of multi-ethnic communities, maintaining one's own cultural identity became an essential and foremost duty. Despite the wages for labour were not very high, East Indians got jobs in every field. As we have seen earlier too, East Indians can lead a tough life, accommodation was also not a big issue for them. But the real problem was the consequent disturbances that took place because of the arrival in the multi-cultural society.

> "It is not a question of race, but of wages, not a question of men, but of modes of life... . When men require meat to eat and real beds to sleep in are ousted from their employment to make room for vegetarians who can find the bliss of sleep in some filthy corner, it is rather difficult to say at what limit indignation ceases to be righteous".[20]

Hence, it led to violence and agitation against East Indians, which, of course, most of the press deplored.

Canada effectively stopped East Indian immigration with an Order-in-Council in January 1908, which gave immigration officials the authority to bar any one who

would be a potential immigrant to Canada and did not come on a "continuous voyage"[21] from their native country. Since there were no direct steamship services from India to Canada- most immigrants from India came via Hong Kong - East Indians were, in effect, barred without the embarrassment of any act or regulation singling them out. However, six years later, in the spring and early summer of April of 1914, 376 Asian Indian immigrants took the voyage to Canada on a Japanese vessel - the *Komagata Maru* which had been chartered by Gurdit Singh, who had always wanted to start a "continuous voyage" from India to Canada.

Before the *Komagata Maru* started its voyage for Vancouver from Hong Kong on April, 1914, the Governor of Hong Kong sent a telegram to the Governor General of Canada, on 30 March, 1914, wanting to know whether the boarders of the ship would be permitted to land in Canada or not. But there was no reply. The Governor of Hong Kong wrote again on April 6, 1914, informing the Governor General of Canada that a vessel *Komagata Maru* had left Hong Kong for Vancouver on April 4th. The Governor General of Canada replied at once on April 7, 1914:

> "Your telegrams 30th March and 6th April, Indian Sikhs on way to British Columbia. Regret it was impossible to obtain views of Canadian Government earlier. Entry is prohibited under order in Council of 8th December 1913, and 31st March, 1914, which prohibit entry of certain classes of immigrants into British Columbia until end of September, 1914".[22]

Komagata Maru had left Hong Kong on April 4, 1914, from Hong Kong, halting at Moji, Japan, for picking up more passengers. It reached Canada on

Saturday, 23 May, 1914; it was forced to anchor on the far side of the Burrard Inlet, opposite Vancouver. Then it followed several incidents which are significant milestones in the annals of Indians immigration to Canada. Malcolm Reid, a political appointee as the Vancouver immigration agent, H.H. Stevens, a Conservative Party M.P. who was an opponent of East Indian immigration, and W.C. Hopkinson, the Central Investigation Inspector for the East Indian immigration - all of them would be remembered by the Indian community as villians in the *Komagata Maru* incident.

The passengers on board were treated very badly by the Canadian government, and this maltreatment created a great contempt against the Canadian immigration policy among the Punjabis in particular and in Indians in general in North America. They now realised fully that the real cause of their humiliation and indignities was their slavery to the British regime back home. The terrible treatment that they underwent filled them with distress and embarrassment. Day after day, the passengers of the *Komagata Maru* faced different kinds of humiliation in addition to the threat of a deportation.The contempt which the British government showed them under the garb of prohibiting the entry of *Komagata Maru* led soon to a hatred against the British colonialism. Seeds of a revolution were sown on the Canadian soil and not much later thereafter, many of those associated with the immigration struggle of the *Komagata Maru* were also involved in the revolutionary activities in Canada.

The most important names during this time were of Bhag Singh and Mewa Singh. Bhag Singh was in the Tenth Bengal Lancer Regiment, but rebelled against the colonial government, burned his honorable discharge certificate in 1909, and emigrated to Canada in 1912. He felt that serving the British Indian Army was to be in the service of slavery. He joined the Khalsa Diwan and formed a special branch of the Socialist Party of Canada in Vancouver. He became a member of the Ghadr party, a revolutionary party of East Indians especially the Sikhs who were revolting against the British Government to free their homeland from its colonial grasp. Along with other revolutionaries in Canada, he published a weekly in Urdu and Gurmukhi, *Ghadr*. He took an active part in bringing the passenger of *Komgata Maru* on off-shore. Later, he became a priest in a gurdwara, where he was shot dead by another revolutionary. Mewa Singh was a resident of Vancouver, who also tried hard to get the East Indian immigrants of *Komagata Maru* into Canada. Later, he shot dead W.C. Hopkinson and was arrested for carrying a weapon purchased in the United States. Ten days after the shooting, Mewa Singh was tried for murder and sentenced to death by hanging. Thus, both Bhag Singh and Mewa Singh are regarded as martyrs by the East Indians of Canada.

After the adverse publicity the Canadian government received during the incident of *Komagata Maru*, it became easier for East Indian immigrants to arrive in Canada. Again, the motivation of the immigrants who came to Canada during the first decade of this century and those came after the second World War had a

drastic differentiation. While, previously, it was the labour class with strong physical attributes that the bulk of immigrants comprised of, today, it is the scholars, scientists, technical personnel and industrial engineers, and commercial managers who are preferred as emigrants.

Canada embarked on the path for economic prosperity after the second World War. The East Indians hoped with great expectations to fulfil their dreams and urges. They aspired to be materially affluent for impoverishment had always devoured them menacingly back in their homeland. Hence forth, crossing all barriers and hazards, they came to a federal country, where all ethnic groups were treated with remarkable justice.

One interesting feature about East Indians in Canada is that among them there are 'twice migrants'[23] too. These latter subgroups migrated from Britain or other former British colonies, mostly from Africa, especially from East African countries, like Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. Some have came from Latin American countries, especially Guyana; and others from Caribbean countries, for instance, Trinadad. Some have come from the Pacific Islands, mainly Fiji. Others have come from the South-east Asia, especially Malaysia, Singapore, and Mauritius. Most of them were Gujaratis, Punjabis, Hindus, Punjabi Muslims or Sikhs. The direct migrants and twice migrants both shared a common cultural identity, which remains fresh in their memories even after parting from 'home' country,[24] in some cases for hundreds of years.

But the 'twice migrants' considered themselves superior to the direct migrants. They came with the experience of an urban development and of dealing with the white-skinned community. They were more skilled, had more linguistic facility, and more communication capabilities. But their migration created a chaos among the immigrant community of East Indians existing in Canada.

Since the second World War, Canada has emerged as an economically and militarily powerful sovereign state. Many Canadians are culturally ethnic, politically nationalist and economically internationalist. In such a country, cultural distinctiveness is a socio-emotional issue. A common feeling binds the community and enriches it with internal power to maintain an integrity. The attachment of individuals to the social order is primarily concerned with a cultural myth - the 'myth of return'.[25] For direct migrants, the myth is still undimmed. They maintain the myth and very often visit their homeland; but for the 'twice migrants', the myth has been diminishing gradually except for the projection of their cultural effervescence among them, which they maintain always.

As stated earlier, Canada is a multi-cultural country. There are around thirty odd groups that are sufficiently similar and integrated to be described as ethnic groups. As a result, not only the several ethnic groups did not disappear into a melting pot of a common culture but each group was able to preserve and foster its ethnic identity. The East Indian community also maintained its cultural identity. They shared a mutual solidarity, possessed cultural feelings and traditional

sentiments. They maintained a degree of integration and a sense of their own identity with their own distinct culture, tradition, race, and religion. While maintaining all these, the East Indians always considered themselves as a part of Canada. A shared feeling of identity is important when the community exists in a minority condition; but transactions between people who share common traditional sentiments is also essential to maintain the mutual solidarity. Transactions can be political - such as participation in political decision-making, chain of command and the exercise of political power; they can be cultural - such as schooling, the diffusion of literature and broadcast or performed entertainment; they can be social - such as intermarriage and social class relations; and they can be economic - such as trade and transport. These sort of transactions can benefit any community that is in minority in a different state. East Indians try to enhance their feeling of togetherness through these transactions.

The ethnic consciousness is highly emphasized in communities that exist in inconsiderable number. It is obvious that informal social relationships are frequently maintained when communities are small or where culture, language, or religion are shared within that small domain. The East Indians maintain this through their lifestyles. Sikhs of India, for instance are numerically large and their identity is both ethnic and religious. They have been successful in preserving their religion. Ismaili Muslims of East Africa are also both an ethnic and a religious group, and they have founded strong religious institutions wherever they have

gone. With the Hindus the same orthodoxy can be perceived. They have bonded together to establish Hindu temples, which are used for offering prayers, for the presentation of council ceremonies, and for important rituals linked to marriage and death.

The religious life of the East Indian immigrants has, however, undergone a marked change. Temples have been built from Halifax to Vancouver. They make worship on Sunday as regular pattern. These services often make reference to the sacred calender followed on their homeland. As it is difficult to meet on week days, Sundays are much more convenient. Where the East Indian community is large enough, several temples develop along cultural or ethnic lines. For example, in Toronto, there are temples for Hindu people from India, gurdwaras for Sikhs of India, and there are places for informal devotional meetings of the East Indians from Africa. The services are several hours in length, requiring a knowledgeable priest familiar with the complexities of the formal ritual pattern. So we observe that among this minority of East Indians, there are several subdivisions of ethnicity and cultural sentiments. But politically and sociologically, they all resemble one single identity and they themselves prefer to carry that single-identity of originating from India. As they are from the same country, and in a foreign land they try to maintain a single identity and exist as one community and therefore they share same cultural and traditional sentiments. Thus, at one level, there is a cultural homogenization among the followers of various traditional and religious customs

from within the all-embracing East Indian community.

Earlier East Indians demonstrated a clear pattern of group maintenance in Canada. Strong group consciousness and minor-group status were being exhibited through socio-cultural interactions. The ethnicity and culture of the East Indian community is defined through its relationship to other communities which are existing in the same society. When we talk about relationship to other communities, the question of boundary for one's own culture comes into question. During the colonial period, the East Indian community can be highlighted through the maintenance of the ethnic boundary and its existence continued for decade after decade. The boundary maintained strengthened with the passage of time. At a very dawdling pace, the rate of inter-cultural marriages was rising.

But in the new world of these second-wave immigrants, the scenario is very different. The inter-cultural marriages progressed very fast. Acculturation is gradually slipping into but very subtly. Still the possessiveness of one's own culture, religion and tradition is being inextricably maintained. The new world of East Indian immigrants seem to lose their cultural identification by neglecting several customs and they seem not to have emotional approach towards those. For instance, previously inter-caste marriage was seen as blasphemy but today inter-marriages prefered to enhance and strengthen the cultural identity in Canada. But ethnic identity becomes crucially important whenever they perceive that it is threatened.

The federal Government of Canada had favourable legal conditions for these East Indian immigrants. Most of them desire good communication skills in English for their children because they are important for achieving professional status and upward mobility in the society. The schools are the main place for making such dreams a reality. But on the other side, schools are crucial places for acculturation. They face lots of problems in making cultural adjustment but practically their subtle desire is that schools should play a significant role in maintenance and development of the child's ethnic language and culture. There is an awareness of protecting one's own culture and tradition in the multi-cultural society of Canada.

Though the East Indian community believes that education is highly valued knowledge that can be achieved easily, schools are places where socio-economic classes and status come in question. Economic differences among the East Indian community is very prominent, but in schools all students are treated equal as their backgrounds don't matter. This leads to acculturation to some extent. But the biggest factor of acculturation in educational institution is that they are judged by western standards. And this urge of westernisation creates the definite cause of losing one's own culture. The metaphor appropriate to the social and cultural developments through the educational institutions is the kind of communication that exists in the classroom. Hence, the interaction between different classes of students holds importance. The intermingling of various students creates an atmosphere of homogeneous culture. Thus we can see that the children of the East Indian

immigrants generally, identify themselves more strongly with the values of the majority than what their parents tend to follow.

In a multicultural and multiracial society of Canada, today the bonding among the East Indians is enhanced by informal emotional relationships among the members of the community. Their power of maintenance of cultural values is more emphatic and more distinctive. They have circumscribed themselves into a group where they feel they have their own individual identification and which has developed a favorable self-perception for instance, by emphasizing positive in-group and negative out-group traits. They are invoked by not stereotypical myths, but by pro-group interpretations of historical and current events. The East Indian communities in Canada have established a different social identity -- different from the previous ethnic ones. But they also consider themselves as part and parcel of the cultural tradition, its values, patterns of conduct, and achievements; and they try their best to contribute to the process of integration, maintaining orthodoxy in their cultural norms. As we all know that ethnic boundaries are those social boundaries which isolate and nucleate any community, but there is a continuous flow of information, interaction, exchange and sometimes people across their own ethnic group exemplify to cross the so-called ethnic boundary.

Though Canada has a variety of communities and groups nucleated among themselves, but these groups maintain their self- identity. They are no more considered as isolated communities by the Federal Government of Canada. The

East Indian Community has the power of integration but they are deemed with a starting denial for acceptance of authoritative cultural values of other communities that exist in majority. They feel a sense of pride in maintaining a self-identity, and a predomination of self-ethnicity has always been observed among them, whether at the time of colonial rule or later during the post-colonial period.

Canada today is not so much a mosaic as a complex matrix of various cultures and the divisions within each culture. This matrix defines and boundaries subtly, but sociologically speaking they create an effervescence of ethnicity and cultural sentiments. The new world of East Indian community is no longer marginalised in terms of privileges and beneficial advantages. The contributions that these new immigrants of India had made is undoubtedly very appreciable. Doctors, lawyers, engineers, entrepreneurs, chartered accountants, management professionals, information and technology professionals, teachers, professors, research scholars -- they are dispersed everywhere for everysort of jobs, from a hospital to a software industry. The economical infrastructure of Canada got a developing change due to the brain drain from India in the last three decades. From power generation, telecommunication to transport, everywhere there had been a drastic change of the country due to these East Indians. Not only the skilled East Indian professionals, there are also a large number of unskilled immigrants in Canada who have emigrated from India. Since an overwhelmingly large unskilled East Indian immigrants are from agrarian background, they have taken

mainly to farming. The agricultural sector is not very popular with the mainstream community and therefore, East Indians make a significant contribution in this sphere.

People of East Indian origin carried with them their dance, music, poetry, myths, legends, cuisines, colourful customs and dresses. There are regular classes of classical music and dance of India. Artists, classical, popular, folk and film, of India perform regularly in Canada. Films depictings East Indian immigrant situations and characters, have got significant notice and appreciation. Besides, video lending libraries with film cassettes of India, shops selling audio cassettes of East Indian music, East Indian programmes on T.V. and radio have all become common now. Clothes and fashions of India, restuarants and shops with spices of India and other foodstuffs have sprung up in many cities of Canada.[25]

The East Indians have established themselves in every fields most significantly they have encapsulated their experiences and memories through their unique writings. Writers like Rohinton Mistry, Uma Paranesweran, Himani Bannerji, Rana Bose, Rahul Verma, Surjeet Kalsey, M. G. Vassanji and numerous others have enriched the literature of Canada. They have portrayed not only India from memories, but they hued Canada with their best colours. Theirs writings were so affective that they inspired lots of other Canadian to write on themes of immigrant experiences, for instance, Valerie Fitzgerald, Janette Turner Hospital and Lawrence Hill are some of them. Thus the manifestations of experiences

through writings have increased in a significant number among the educated ones. Not only writings, the East Indians have proved their vibrancy and dynamic traits through their establishments in diversified fields in the multicultural society of Canada.

NOTES

1. Ronald Takaki, 'Emigrants from Erin: Ethnicity and Class within White America', in *A Different Mirror: A History of Multiculticultural America* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993), p. 145.

2. Leszek A. Kosinsi, (ed.), 'Introduction: The Study of Migration', in *People on the Move: Studies in International Migration* (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1975), p. 3.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

4. R.K. Jain, 'Introduction: Overseas Emigration in the Nineteenth Century', in *Indian Communities Abroad: Themes and Literature* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1993), p. 4.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

7. Pierre L.van den Berghe, 'Indians in Natal and Fiji: A "Controlled Experiment" in Culture Contact', in *Race and Ethnicity: Essays in Comparative Sociology* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1970), p. 273.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 262.

9. Parminder Bhachu, 'Introduction', in *Twice Migrants: East African Settlers in Britain* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1985), p. 7.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

11. Ronald Takaki, '"Strangers" at the Gates Again: Post-1965', in *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1989), p. 445.

12. Parminder Bhachu, 'Introduction', in *Twice Migrants: East African Settlers in Britain* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1985), p. 4.

13. Arthur W. Helweg, 'Indians in England: A Study of the Interactional Relationships of Sending, Receiving and Migrant Societies', in M.S.A. Rao, (ed.), *Studies in Migration: Internal and International Migration in India* (Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1986), p. 376.

14. Ronald Takaki, '"The Tide of Turbans": Asian Indians in Americans, in *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1989), p. 295.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 294.

16. Roger Daniels, 'The Indian Diaspora in the United States', in J.M. Brown, and Rosemary Foot, (eds.), *Migration: The Asian Experience* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1994), p. 90.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 89-91.

18. Ronald Takaki, '"The Tide of Turbans": Asian Indians in Americans, in *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1989), p. 446.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 447.

20. S.S. Josh, 'Indians Go To Canada', in *Tragedy of Komagata Mara* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1975), pp. 1-5, 101.

21. Roger, Daniels, 'The Indian Diaspora in the United States', in J.M. Brown, and Rosemary Foot, (eds.), *Migration: The Asian Experience* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1994), p. 86.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 86.

23. Deparment of External Affairs, *Documents On Canadian External Relations. Vol. I. (1990-1918)* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1967), p. 643.

24. Parminder Bhachu, 'Introduction', in *Twice Migrants: East African Settlers in Britain* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1985). p. 1.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

27. Kavita A. Sharma, 'Ongoing Journey', in *The Ongoing Journey: Indian Migration to Canada* (New Delhi: Creative Books, 1997), pp. 167-177.

CHAPTER II

MEMORIES AND EXPERIENCES: WRITERS OF INDO-CANADIAN DIASPORA

...Home was the uprooting:
The shiver of separation,
Despair for our children
Fear for our future.

Home was the finding of a dry land
Bereft of water or rainfall
Where water is cherished
Where our tears made channels
And became irrigation.

Home was in watching
The fruit growing and pushing
So painfully watered;
The timber hewn down
The mill run completed.

Home was in waiting:
For new roots holding
For young ones branching
Four our yearning fading...

- Dorothy Livesay.[1]

An innate attachment with home and its roots had been always the main subject matter of the literature that displayed the experiences of the immigrants. Writers originating from different cultures came to write in English in the literary setting of multicultural Canada. The effervescence of a mixed literary milieu, issues like racism and active discrimination, the slow and agonizing process of acculturation - these are the distinctive traits of Canadian literature of the diaspora. Feelings of the family and the community are enumerated in these writings of disasporic Canada.

Whether the writings of the immigrants belong to Canada has been a point of debate for long. It all began in the sixteenth century, when explorers and voyager passed this *Ultima Thule* or the "farthest land".[2] In their descriptions of their journeys, they described the beauty of the landscape, but the natives of this land were never taken into account. Until Richard Hukluyt[3] mentioned in his *Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* about the natives of this country. Later writers like Duncan Campbell Scott,[4] George Copway,[5] and others started a tussle for prominence between the immigrants and the natives through their works. Gradually, this tussle took a concrete shape with writers like Pauline Johnson[6], Sir Humphrey Gilbert,[7] and others, who either supported or demanded the vast land of Canada as their own.

Slowly, Canadian literature discovered itself hued with different shades of colours regarding the significance of identity felt by the people there. Whether it is George McWhirter,[8] the Irish writer, or it is Frederick Philip Grove,[9] the German author or it is Mordecai Richler,[10] the Jewish or it is Austin Clarke,[11] the Barbadian, or it is Joy Kowaga,[12] the Japanese writer - all have created literature preferring tremendously their own affinities, their own cultures, their own identities. Among these, the crucial importance of identity had also been felt by the East Indians. They have been creating works interconnecting it with their immigrant experiences and their own feelings for multicultural Canada. The demographic profile of Canada also provided an opportunity to a form of loose

association with other cultures and traditions as well. This unfolding truth has been manifested by the East Indians' imaginations. The East Indians had landed there more than half a century ago. Their acquaintance with the place energized their writings, with a new affirmation, expressed with humour, passion, wit, agony, irony and bold metaphors of place, family, community, culture, tradition and identity.

In the multicultural society of Canada, the experiences that the East Indians underwent have been attempted to represent through their own writings - writings that would, obviously, treat them in a different arena. Implications of social stratification had been there since the country became a multicultual state. Several ethnic groups belonging to different cultures, were interacting together to give Canada the colour it has today. The tradition that emerged basically was the question of one's own identity among the innumerable recognitions that different cultural communities received. The question of being a minority had always been there in the hearts of the East Indians in such a society. Hence their presentations would be unprecedentally claimed in discretion. The feelings of bias and prejudice in the existing society sowed the seeds of cultural consciousness among the East Indian immigrants. The preservance of their own culture, tradition, customs became a compulsive characteristics among them. Remaining within their own domain and circumference gradually gave birth to the exhibition of the identity that they possessed. Thus, through the process of preservation of one's own culture as

well as the exhibition of their identity to the mainstream of the existing multicultural society of Canada, the writings of the East Indians gave rise to the literature that can be called as the "hyphenated"[13] Indo-Canadian Literature.

The powerful literature that the immigrants of India - as also from other places - produced has been referred to as a "hyphenated" Canadian literature. This is because everyone is a hyphenated citizen - an Indo-Canadian, or a Ukrainian-Canadian, or a French-Canadian, although the term English-Canadian is seldom heard. While there is a school of thought that celebrates hyphenation as equal recognition for all, there is also a school of thought which holds the hyphenation as ghettoization, an implicit relegation to second class citizenship of all those who do not fall into the white Anglo-Saxon or French categories.[14] Thus, the debate for the recognition of one's identity with Canada had started long time ago, and is still continuing.

The literature of the East-Indian community has presented a lot to the multicultural society of Canada. The writers of the Indo-Canadian literature have contributed to all the major literary genres - drama, poetry, and prose. The authors frequently deal with themes of being a minority and alienated in the existing society; and the sentimental marginalization through the feeling of otherness, has also been seen very often in their writings. The quest for homelands has been a common voice usually in the writings by immigrants. The East Indian writers of Canada were not far behind Indo-Canadian writings and have contributed to

Canadian literature in yet another way. The writers have brought to their writings not only racial memory and contemporary history, but also traditions of writings and literary feelings that existed back in India. The writers of East Indian community kept themselves abreast with western literary traditions and literatures, too. Thus, their contribution has helped Canadian literature make a new mark in the world of literatures.

The contribution of Indo-Canadian literature has been well-received. The feelings, the emotions, the sentiments - all lend Canadian literature with a different shade and vividness. Although the tendancy of projecting their own cultures, own customs, had always adored the writings of all immigrants, the zest with which they displayed their own traditions become quite significant in the writings of East Indians. The mood that intensified the consciousness of otherness has been demonstrated significantly in their writings. Thus, their literature has had the ambience and sensation of identity in its quality and presentation. The microcosm within which these Indo-Canadian writers work emphasizes the ardent effervescence of warmth and vehemence of the segregation and otherness in the multicultural society of Canada.

The expression of the experiences of these East Indian immigrants had always been there in the tradition that they adopted in literature. There were no attempts to create written literature when the immigrants of the East Indian origin first begun as indentured labour. It was basically the oral tradition that they

followed enthusiastically because almost all of them were illiterates. The *nautanki* of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, *naach* and *maach* of Madhya Pradesh, *teru koothu* of Tamil Nadu, *bhaavai* of Gujarat, and *jatra* of Bengal - were the only sources of expressing their own traditions and culture.[15] This phase of the oral tradition of literature continued till the influx of immigration shifted from indentured labourers to the expatriate groups consisting of scholars, professionals, and other educated ones. The writings of these new immigrants appeared in course of time and gradually flourished, contributing to all the genres of contemporary Canadian literature.

A study by Dr. Suwanda Sugunasiri, an immigrant to Canada from the Indian sub-continent, in his *In Search of Meaning: The Literature of Canadians of South Asian Origin*, published in 1989, records that between 1962-1982 a surprisingly large number of South East writers in English had published their works. The statistical figures that Sugunasiri estimated includes several authors of different genres. He calculated the total number of writers to hundred and two and the works amounted to a hundred and ninety-six. His data refers basically to *South Asians*. In the Canadian context, the term *South Asian* literature meant the writings of Canadians who trace their origin to one of the following *South Asian* countries - India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. It includes writers who came directly to Canada from one of the *South Asian* countries, or indirectly by way of Britain or other erstwhile British colonies such as the countries of Africa, Latin America,

the Caribbean Islands, the Pacific Islands, and the South-East Asia, especially Malaysia, Singapore, and Mauritius.[16] The statistical information provided included writings published till 1982. In the last decade, there have been as many publications as in the eight proceeding decades. In quality, too, the recent works after 1982 far outweigh the earlier ones and have been much more appreciated critically.

As people of Indian origin came from different parts of the world to this multicultural society of Canada, they encompassed a multiplicity of ethnicities, cultures, and traditions. Therefore the "hyphenated" category, Indo-Canadian, does not indicate a monolithic whole, but rather a conglomeration of differences.

The use of the category, Indo-Canadian, designates the need for such ethnic demarcations from the mainstream existing in Canadian multicultural society. Amid this clamour, the struggling voices of the immigrant experiences in the harsh realities of racial discrimination struggle to make their own individual identity within the mainstream hegemony of the existing society of Canada. Different divisions within the Indo-Canadian community is often the hardest fact for any mainstream to recognize.

The multiplicity of differences among Indo-Canadians is linked by a common history of British colonisation and the indentured labour system. The concept of colonization includes both the physical and metaphorical parameters. The imposition and the institutionalization of the English language as crucial

components of the white domination have left a legacy of writers using the English language as their own language. Some of the writers of Indo-Canadian origin have witnessed not only the casual brutality of discriminations in the British colonies, but also in the realm dominated by whites. These writings focus mainly on their experiences in Canada.As they have directly migrated to Canada, their writings have an effervescence of those parts of India where they belonged to.

The literature that the East Indians who immigrated to Canada directly presented, has been contributing to all the genres of Canadian literature. In drama, the Indo-Canadians began a new phase by developing a nascence of popular theatre. The centre of activity for dramatic traditions are mainly Montreal and Vancouver. There are two theatre groups founded by Indo-Canadians in Montreal. One is *Montreal Serai*, founded by Rana Bose and his associates; the other is *Teesri Duniya*, founded by Rahul Verma and his companions. As Bose and Verma both are from India, the themes of their plays are closely related to Indo-Canadian experiences, despite the fact that both of these theatre groups are now multiethnic in membership and goals.

These theatre groups have the same goal - to use the non-violent potent power of the dramatic medium to identify injustices, to raise a voice of protest, and to educate people and the government about their rights and responsibilities. The themes of these plays are mainly concerned with the injustices experienced by a minority, be it exploitation of new immigrants, racial prejudice, inequalities with

the Indo-Canadians, or gender-related offerings.

Before these threatre groups of Montreal were founded, both Rana Bose and Rahul Verma used to work together back in India. They produced several Hindi and English plays, till 1985. *Ek tha Gadha, Julus, Ghar Ghar ki Kahani, Ahsaas, Darwaze Khol Do,* and *Bhanumati Ka Pitara* are some of the Hindi plays that they produced. The last one *Bhanumati Ka Pitara* was written by Rahul Verma and stagecrafted by Rana Bose and Arvind Jain. *Once there was a Donkey* (the English translation of *Ek the Gadha*), *Thank You Mr. Glad*, and, in 1985, *The Great Celestial Cow* were some of the English plays that Bose and Verma produced together. After *The Great Celestial Cow*, Rahul Verma and Rana Bose split and formed two different theatre groups in Canada.

Rana Bose founded the *Montreal Serai* which is both a theater group and a magazine. Established in 1985, *Le Groupe Culturel Montreal Serai* publishes a magazine ten times a year, and it stages plays ranging from full-size stage production to experimental non-proscenium productions. Current issues acting as a local voice of conscience or protest, have always inspired this *Serai*. In an interview in February, 1989, regarding the immigrants of East Indian community, Rana Bose said:

> "...At the end of it all, the finger points to the immigrants... . The complaint used to be that these immigrants are illiterate, lazy and are going to take our jobs away. Now they say these people are too literate, too educated, they work too hard, and they're going to take our jobs away."[1]

Le Groupe Culturel Montreal Serai have produced several noteworthy plays in the recent years. *Baba Jacques Dass and Turmoil at Cote-des-Neiges Cemetery* was staged at Centaur Theatre, known as Montreal's main English language theatre, in October 1987. *Some Dogs* was presented at Theatre Calixe Lavallee, in July 1988. *On the Double* was enacted out on a double bill with *Some Dogs*. This play was written by Sharon Pollock, an established playwright of Canada. They also presented *Alternative to Marriage* in November 1988. This play was written by Nilambri Ghai, one of the well-known playwrights of Indo-Canadian origin.

Beside these, Rana Bose has produced several other plays which enumerate major characteristics regarding the experiences of the East Indians. He uses contemporary diction, social messages and issues that prick the involvement of Indo-Canadian encounters. He tries to throw up the concepts of Canadian consciousness through his innovative and creative productions. He tries to display the injustice, the inequalities that the East Indians community always underwent as immigrants. *Montreal Serai* has talented actors like Kunal Basu, George Beriault, Lisa Foster, Kalpesh Oza, and Shawn Goldwater. The musicians they have like Himmat Shinhat, Beverley Walker, and Vasu Seshadri, are also very talented.

Teesri Duniya was founded by Rahul Verma in 1985. It had been and still is the most active South-East Canadian drama company. It has produced dramas

with vitriolic in its tone. The writings of Rahul Verma are structurally very dense, have propensity to pack issues on burning topics. His production has a titanic montage, eluding skillful art and creativity. Some of its reputed productions are *Job Stealer*, produced in April, 1988; *Isolated Incident*, produced in the same year, December; *Equal Wages* was staged in 1989; *Land Where the Trees Talk* was presented in September, 1990; *No New Land* produced in 1992; and its radio version *Trading Enquiries* in 1993. With the play *Isolated Incident* bagged Rahul Verma won the Quebec Drama Festival Award. Some of the actors who have contributed their creative skills to this theatre group are Ken McDonough, Steve Slavey, Raminder Singh, and others.

Rahul Verma's plays are a significant part of the protest theatre in Canada. He produces plays with the main motive to focus everybody's attention to all the multicultural society, dealing with the problems common to all minorities. He has had a profound knowledge about the techniques of protest theatre -- non-proscenium, rudimentary props, a small cast of characters acting numerous roles, songs and drums once used to initiate interest at street corners, and dialogues and actions that aim at political and social injustices.

In Montreal, the streat plays could not develop properly, mainly because of geographical reasons. The climatic conditions were not suitable enough to perform the dramas and plays in the open street. That is the main reason why the street-plays of Canada do not take place literally on the street. Other factors are that in

Canadian way of life, people seldom walk on streets other than in downtown areas during the daytime but there, too, they are under pressure of time. Therefore, the plays usually take place in small theatres which have a reputation for encouraging avante-garde art.

Beside the theatre groups of Rana Bose and Rahul Verma, there are a handful of Indo-Canadian theatre groups. *The Indian Mahila Samiti*, an organization of women in Vancouver publishes its scripts in Hindi or English. In Vancouver, two prominent drama productions work actively. They are *Vancouver Sath* and *Samaanta*. They deal with the recurring themes of the exploitation of labourers in the vegetable and fruit farms of British Columbia and in the lumber industry; gender discrimination within families, especially about the privileged position given to the male children as opposed to the restrictions imposed on the female children; the repression and oppression of women who work long hours in the fields and also run the traditional household; and the problems related to intergenerational communications, especially between senior citizens and others.

Sadhu Binning is a prominent playwright who has contributed to *Vancouver Sath* regularly. He emigrated to Canada from India in 1967. He published his work in *Ankur*, a leading co-operative publishing house. He is also a key figure in *Watan* and *Watno Dur*, both Punjabi language magazines. He has also written and produced full-length plays that have been staged not only in Vancouver, but also in Toronto and Montreal. He has also translated a few of his Punjabi plays in

English. One such is *Lesson of a Different Kind*, published in *Ankur*, (September, 1991), which brought him immense fame and reputation.

Ajmer Rode is another playwright of Indo-Canadian origin. He immigrated to Canada in 1966. He has been involved deeply in Punjabi theatre in British Columbia since then. He has written, directed, and acted in several plays in both English and Punjabi, in Vancouver. He is a founding member of several Indo-Canadian literary and performing arts Associations. His one act play *one Girl, one Dream* published in the *Toronto South Asian Review*, (Spring, 1983), came under severe criticism.

Nilambri Singh Ghai was one of the founding members and one of the editors of *Montreal Serai*. She performs in theatre production, assists in the writing of scripts. Her play *Alternative to Marriage* became quite well known and was a very well-crafted work. It explores and redefines the theatre system. The characters of this play are engaged in arguments regarding forced circumstances, existential choices, and cultural preconditions.

Shiv Chopra came to Canada in 1960. He was the first person among writers of Indo-Canadian origin to initiate verse drama. His verse drama *Riata and Gita*, presented in 1981, and *In Praise of Women*, staged several times between in 1982 and 1984, brought him praise, reputation, as well as criticisms. He has also published these verse dramas and other plays.

Another type of drama - the dance drama - was initiated into Indo-Canadian literature by P.V.Subramaniam. Most of his dances dramas are based on the philosophies of the Buddha.

As drama is a device with which a message can be conveyed directly, playwrights have been using a powerful, yet simple and satirical language to express the nuances of the culture, the lifestyle, the system they exist in. Though the effectiveness of drama, undoubtedly, is more emphatic, this genre did not flourish as much as other genres of literature among the East Indian community of Canada. There is a significant drawback in drama as a literary genre -- subversion. The playwrights are compelled to use ironical expressions which are full of pun to reveal the message, through the synchronized movements of their characters. The freedom of verbalizing the issues directly and elaborately which this literary genre lacks.

On the other hand, poetry crosses such barriers of restriction in its manifestation. Indo-Canadian Poets subvert language and idioms in order to make Canada and Canadian English their own. Further more, all writers of all genres of Indo-Canadian origin are stretching Canadian English to new frontiers; while any such inroads that have been made so far might seem minimal, and the movement towards familiarization and acceptance of the myths and idioms of the Indo-Canadians by the large stream of Canadian literature might be discouragingly slow.

The emergence of poetry as a literary genre in Canada by the Indo-Canadians developed around the sixties of this century. The portrayal of the experiences by these East Indians as immigrants in this multicultural country has been coloured with the consciousness of alienation, segregation, and otherness. The emotional bondage that developed with the contemporary society carried the varifications of different cultural moods and images. The poetry by Indo-Canadians has brought them both immense appreciation and sense criticism.

Among the poets of Indo-Canadian origin, Himani Bannerji holds a position of pride. Her two collections of poems, *A Separate Sky*, published in 1982, and *Doing time*, published in 1986, explore the relation between politics and culture, issues of gender, race and class. A sample collection of her poems appears in *Shakti's Words: An Anthology of South Asian Canadian Women's Poetry* published in 1990. Some of them which appear in this anthology are *Wife, some kind of weapon, Apart-hate*, and other poems.

The works of Lakshmi Gill also have the same effervescence as that of Himani Bannerji.Her volumes of poetry, like, *During Rain I Plant Chrysanthemums*, published in 1966, *Mind Walls*, in 1970, *First Clearing*, in 1972, *Novena to St. Jude Thaddeus*, published in 1979, manifest the sensitivity of socio-cultural settings of Canada. Several other poems of hers like, *Lyrics, Confrontations, Light Canada, Revolution, Me, Discarded Poems, Immigrant Always*, and others, are written in a different fervour of harsh reality that the

immigrants are confronted with.

Another poet of Indo-Canadian origin who brought the writings of East Indians global attention is Surjeet Kalsey. Her creations have appeared in *The Toronto South Asian Review*, *Link*, and other local magazines. Her collections of poetry *Speaking to the Winds*, published in 1982, and *Footprints of Silence*, in 1988, are filled with the essence of reality - the sentiments of being an immigrant, the feelings of minority, emotions attached to belonging to the segregated community. A selection of her work has been included in *Shakti's Words: An Anthology of South Asian Canadian Women's Poetry*, published in 1990.

Beside being a well-reputed playwright, Ajmer Rode is a also a very sensitive poet. His well-crafted creations include the collections of poems titled *Blue Meditations*, published in 1985; *Poems at My Doorstep*, published in 1990, and others. His works have appeared not only in Canadian literary magazines, but also in the literary magazines of Britain and India.

Stephen Gill is another poet belonging to this Indo-Canadian community. He had been the President of the Cornwall Branch of Canadian Author's Association. His publications include *Reflections: A Collection of Poems*, published in 1972; *Wounds: A Collection of Poems*, published in 1974; *Moans and Waves*, published in 1988; and others.

Besides writing verse drama, Shiv Chopra is also a poet par excellence. His collection of poems *The Wondrous Virgin*, published in 1983, portrays the

problems that the Indo-Canadians face.

There are a lots of other poets who have already been acclaimed and have published their creations in Canadian literary magazines. Some of these poets are Arzina Burney, Tilottama Rajan, Nilambri Singh Ghai, Kaushalya Bannerji, Annie K. Koshi, Brian Braganza, Nirmala Singh, and Tyrell Mendis.

Arzina Burney, Tilottama Rajan and Nilambri Singh Ghai published their creations in *Shakti's Words: An Anthology of South Asian Canadian Women's Poetry*, first publish in and published again in 1993. Burney's well known peoms include *Prairie Summer, Pleasant Heartbreak,* and *Morogoro Camp*. Tilottama Rajan is the daughter of the well-known diasporic writer, Balachandra Rajan. She has is a second generation Indo-Canadian. She received numerous awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1987-88, and the Keats-Shelley Association Award in 1989. She published her volume of poetry, *Myth in a Metal Mirror* in 1967. Nilambri Singh Ghai wrote a sonnet *To Two Moral Selves ... A Sonnet* published in 1993.

Kaushalya Bannerji is an important new vioce who writes with a strikingly perceptive sense of Canadian identity. She has published her poems in the *Toronto South Asian Review*. Some of them are *Insomnia, Ourselves to Nothing, World War* and *Graduate School*. Annie K. Koshi became an eminent budding poet and has published her well-crafted creations in Canadian literary magazines. *Colour Power, Colour Code,* and *Dark Baby-Girl* are some of her better known poems.

dealing with themes of discrimination and difference of colour and creed. Brian Braganza is a Goanese by birth. His poem *Trains* was published in the *Toronto South Asian Review*. Nirmala Singh is also poet of Indo-Canadian origin. Her *The Shiva Dance*, published in 1979, brought her a lot of appreciation. Tyrell Mendis is Tamil by origin. *The Canned Think* was published by him in 1980. His other well-crafted creations have appeared in Canadian literary magazines like *Toronto South Asian Review*, *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, and others.

Poetry as a genre has attracted a lot of budding writers of East Indian community. Ravindra K. Swain, Shiv K. Kumar, Niala Maharaj, Niranjan Mohanty, Sagaree Sengupta, David Ray, Amarjit Singh, Rina Singh, Chitra Divakaruni, and Sumana Sen Bagchee are some of the budding poets of Indo-Canadian diaspara. Their predominent concern is to give a voice to the injustices and inequalities experienced by the East Indian immigrants.

Most of the Indo-Canadian poets have been successfully portraying the exact colour of their immigrant experiences but with different shades. They have focussed primarily as their feelings of alienation, their emotional suffereing for being treated as the other in the existing multi-cultural society of Canada. The poets also have been effacacioulsy dealing with their sentimental attachment to their homeland, India. No wonder, the poetry created by these Indo-Canadians has served as a useful device to promote the understanding of their own cultures and tradition. Thus, the writings of these members of East Indian community have

contributed to an important aspect of the contemporary Canadian literature, namely literatures of racial and ethnic minorities in Canada.

Marked by exactness and accuracy to the demonstration of the perfect feelings, these genres of literature - drama and poetry - could not develop and proliferate to manifest the emotional affinity of the East Indian community. Because of the hindrances in the fluidity of the language for expression, drama as well as poetry lack that proper sentiment which the prose alone can articulate. Prose had always been powerful genre to attack the imbalances, the discriminations, and inequities that have been quite common in the multicultural society of Canada.

Prose to has been by Indo-Canadian writers used as a mirror for reflecting the Canadian reality. In non-fictional category, essays, biographies, letters, and critical papers hold the most important place. But migrants of East-Indian community have not contributed much to this aspect of Canadian literature, although Nilambri Singh Ghai is an important name in the non-fictional category of writings by Indo-Canadians. Beside her dramatic and poetic creations, she has also written several critical essays depicting adult-education, racial discrimination, inequalities and injustices that occur frequently in the multi-cultural Canada. As a student of English literature and a teacher of literary course in adult education, she used powerful language to express her feelings.

Another name that comes to everyone's mind is that of Shiv Chopra. He had been a student of science at Mc Gill University. Apart from being the initiator of verse drama, and writing several poems, he is a man of scholarly knowledge. He has presented critical papers on philosophy, mythology, and science.

In the category of letter writers, S.S. Dhami holds a very important position. He had been the amanuensis for his companions for writing love-letters. He also wrote letters to his wife, Prem, who had stayed back in India. Some of his letters are also addressed to different publishing houses and officials with a request for the publications of his collection of billet-doux.

Stephen Gill has also written several travel essays and literary criticisms, beside writing poems. His critical writings and essays were more successful than his poetry, for the zeal with which he wrote them, reflected the cultural mosaic of Canada. He has also made a critical evaluation of his own creations in a volume titled as *Stephen Gill and His Works*.

One of the most noteworthy authors in this catalogue of non-fictional writers of Indo-Canadian diaspora is Arun Prabha Mukherjee. She has written numerous articles on post-colonial literatures, women's writings, and critical theory. *The Gospel of Wealth in the Modern American Novel: The Rhetoric of Dreiser and Some of his Contemporaries*, published in 1987, *Towards an Aesthetic of Opposition: Essays on Criticism and Cultural Imperialism*, published in 1988, and *Oppositional Aesthetics: Writings from a Hyphenated Space*, published in 1994, are

some of her significant critical works. She has also edited an anthology of writings of colour by women, and aboriginal women, entitled *Sharing Our Experience*, published in 1993. She has contributed entries on several South East women writers to *A Feminist Companion to Literature in English*, published in 1990.

Apart from working in the genre of poetry , Himani Bannerji has also worked in areas of feminism, marxism, and anti-racism in her critical oeuvres, like *The Writing on the Wall*, published by the *Toronto South Asian Review*, and *Thinking Through: Essays on Feminism, Marxism,* and *Anti-Racism.* Her critical essay "But who speaks for US? Experience and Agency in Conventional Feminist Paradigms" was included in *Unsettling Relations: The University as a Site of Feminist Struggles*. She has also co-authored anthologies on issues pertaining to gender, race, and class.

Most writers of East-Indian community have preferred to write fiction. The first significant English fiction of Indo-Canadians is *Maluka* which is set in British Columbia back in the 1920s. Though it was published in 1978, four decades after it was written, S.S. Dhami was satisfied with it, for he could lace the story with some autobiographical traces in a broad sense. This novel handles marvellously race relations, focussing on the prejudice that exists between different races and communities in the contemporary society at all levels. Its mellifluous descriptive passages and the authenticity of its delineation of the early life of Indian immigrants diaspora in Canada has been displayed with great accuracy. The

immigration problems and the most important historical event in the history of Indian immigration to Canada - the incident of *Komagata Maru* - became the main effervescence of this novel because it bears the core of Indo-Canadian experiences - the past, the present, and the future.

Stephen Gill is also another name in this genre of literature. Apart being a successful critic, he is a reputed novelist. His novels include *Why: A Novel*, published in 1976, *Immigrant: A Novel*, published in 1978, and *The Loyalist City*, published in 1979. He too focusses on the racial discrimination and injustice faced by East Indian immigrants in Canada. He has also dealt with some of the strains and difficulties involved in the making the multcultural policy of Canada work.

Lakshmi Gill is a well-known poet but her *The Third Infinite Eye*, published in 1993, by the *Toronto South Asian Review*, initiated her into the realm of fiction writing as well. Among most of the Indo-Canadian novelists, Rohinton Mistry needs no introduction. Born in Mumbai in 1953, he emigrated to Canada in 1975, and now lives in Toronto. His first novel *Such A Long Journey*, published in 1991, won the award for Best Book in Governor-General's Award for Fiction in 1991, and the W.H. Smith/Books in Canada First Novel Award. In 1992, it also bagged the Commonwealth Writers Prize for the Best Book. His next novel *A Fine Balance*, published in 1996, gave him again the Commonwealth Writers Prize in 1996. Despite his popularity, Mistry claims that he is not uncomfortable with his new celebrity status, and that he has "learned to love giving public readings"[18]

of his work.

Anita Rau Badami is the most recent addition to the list of Indo-Canadian novelists. Her *Tamarind Men*, published in 1996, is an impressive novel. While sharing the sensibility of the popular novelists, she has been trying to explore newer areas of experiences.

Apart from novels, the direct migrants also preferred the genres of short story writing. Himani Bannerji has once again zealously contributed to this genre of literature. She wrote stories for children. *The Two Sisters* is a collection of short stories translated from Bengali. Another children's fiction she wrote is titled as *Colored Pictures*.

Lino Leitao was born in Goa and migrated to Canada for higher studies. His short stories are based on fables, and have appeared in the *Toronto South Asian Review*, and the *Journal of South Asian Literature*. Some of his better known works are *Collected Short Tales*, published in 1972, *Goan Tales*, published in 1977, and *Six Tales*, published in 1980.

Hardev Singh wrote tales and stories, especially based on the folk lores and traditions of Punjab, the place he belongs to. His *Folk Tales and Proverbs of Punjabi People*, published in 1979, is a marvellous collection of tales; and *Doddles and Scribbles*, published in 1978, is a collection of short stories and articles, which won him much acclaim.

Rohinton Mistry began his career of writing short stories before he became a well-known novelist. He wrote short stories while he was attending the University to Toronto. He has won two Hart House Literary prizes in 1983 and 1984 for his stories "One Sunday" and "Auspicious Occasion", respectively. In 1985, he won the Annual Contributors' Prize from the Canadian Fiction Magazine. In 1987, a collection of his short stories, *Tales from Firozsha Baag*, was published by Penguin Books Canada limited; and it reappeared in Great Britain and the United States under the new title *Swimming Lessons and Other Short Stories From Firozsha Baag*. This collection of short stories has been reviewed very well in British and North American journals.

There are several authors who contribute quite enthusiastically their creative skills in this genre of Indo-Canadian literature among them Senarat Paranavitana and Stephen Gill. *Sigiri Graffiti* published in 1956, brought Senarat Paranavitana a lots of praise from the literary world. Stephen Gill's *Life Vagaries: 14 Short Stories*, published in 1974, once again established him as a story writer as well.

These are some of the writings by immigrants of East Indians origin who came directly to Canada. But the literature of the Indo-Canadian diaspora is not confined to direct migrants only. It also includes the writings of the East Indians who journeyed to Canada, having came from Britain or other erstwhile British colonies such as the South Africa, East African countries, Mauritius, Latin American states, and nations of the Caribbean Islands. Beside these countries,

there are also writers of Indian origin who have came to Canada from the United States of America.

The literary artists of these places envision different types of experiences in terms of their personal identities, histories, and geographies. They re-create their familial, social, cultural, political histories and work through a different identity and belonging, juggling with new words and new worlds. Their cadenced voices remind everyone of their different identities, multiple ethnicities, but now intersecting in a common hyphenated term in the multi-cultural society of Canada.

The countries of East Africa, like Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, were under British colonial administration where racial discrimination was rampant. Moyez Ghulamhussein Vassanji was born in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1950. He grew up in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, as a member of a small Muslim Ismaili sect. The early migrants of the community from India were not educated, and the generation of Vassanji was the first to successfully complete A levels of the British system of education in Dar-es-Salaam. He went to London, then to the United States. He received his Ph.D. in Physics from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He also studied Sanskrit, medieval language and literature of India, as well as Gujarati and Cutchi. He has been a writer-in-residence at the University of Iowa. Then he came to Canada as a research associate and lecturer at the University of Toronto in 1978. Presently he stays in Toronto. His first novel *The Gunny Sack*, published in 1989, was awarded the Commonwealth Literary Regional First Novel Prize in

1990. It has recently been translated into German. It enumerates his experiences in Africa. His second novel, *No New Land*, published in 1991, has been set in Toronto, exploring the difficulties and problems that the migrants face in a multicultural country. He wrote a collection of short stories *The Uhuru Street*, which was published in 1990 and which dealt with once again his African background. He also edited a critical book on South-east Asian Canadian literature, titled *A Meeting of Streams*, which published in 1985. His latest novel *A Book of Secrets*, published in 1994, confirmed his reputation as a significant conjurer of the immigrant experience.

South Africa was another British colony. Here, however, the colonial administration perfected a system of racial separateness called apartheid. Such an atmosphere was both a boon as well as a bane for writers in projecting the intricacies of life compartmentalised of by colour, creed, and race. Farida Karodia was born, and brought up in such an atmosphere. She taught in South Africa for four years and then in Zambia for three years. At last she migrated to Canada. After three years in Canada, she decided that she should give up her teaching profession and should concentrate wholly on her writing career. She felt she must encapsulate all her experiences in her literary works. She wrote several radio dramas for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Her first novel *Daughters of the Twilight* was published in 1986 by the Women's Press in London. She has highlighed in this novel the tragedy triggered by racism back in the South Africa.

Ven Begamudre was born in India and moved to Canada when he was six. He had lived on the island of Mauritius and later in the United States. Mauritius had been a white dominated region for a long time where Indians had been taken as indentured labourers for sugar plantations. Ven Begamudre has had an innate feeling for these Indians although his own life in Mauritius was too short, and too early. His first book -- a novella -- *Sacrifices*, was published in 1986. He received the Okanagan Short Story Award for the summer 1989 and in 1990 the City of Regina Writing Award. *A Planet of Eccentrics* was published in 1990. He has co-authered with Judith Krause an anthology titled *Out of Place* (Coteau). His recent novel *Van de Graaff Days*, published in 1993, is about the middle class immigrants and professionals and how they deal with the dichotomy between expectations and fulfillment in a new land.

The writers of the Indian diaspora who came to Canada from the Latin American countries brought with them a different experience. Cyril Dabydeen was born in Canje, Guyana, in 1945, and moved to Canada in 1970. In 1964, he won the highest poetry award in Guyana, the Sandbach Parker Gold Medal. He has published several volumes of pertry. They are -- *Poems in Recession*, published in 1972; *Distances, and Goatsong* both published in 1974, *Elephant's Make Good Stepladders*, published in 1982; *Islands Lovelier Than a Vision*, published in 1986; *Coast Land* in 1989; and *Stoning The Wind*, published in 1994. He has also written collections of short stories. *Still close to the Island*, was published in 1980; *Two*

Monkey Jungle, was published in 1988; and *Black Jesus and Other Stories*, was published in 1996. His two short novels are *The Wizard Swami* and *Dark Swirl*, which trace his origins among the East Indians Community in Guyana. He has contributed to several literary magazines and anthologies, and in 1987, he edited *A Sharply Fire*, an anthology of Caribbean - Canadian writings.

Arnold Harrichand Itwaru is yet another important name among the writers of East Indian who hailed originally from Guyana. He came to Canada in 1969. His oeuvres include poems, short stories, and critical studies. Some of these are: *Shattered Songs. A Journey From Somewhere to Somewhere*, published in 1982; *Critiques of Power*, published in 1989; *Shanti* and *In Invention of Canada: Liberty Text and the Immigrant Imaginary*, both published in 1990; *Body Rites (Beyond the Darkening)*, published in 1991. He has co-authored with Natasha Ksonzek *Closed Entrances: Canadian Culture and Imperialism*, published in 1994. Most of his works talk about the politics of marginalization, colonialization, oppression that women face, and about multi-cultural society. As to why East Indians are 'special' to the people in Guyana, he observes --

> "India is a symbol of their (people of Guyana) distinctiveness of not being African. That is why when an Indian - Guyanese comes to Canada and is told that he is black he objects to it very strongly".[19]

Other prominent Canadian writers from Guyana whose roots can be traced back to India are Frank Birbalsingh, Roy Neehal, Kamana Jean-Gopie, and Victor Ramraj. *Jahaji Bhai, Indenture and Exile: the Indo -Carribbean Experience*,

published in 1989, *Indo-Carribbean Resistance*, published in 1993 and *Novels and the Nation: Essays in Canadian Literature*, published in 1995, are some of the well-known works of Frank Birbalsingh. These Indo-Canadians from Guyana speak of the sufferings of marginalization under the indentured labour system by the white domination. Their resistances had variously taken a form of strikes, adherence to religious practices, pursuit of economic success, and creation of art and music.

Canada has also attracted people from the British colonies in the Caribbean Islands and many writers also migrated to this multicultural country from there. Neil Bissoondath is one of them, who felt that he could achieve his literary potentials only by leaving his native lands for the metropolitan centers of Europe and North America. It was, in fact, his uncle V.S. Naipaul, the famed writer of Indian diaspora, who advised him that Canada could be a better choice for migration. So he left for Canada, and has been living there since. His first volume of short stories *Digging up the Mountain* was published in 1986. Most of the stories in this collection had been published before in various literary journals as *Saturday Night*, and also broadcast on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's literary programme *Anthology*. "Dancing", one of the fourteen short stories in this collection won the McClelland and Stewart Award for Fiction and the National Magazine Award in 1986. His *A Casual Brutality*, published in 1988, was shortlisted for the Trillium Award and the W.H.Smith (Canada) First Novel

Award. His third book *On the Eve of Uncertain Tomorrows*, published in 1990, is a collection of ten short stories.

Another well-known writer, who left the Caribbean Islands, for a better future, is Ramabai Espinet. Like Bissondath, she is also a Trinidadian by birth. She obtained her Ph.D. from the University of West Indies in Trinidad. She has edited an anthology of poetry by Caribbean women, *Creation Fire*, published in 1990. Her own collection of poems *Nuclear Seasons*, which was published in 1991, earned her a place among the authors of the Indian diaspora.

Harry Singh Ladoo is another Indo-Canadian who was born in Trinidad. Prior to his departure for Canada, Ladoo worked on the plantations fields and in boats. That enhances the substantial authenticity of his fictional delineation of the plantations and the pictures of the sea and the ocean. Ladoo, however, was determined to move beyond the microcosmic island of Trinidad, and came to Canada in 1968. After pursuing a graduate degree in English from the University of Toronto, he studied and wrote during the day, and took up night jobs, such as dishwashing in restaurants. His first novel *No Pain Like This Body* was published in 1972. The following year, aided by a grant from the Canadian Government, Ladoo returned to Trinidad with the intent of furthur research for his fictions. Ironically, it was Trinidad that inspired the milieu of his novels, Ladoo was found brutally assaulted in a ditch, presumed to have been murdered. His last novel *Yesterdays* was published posthumously in 1974. His short story "The Quiet

Peasant" was published in *Canada is Us Now* in 1976. Ladoo left behind manuscripts of poems, short stories, and several unfinished novels.

Another writer on this group of Bissoondath, Espinet, Ladoo, is Samuel Dickson Selvon. He was born in 1923 in Trinidad. Despite his Indian ancestry, his upbringing was culturally cosmopolitan. He claimed to have been creolized at an early age, by which he means that he and his family did not maintain exclusively Indian cultural customs and practices. Having lost his religious inheritance from India, he became a member of the Canadian Presbyterian Mission Church. After high school, Selvon joined the Royal Navy as a Reserve which, by patrolling the seas between Trinidad and Venezuela during World War II, protected convoys of ships taking Venezualan oil to Europe. Since he supported his family economically, his sense of maturity and a feeling of security developed at an early age. More importantly, this job provided him with enough free time for writing. Selvon began composing both prose and poetry. After migrating to London in 1950, he has written television scripts, radio plays, poems, short stories and novels. He left for Canada and presently lives in Calgary. His first novel *A Bright Sun*, published in 1952, bagged him the Guggenheim fellowship for a year. His other works are *An Island Is A World*, published in 1955, *The Lonely Londoners*, published the following year, *Turn Again Tiger*, published in 1958, *Plains of Caroni*, in 1970, *Moses Ascending*, in 1975, and *Moses Migrating*, published in 1983. He was awarded the Humming Bird Medal for his work in the Caribbean

Literature. His only collection of short stories is *Ways of Sunlight*, was published in 1957.

East Indians have also migrated to Canada from territories adjacent to India during the colonial period. Nazneen Sadiq was born in that place of India which is now in Pakistan. She migrated to Canada in 1964, and now lives in Toronto and works as a writer and a journalist. She published a children's book in 1985 - *Camels can Make You Homesick and Other Stories*. She attracted global attention with her novel *Ice Bangles* published in 1988. It is a story of a woman's struggle to find and assert her identify within and later, outside her marriage.

Balchandra Rajan was born to an Indian family, in that part of the British domain which today is in Burma. He went to England for his higher studies. He was a bright student at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was the first Indian to receive a fellowship in England. From 1948 to 1961, he was a member of the Indian Foreign Service. As a diplomat, he had various postings among them in New York, with the United Nations, and with the UNICEF, in Vienna. In 1966, he joined the faculty of the University of Western Ontario in Canada, and has been living there since then. His contribution to the Indo-Canadian literature is primarily as a scholar and a literary critic. He is the author of several acclaimed books of literary criticisms including *Paradise Lost and the Seventeenth Century Reader*, published in 1947; *W.B. Yeats: A Critical Introduction*, published in 1965; *The Lofty Rhyme: A study of Milton's Major Poetry*, published in 1976; and *The form*

of the Unfinished: English Poetic from Spenser to Pound, published in 1985. He is the founder editor of *Focus*, and has also edited three collections of essays on Milton. He received the honorary citation as Honored Scholar of the Milton Society in 1979, Chauveau Medalist of the Royal Society of Canada in 1983, and fellowship in the Royal Society of Canada. He has also published two novels - *The Dark Dancer* in 1958, and *Too Long in the West* in 1961. These gave him a place in the literary world as well. *The Dark Dancer* has been translated into German, Swedish, and Yugoslavian.

The East Indian people not only migrated indirectly to Canada through the British colonies, but also from Britain itself. The most significant name in this group is that of Saros Cowasjee. He was born in Secundrabad, India, in 1931. He went to Leeds, England for his Ph.D. in 1960. After three years, he came to to Canada as a faculty member of English at the University of Regina, Saskatchewan. He received Canada Council and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council leave fellowships in 1968-69, 1970-71, and 1986-89; Canadian Council research grants in 1970-71 and 1974-75; and a President's Research Fund grant in 1974-75. Cowasjee's writings consist of two novels, *Goodbye to Elsa*, published in 1974, and *Suffer Little Children* in 1982, and two collection of short stories *Stories and Sketches*, 1970, and *Nude therapy and other stories*, published in 1978. He has also written a screenplay *The Last of the Maharajas*, published in 1980. This was based on Mulk Raj Anand's *Private Life of an Indian Prince*.

Uma Parameswaran is another contributor to the literature by Indo-Canadians. She was born in Madras, India. In 1963, she was awarded a Smith-Mundt Fulbright Fellowship and came to the United States, to study American literature at the Indiana University. In 1966, she migrated to Canada. Parameswaran is a scholar and creative writer. She has published three books of literary criticism. They are *Cylic Hope Cylic Pain*, published in 1974, *A Study of Representative Indo-English Novelist*, published in 1976, and *The Perforated Sheet: Essays on Salman Rushdie's Art*, published in 1988. Her poems, stories and plays have appeared in several journals, magazines, and anthologies. Her two books *Trisanku* published in 1988, and *The Door I Shut Behind Me*, published in 1990, are well-crafted creations. Her Play *Rootless But Green Are the Boulevard Trees*, published in 1979 was the first full length play by an Indo-Canadian published in Canada. She published a collection of poems *Of Women, I Sing*. Her commitment to poetry and women has been exemplified by her membership in the editorial collective of *Contemprary Verse II*, a feminist poetry journal. She is the founder, producer, and the host of a weekly television programme, Performing Arts and Literature of India.

Jamila Ismail was born a second generation Indo-Chinese, and was raised in Hong Kong. Since 1963, she is in Canada she has taught at the English department at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver. Her publications include *sexions*, published in 1984, and the *jamelie-jamila project*, published in 1992, was

a collaborative book work with the artist, Jamelie Hassan.

Apart from these, there are some writers of Indian diaspora, who have contributed not only to the literature of East Indians community of Canada but also to the Canadian literature as whole. They do not belong to any of the categories mentioned above because they did not permanently settle in Canada. They had been in this multicultural society of Canada for a certain short tenures, created writings and have been recognised in the arena of literatures. Bharti Mukherjee, Timeri Murari, Suniti Namjoshi and Yasmine Ladha are such writers of Indian origin contributing their mite to the Canadian literature and the literature of the Indian diaspora.

Bharti Mukherjee's magnificent oeuvres include novels like *The Tiger's Daughter*, published in 1972, *Wife*, published in 1975, and *Jasmine*, published in 1989; short stories like, *Darkness*, published in 1985, and *The Middleman and Other Stories*, published in 1988. Beside these, she has also written socio-political articles like "An Invisible Woman" published in *Saturday Night* in March, 1981; other articles include "Response: American fiction" in *Salmagundi* in Fall, 1980 and Winter 1981; and "Prophet and Loss: Salman Rushdie's Migration of Souls" published in *Village Voice Literary Supplement*, in March 1989. She has co-authored essays with her husband Clark Blaise, a Canadian-American author, *Days and Nights* in Calcutta, a travel memoir published in 1977; *The Sorrows and the Terror: The Haunting Legacy of the Air India Tragedy*, published in 1987; and

"After the Fatwa: The Satanic Verse Controversy" published in *Mother Jones* in 1990. Bharti Mukherjee won the Canada Arts Council Award in 1973-74 and 1977, the Shastri Indo-Canadian Award in 1976-77, a Guggenheim foundation in 1978-79, and the National Book Critics Circle Award in 1988. Her short stories in *Darkness*, "World According to Hsu" and "Isolated Incident" won major Canadian journalism awards. There is a stronger tone of disappointment and disillusionment with Canada that persists in her works and so she has often earned adverse comments from Canadian reviewers.

Timeri Murari was born in 1941 in Madras, India. He grew up in the transition period of India when the colonization and decolonizatin was taking place. He went to Britain for studying electronics, but was dissatisfied with the subject, so he shifted to political science and history at the McGill University, Canada. He wrote articles for the *Kingston Whig Standard* in Kingston, Canada. His major writings are novels, like *The Marriage*, which was published in 1973, *Lovers Are Not People*, was published 1977; *The Oblivion Tapes*, was published in 1978; *The Field of Honour*, was published in 1981; *Taj*, in 1985; *The Shooter*, in 1986; and *Enduring Affairs*, was published in 1991. He also wrote a journalistic study *The New Savages: Children of the Liverpool Streets*, which was published in 1975. He has also produced a documentary trilogy for Thames Television titled *Only in America*; and a non-fictional prose *Goin' Home: A Black Family Returns South*, was published in 1980. His novel *The Imperial Agent*, published in 1987, was

written as a sequel to Rudyard Kiplings *Kim*, and *The Last Victory*, published in 1990, was a sequel to *The Imperial Agent*. He has also written three stage plays *Grenade, Lovers Are Not People*, and *The Inquisitor*; and a screenplay for a film based on his *The Field of Honour*.

Suniti Namjoshi joined the Indian Administrative Services at an early age of Twenty-three in 1964. In 1969, she resigned from the administrative service and moved to Montreal to do a Ph.D. at the McGill University. Her creative works include novels, poems, fables and other works. *The Jackass and the Lady*, published in 1980, *The Conversations of Cow*, published in 1985, *Aditi and the One-Eyed Monkey*, in 1986, and *The Mothers of Maya Diip*, published in 1989, are some of her prose works. Her poems and fables include *Poems*, published in 1967, *Cyclone in Pakistan*, published in 1971, *More Poems*, in 1971, *Feminist Fables*, published in 1981, *The Blue Donkey Fables*, published in 1988, and *Because of India: Selected Poems and Fables*, published in 1989. A selection of her poems was published in *Shakti's Words: An Anthology of South Asian Canadian Women's Poetry*. She also co-authored with Gilliam Hanscombe *Flesh and Paper* in 1986. *The Authentic Life* was her first oeuvre that was published outside India, by the University of New Brunswick, Canada. Another recent work of hers has been published under the title *From the Bedside Book of Nightmares*. She moved away to Devon, England in 1988, from Canada and has been there since then.

Apart from Bharti Mukherjee, Timeri Murari and Suniti Namjoshi, the last name in this category is Yasmine Ladha. She migrated to Canada from East Africa. She now lives in South Korea. Her collection of short stories *The Lion's Granddaughter*, published in 1992, displays her writing skills replete with what she calls "chutneyfication". Her anxiety to aviod being classified with other immigrant writers is real enough but it is frequently replete by her inept techniques. For example "Readerji"[1], "gum-sum"[2], "fatafat"[1], and such items of the vocabulary in the stories become intrusive. "Be a Doctor"[18] one of the few stories in this volume seems to be painted with autobiographical traces. Other stories like "Peace Flats",[63], "Lion's Grand daughter",[53], and "Aisha"[25], reveal the history of racial segregation between East Indians and Africans in East Africa.[20] It is interesting that Ladha had dared to introduce a mixed-raced protagonist into a conservative wealthy Indian family in the segregated social setting of Tanzania. Her collections of poems *Bridal Hands on the Maple*, published in 1992 has been created with a effervescence of sentimental attachment to her Indian origin. Her other poems have appeared in *An Anthology of New Stories from Alterta Writers*, published in 1992. Her recently published book of prose and poetry *Women Dancing on Rooftops: Bring Your Belly Close*, is an evocative piece of writing projecting heightened empathy for Kashmiri women.

The importance of the writings of Indian diaspora by East Indians community has been evident in various anthologies that have been published in

recent years. After Dr. Suwanda Sugunasiri's *In Search of Meaning: The Literature of Canadians by South Asian Origin*, published in 1989, the two most significant publications of anthologies including Indo-Canadians are *Shakti's Words: An Anthology of South Asian Canadian Women's Poetry*, published in 1990, and again in 1993, edited by Diane McGifford and Judith Kearns; and *The Geography of Vioce: Canadian Literature of the South Asian Diaspora*, edited by Diane McGifford, published in 1992. Beside these, there are several journals where budding writers of the East Indians community have been publishing their creations. Some of them are *The Toronto South Asian Review*, founded by M.G.Vassanji, in 1980 which is now published under a new name *The Toronto Review*, *Journal of South Asian Literature*, *SansCrit*, *Asianadian*, *Rungh*, and *Rice papers*. The *Rice Papers* is a workshop of East Canadian writers.

Although by writing in English Indo-Canadian writers have tries to reach a wider audience. They have quite often also contributed to the Canadian literature written in other languages as well. Writings in Punjabi and Gujrati have been very common since the initial migration of Indians to Canada at the turn of the century. In Punjabi, Kashmir Singh Chaman, Santosh Chinna, Darshan Gill, Gurucharan Ramapuri, Iqbal Ramuwali, Amarjit Chahal, Tarlochan Singh Gill, Singh Kesara, are some of the writers who have been known for their writings. The Punjabis also have a number of local newspapers for the Punjabis of Indo-Canadian origin. Among them, *Hindustani* and *Sansar* are very popular ones. In Gujarati, Ramunik

Shah, Ashwin Vaidya are very significant names in such a group of writers. Manobendra Mukhopadhay is an important name in Bengali. Writing in Urdu began in the 1960s and continues to enjoy a substantial readership. Although writings in Sanskrit could not get such popularity as Punjabi or Gujrati or Urdu, but their initiative dance dramas had really made a landmark in the writings of Indo-Canadians. *Pancha Kanya Tarangi, Veer Kanya Vahini, Kinkini Mala,* and *Dima Panchakam* are very popular sanskrit dance dramas based on Buddhist themes that reveal the traditions and cultures of India in a different shade.[21] Notwithstanding the vitality of the writings in these languages, the writings in English have been the most prominent among Indo-Canadians.

To encapsulate the vast ocean of creativity of the East Indians community has been always a tiring task. The writings of the Indo-Canadians basically focus on the discrimations , demarcations, differences, injustices, inequities that have been a part of almost every East Indians. Some shades of nostalgia, the relation with India, the sentimental attachment to home, have also been projected with an emotional touch by these Indo-Canadians. Their sense of identity in the multicultural society of Canada, has been influenced by the various narrative techniques that they adopt in their writings. The tradition and the culture become more important when sense of otherness and marginalization seeps into these writings of Indo-Canadians. Hence, the writers had to represent those feelings, affinites, with the colour of authenticity and exactness. The various cadenced

voices remind readers of constantly different ethnicities, different identities, different geographies,different histories, to which these Indo-Canadian writers belong. Though their works reveal the intersection of history and geography, of the past and the present, they also indicate a monolithic whole referred as "hyphenated" Indo-Canadian writings. Thus, they provide new, imaginative ways of struggle in multicultural society of Canada through the imagination the sustaining human spirit of Indians that is capable of inhabiting different spaces, simultaneously.

NOTES

1. Dorothy Livesay, 'Call My People Home' (A Documentary Poem for Radio), in *The Self-Completing Tree: Selected Poems* (Victoria: Press Porcepic, 1992), pp. 169-170.

2. David Galloway, 'The Voyagers', in C.F. Klinck, (ed.), *Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 4.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

4. **Duncan Campbell Scott,** (1862-1947) Born in Ottawa, educated in Quebec. Began work as Civil Servant in 1879; appointed Secretary in Department of Indian Affairs in 1896, becoming Deputy Superintendent General in 1913. Retired in 1932. In his second book, *Labour and the Angel*, talks about the Metis people.

   Excerpt taken from: George Wicken, 'Duncan Campbell Scott, in Eugene Benson, and William Toye, (eds.), *The Oxford Companion of Canadian Literature* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 1043.

5. **George Copway,** (1818-1869) Born in Ontario, belonged to the Missisauga band of the aboriginal Ojibwa people. He was the first Native Canadian to publish a book in English. Taking advantage of his Christianized Indian identity, he wrote his life story for a white audience, *The Life, History and Travels of Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh (George Copway) a Young Indian Chief of the Ojbwa Nation, a Convert to the Christian Faith, and a Missionary to His People for Twelve Years* (1847).

   Excerpt taken from: Donald Smith, 'George Copway,' in E. Benson, and L.W. Conolly, (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Post-Colonial Literatures in English Vol. I* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 270.

6. **Pauline Johnson,** (1861-1913), born on the Six Nations Reserve near Brantford, Ontario, of an English mother and a Mohawk father, she received a cultured Victorian upbringing. From 1893 to 1909, billed as Tekahionwake, the Mohawk princess, she held audiences across Canada and its parts of the United States of America and England spellbound with recitations of her own poems and achieved international acclaim as a concert entertainer and poet.

Excerpt taken from: S. Penny Petrone, 'Pauline Johnson', in E. Benson, and L. W. Conolly, (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Post-Colonial Literature in English Vol. I* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 738-739.

7. David Galloway, 'The Voyagess', in Klinck, C.F., (ed.), *Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), pp. 7-10.

8. **George McWhirter,** (1939 -) born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, educated in Belfast, and taught in high school there until he and his wife immigrated to Port Alberni, British Columbia, in 1966. His novel, *The Listeners* (1991), and collections of short stories, *Coming of Grips with Lucy* (1985), and *A Bad Day to be Winning* (1991) contain descriptions about his Irish roots.

Except taken from: Alan Twigg, 'George McWhirter', in E. Benson, and L.W. Conolly, (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Post Colonial Literatures in English Vol. II* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 950.

9. **Frederick Philip Grove** (1879-1948) Born at Radomno, East Prussia in 1879, was educated at Bonn and Munich, but left university without a degree. During 1903, he travelled in Italy with Elsa, wife of the architect, August Endell, until he was arrested for fraud. Released from prison in June, 1904, for five year, he tried to repay his debts and support Elsa by means of numerous translations. He could not succeed economically as a translator. In September 1909, he pretended suicide and fled to the United States of America, where Elsa joined him. For two years, they attempted farming in Kentucky, until he abandoned Elsa. He changed his name Felix Paul Berthold Friedrich Greve to Frederick Philip Grove and became a teacher in Maintoba, Canada. His books *A Search for America* (1927), *The Master of the Mill* (1994), and *Consider Her Ways* (1947), typify the immigrant writer in post-colonial societies in a sense of isolation, his feeling of rejections of grudging acceptance and the conviction of personal failure.

Excerpt taken from: D.P. Spattigue, 'Frederick Philip Grove', in E. Benson, and L.W. Conolly, (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Post-Colonial Literatures in English Vol. I* (London: Routledg, 1994), pp. 612-614.

10. **Mordecai Richler,** (1931 -), Born in Montreal, Canada, he grew up in Montreal, where his grandfather settled after immigrating to Canada in 1904. He attended Baron Byng High School and Sir George Williams College as an English major. He abandoned college after two years and travelled to Europe in 1951, living mainly in Paris. He returned to Canada

in 1952, left for London, England, after two years, where he met and married Florence Wood in 1960. Richler returned to Montreal in 1972. His early novels, *The Acrobats* (1954), *Son of a Smaller Hero* (1955), and *A Choice of Enemies* (1957) are examples that explore crises of ethnic, national, and artistic identities.

Excerpt taken from: Victor J. Ramraj, 'Mordecai Richler', in E. Benson, and L.W. Conolly, (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Post-Colonial Literature in English Vol. II* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 1365-1366.

11. **Austin Clarke,** (1934 -) Born in Barbados, the West Indies, attended the best schools on the island - Combermere and Harrison College - before proceeding to the University of Toronto. His two novels *Survivors of the Crossing* (1964), and *Amongst Thistles and Thorns* (1965), and the autobiographical *Growing up Stupid under the Union Jack* 1977), record his early memories of colonial Barbados. But the bulk of Clarke's writing considers black experience in Canada through collection of stories, like *When He was Free and Young and He Used to Wear Silks* (1971), and an ambitious trilogy of novels - *The Meeting Point* (1967), *Storm of Fortune* (1971), and *The Bigger Light* (1975) - set in Toronto.

Excerpt taken from: Frank M. Birbalsingh, 'Austin Clarke', in E. Benson, and L.W. Conolly, *Encyclopedia of Post-Colonial Literature in English Vol. I* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 252.

12. **Joy Nozomi Kogawa,** (1935 -) born in Vancouver, spent her childhood there until 1942, when her family, with some twenty-two thousand other Japanese-Canadians, was forcibly uprooted. Her father, an Anglican Minister, was sent to Slocan, one of many internment camps in the British Columbia interior. In 1945, her family relocated again this to Coadale, Alberta. She studied music and theology in Toronto, then returned to Vancouver, where she married David Kogawa in 1959. Her *A Choice of Dreams* (1974), *Jericho Road* (1977), *Obasan* (1981), and *Itsuka* (1992) - all portray the injustice and racism in Canada.

Excerpt taken from: Roy Miki, 'Joy Nozomi Kogawa', in E. Benson, and L. W. Conolly, (eds.), *Enclycopedia of Post-Colonial Literature in English Vol. I* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 780.

13. Arun P. Mukherjee, 'Introduction', in *Oppositional Aesthetics: Readings from a Hyphenated Space* (Toronto: TSAR Publications, 1994), p. vii.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. vii-8.

15. Uma Parameswaran, 'India's Street Theater in Delhi and Montreal', in *Saclit: An Introduction to South-Asia Literature* (Madras: Eastwest Books (Madras) Pvt. Ltd., 1996), p. 76.

16. Uma Parameswaran, 'Literature of the Indian Diaspora in Canada: An Overview', in *Saclit: An Introduction to South Asian Literature* (Madras: Eastwest Books (Madras) Pvt. Ltd., 1996), p. 5.

17. Uma Parameswaran, 'Rana Bose and Montreal Serai', in *Saclit: An Introduction to South Asian Literature* (Madras: Eastwest Books (Madras) Pvt. Ltd., 1996), p. 103.

18. Amritjit Singh, 'Rohinton Mistry', in Emmanuel S. Nelson, (ed.), *Writers of the Indian Diaspora: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Source book* (London: Greenwood Press, 1993), p. 209.

19. Chelva Kanaganayakam, 'An Interview with Arnold Harrichand Itwaru', in *Configurations of Exile: South Asian Writers and Their World* (Toronto: Tsar Publications, 1995), p. 37.

20. Yasmin Ladha, *Lion's Granddaughter and Other Stories* (Edmonton: NeWest Publishers Ltd., 1992).

21. John Miska, "East Indian", in *Ethnic and Native Canadian Literature: A Bibliography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), pp. 61-69.

CHAPTER III

A QUEST FOR IDENTITY IN M.G. VASSANJI'S *NO NEW LAND*

"Where are you form ?"
"North York". I reply. Knowing
That you just want to assert
The fact that I am not "Canadian" —
Or your idea of "Canadian". ...

"Where were you born ?"
"Edmonton". Ahh, you're catching on.
Trying to get the answer
you have already established in your head.
Your next question
Should give you what you seek.

"Where are your parents from ?"
"India".
There.
You've got what you want.
Established that I am an "immigrant".
Not a "real Canadian". ...

"India"
If you knew this all the time,
Why did you better asking me ?
To let me know you know I'm an "immigrant ?"...

It's just that it's one of the first questions
You've asked me since we've met
In the classroom
Or the line-up at the bank.
And I get the feeling that
You want me to be an outsider.[1]

-- ***Aviva Jeol.***

A sense of identity, a feeling of discrimination, and demarcation, have always been in the writings of Indo-Canadian authors. The quest for identity has infact, become a congenital art form in all genres of writings of Indo-Canadians.

Writing from a "hyphenated" space probably, instigates the Indo-Canadian authors to manifest their expressions of identity. The resolution of the enigma of identity, through culture and tradition, has been buttressed by a dream of accomplishments that the recent authors of Indo-Canadian origin are trying to fulfil. Moyez Ghulamhussein Vasanji, an Indo-Canadian author, is trying to establish the quest for identity through his works.

In his first novel *The Gunny Sack*, Vassanji talks about the volatile union of Africa and expatriate Indians. The identity that the Indians are searching for, is produced through this union. The story is told by Salim Juma, who recounts the consequences of the family movement from Porbander, India, to Zanzibar, Africa. The narration carries an air of vividness and a sense of reality, as Salim recounts his family's fortunes first under German, then British colonialism, and finally under Julius Nyerere's socialism in independent Tanzania. It is a spirited saga of alliances, rivalries, successes and failures. It illustrates the Shamshi community's ability to survive oppression, fragmentation and displacement. For these children of Africa and India, the question of identity becomes an important issue. The maintenance of traditions and cultures, turns out to be significant. *The Gunny Sack* re-creates the Indians of East Africa, from the end of the last century through the harrowing first decades of this century, in great details and vividness. The characters of Kulsum, Amina and Ji Bai, are arresting and zealous. The novel is filled with varied and colorful events, conventions, what with customs and taboos.

Vassanji's collection of short stories *Uhuru Street*, is another work where the struggle for identity becomes important. The Uhuru Street in Dar-e-Salaam was where most Indians lived. The characters long to escape their circumscribed world; and live with an identity that separates them from brutality and gratuitous cruelty of the white administration. The characters of Zarina, Ali, Alzira, and Pipa seem to solve the quest for identity through their own perceptions of life. The narrative voices have elements of truth and authenticity. Throughout the collection, these voices draw attention of the readers to an engaging intimacy and introduce them to different traits of India.

His recent novel, *The Book of Secrets*, is another example of his fictional efforts to resolve the enigma of identity. Through the vivid description of historical events like World War II, Vassanji portrays the cruel brutality that the people of East Africa underwent. The characters of Pius, Mariamu, Pipa, Rita, and Alfred Corbin – all are trying to establish their own respective identities with authenticity. The differentiation between Africans, Indians, and the white people projects the subtlety of this quest for identity.

No New Land, the second novel of Vassanji, deals with concepts of race, culture and tradition. In this novel, the question of identity has been taken up through the main protagonist, Nurdin Lalani. Vassanji wants to draw the attention of his readers on themes of identity, race, culture, tradition and community, because an understanding of these concepts is very significant the context of in

multicultural Canada.

The novel, *No New Land*, opens in Canada, with the Lalani family shown in the grips of a big tension and panic because Nurdin, the head of the family, has not come back home form work. Nurdin and his family had come from Africa and had settled down at Toronto. The novel moves in the flashback of incidents and events. After Nurdin comes to this multicultural Canada, he struggles to find a decent job. But his efforts become futile. Zera, his wife, gets a job as a receptionist in a doctor's clinic. So to reduce the economic pressures they put up with Zera's sister, Roshan's family. But as the children of both the families land up fighting most of the times, a severe quarrel between Zera's family and Roshan's family arose; and the two families separate. The Lalanis move to Sixty-nine, Rosecliffe Park, in Don Mills, a suburb of Toronto.

Through a party where new Canadians meet the old, the Lalanis come in come in contact with other inhabitants of Sixty-nine, Rosecliffe Park. They meet Jamal, the lawyer, Esmail, the baker, and several other people from the East Indian community. Gradually, Nanji, a young professor, becomes a very good friend of the Lalani children -- Fatima and Hanif.

One day when Nurdin was returning from the corner store with milk for the next day, he meets an Indian couple from Guyana, Mohan and Lakshmi. Their car breaks down and so they had no where to go. As Lakshmi was pregnant, Nurdin feels pity for the couple and brings them home to stay overnight. Next day,

Romesh, Mohan's brother, comes and takes them away. Romesh helps Nurdin to get a job in Ontario Addiction Centre.

In this Ontario Addiction Centre, Nurdin meets Sushila, the daughter of Narandas, for whom his elder brother, Akber had an amorous feeling in adolescence. Gradually, Nurdin develops a clandestine relationship with Sushila. He makes it a point of meeting her everyday at her house in Kensington Market.

One day, when Nurdin was wrapping up his work in the Ontario Addiction Centre, he sees a white woman in distress. He puts his hands forward for help. But unfortunately, he was arrested with the charge of sexually assualting this white woman.

Throughout the novel, Vassanji focuses the struggle of the Lalani family of establishing its identity amidst various sorts of immigrants in multicultural Canada. Their struggle, however, takes a different and bizarre turn when Nurdin is charged with sexually assaulting a white woman. The novel ends on a note of a quest for identity remaining incomplete.

Throughout the novel, Nurdin tries to formulate an identity for himself with which he could possibly assert his sentimental attachment to Canada. After his emigrating to this multicultural state from Tanzania in Africa, Nurdin is obsessed with the negative feeling that he has now lost his identity due to the displacement from Africa to Canada. As everything around Nurdin has an ambience of newness, the feeling of losing his identity envelops him very poignantly. He

reckons that back in Africa he had some identity of his own. People knew him there. Moreover, they respected him. But after he emigrated to Canada, his sense of losing his identity, of respectability in the new unknown surrounding becomes very prominent. The unknown surroundings of Toronto make Nurdin feel that everything is unfamiliar. After arriving at an unknown place, one had generally a tendency to circumscribes oneself just to protect one's own identity. Doing the same, Nurdin tries to locate an atmosphere of familiarity in the huge, unfamiliar city. He comes to Sixty-nine, Rosecliffe Park with one a feeling that at least around him everything will seem very familiar, very homely. He sees the people of his own community around and this makes him feel - at least apparently - that he is not an alien in the new country. Nurdin has a vague idea that a familiar atmosphere may give him a sense of security, of not losing his identity, a feeling that he is born in and belongs to a particular community. Therefore, his innate attachment repeatedly to his community comes to his mind, since he is new to Canada.

Nurdin apprehends that coming from Africa may compartmentalise him, may provide him with a fixed new identity in multicultural Canada. He starts developing a feeling that the new identity - an African immigrant of Asian origin - has been imposed on him due to his displacement. Whether he likes this new identity of his or not, is of no significance. The brutal fact of imposition of the new identity on Nurdin is that it arises in the context of racial discrimination which is quite obviously common in contemporary Canada.

When several cultures exist together, it is necessary for each culture to have its own distinguishing identity. But when this identity is imposed on a particular culture on the basis of race, colour, and religion, the cruel brutalities become rife with reality. Vassanji focusses on this part of reality in his works.

In *The Gunny Sack*, the colour of human creed becomes important; and the characters seem to draw their identities on this basis of colour.

> "When god was well and ready after all his exertions finally to create mankind, he sat himself beside a red-hot oven with a plate of dough. From this he fashioned three identical dolls. He put the first doll in to the oven to finish it, but, alas, brought it out too soon: it came out and undone. In this way was born the white race. With this lesson learnt, the Almighty put the second doll into the oven, but this time he kept it for too long. It come out burnt and black. Thus the black race. Finally the One and Only put the last doll inside the oven, and brought it out at just the right time. It came out golden brown, the Asian, simply perfect."[3]

This "theory of creation"[4] seems to be the basic theory around which the whole novel revolves. Even the characters get their names according to this theory.

> "Thus our nicknames: Sona for the golden boy, the youngest and favourite, my brother, Jamal; Kala for the one who came between Salim, Salum in Swahili, the overdone."[5]

The identity that Vassanji portrays for all the characters, comes from this theory of discrimination. Infact, this theory has a demarcation drawn with harmony.

But in *The Book of Secrets*, the discrimination is tinged with staunch orthodoxy.

> 'The Indians are half savages.' Mrs. Bailey observed, beginning an explanation she had obviously thought out conclusively and in detail.
> 'And therefore worse', said her companion'. 'You can do nothing with them'.
> 'Gone too far the other way, she means. At least the African you can mould. But the Indian and the Mussulman are incorrigible in their worst habits and superstitions. They will always remain so'.[6]

This perhaps focuses the real feelings of the whites for the Indians.

In *No New Land*, the discrimination based on colour is projected powerfully in the following observation:

> "The black kicked us out, now the whites will do the same...
> Where do we go from here?"[7]

Perhaps through this observation, Vassanji draws our attention not only to circumstances under which the people belonging to Indian origin left their Africa but also to the fact they have lost their sense of a secure identity. Now they have to adopt and adapt to an atmosphere of an unknown, unfamiliar environment. Their identity will be now clubbed together with the people belonging to India. Something which Haji Lalani, the father of Nurdin had lost when he had migrated to Zanzibar, East Africa in 1906. He had tried to establish a separate identity for himself in East Africa. He knew that it was impossible to return to "the land of his birth".[8] So he had built a home for himself, where he could breathe an air of security. Gradually with the passage of time, Haji had gained an identity thanks to the respectability he had earned through hard work. He felt that his family will no longer suffer from insecure identity. He died...

> "....believing he had found a new country for his descendants."[9]

But soon the political scenario changed in East Africa, the land which had passed from the Germans to the British domination, became independent. With the blacks coming to power, the era of a white domination came to an end. As Indian people did not belong to either of the groups -- neither whites, nor blacks -- they

were treated with discrimination. After the Africans obtained political independence, superior authorities often took decisions unfavorable to Indians. Their citizenship were taken away and they were expelled out of the country...

> ... to whatever country that would take them, or else to refugee camps; in effect, they became orphans awaiting adoption.[10]

Hence when Nurdin Lalani and his family were thrown out of Tanzania, he had an option of going to Canada, because....

> The 'Uganda exodus' showed a way out for Dar's Asians. Canada was open and, for the rich, America too. Thus began a run on Canada.[11]

But as the incident in the subway tunnel in Canada, where three white youths hurt Esmail, an Asian immigrant from Dar-es-Salaam, shows, discrimination rules the roost here as well. These three youths, -- "two had crew cut hair, blond, the third wore a funny hat",[12] -- force their domination over others. As they are born whites, they have a feeling of superiority over others belong to man white cultures. They display their identity of being dominant through their behaviour and activities. This attitude of dominance moulds their behaviour. However, they too are a part of identity crisis because there is nothing exceptional about them. They are as common as other human beings. So they try to make the most of their white pigmentation and flaunt its superiority through acts of hurting others with different pigmentation. They expect that people around them should take notice of their domineering attitude, and acknowledge the superiority of their colour.

This is yet another marker to their identity. The old and the young have different points of view about their identities. The old feel that their identity has to conform to the contemporary socio-cultural reality of Canada. While the younger generation feels that being Europeans and having arrived earlier, they have a right to dominate others in all aspects of life, including in the field of jobs. Since they can force their point of view more vigorously, thanks to their physical prowess, the financial security of the younger generation is strengthened more quickly than that of the older ones. This is turn helps them reinforce their assumed superiority at a pace faster than that of their aged counterparts. And having reinforced their point of view their attitude towards the old people of their own race changes too. The older people resent this attitude of the young, although very passively in the form of a mere complaint:

> What do they know of our weaknesses, these youngsters,
> so sure-footed in their rarefied world....seeing us solid as rocks - and as dumb.[13]

After emigrating to Canada, Nurdin feels that a strong financial base is very essential for protecting his family and giving it a sense of security. With his experience in a reputed shoe company -- Bata Shoe Company -- back in Africa, Nurdin tries to enter the employment of a big company. But his struggle to land with a decent job ends in a failure repeatedly. Despite the fact that he keeps on trying one place after another he is being discriminated against because of his having a different identity -- different from those that constitute the mainstream of Canada. Since he does not have any work experience in Canada, his efforts for

getting a job end up in an abject failure, this time due to a bizarre new reason:

> "I am afraid, Nurdin," Mr. Rogers said, "We gave the job to someone else."
> Nurdin exploded. "But my experience! I Know shoes, I can give references -"
> "I am sorry, there were many applicants."
> "I know I do not have Canadian experience," he breathed hotly and with emotion on the phone, "but how can I get Canadian experience if you do not give me a chance? I have sold shoes for eight years! Eight years -"
> "Perhaps you were overqualified, sir."
> That was a new one. Overqualified. Good for laughs, and it got many.[14]

Nurdin feels that the job market is made only for a certain group of people - the whites. Jobs in Canada are not meant for people like him. Moreover, he thinks that due to his age he does not have the capacity of doing hard labour for longer periods of time, so the job market becomes available more easily to the younger people, and as such even the young immigrants get job more easily. Nurdin perceives that as youngsters are able to establish their cultural identities through the security of jobs and professions, their attitudes towards the aged immigrants are full of disdain, -- as much as are of young white towards their aged:

> All the white newcomers, younger people, find jobs, success stories proliferate, bus and subway drivers in uniforms - men you thought no better than you - haughtily stare you down, prouder than doctors and accountants with cute kids and expensive wives.[15]

Nanji, a young immigrant professor, however, has a different perception of this discrimation demarcations. Nanji is a neighbour of the Lalanis. He feels that when a person becomes financially sound with the help of a job, his viewpoint about the society around him also undergoes a change. Such people start considering themselves as members of the socially privileged class, and they

always find a rationale for discrimating against from those who are jobless. Their attitudes become disdainful and they keep on hurting those are unemployed. Nanji feels that this trait emerges more poignantly when one enters the privileged class through a job. As their identity becomes more class-oriented, their attitudes also change.

Through the character of Nurdin Lalani, Vassanji focuesses on the question of an individual's identity vis-a-vis the society. Since Canada has a multicultural ethos, preserving one's own cultural identity becomes a significant question. Sixty-nine, Rosecliffe Park, the building situated in Don Mills, in the suburbs of Toronto, represents a cultural identity as a whole. The macrocosmic outlook of this building projects an amalgamation of different people belonging to similar origins. They interact among themselves to protect their culture, tradition, and customs. They create a friendly atmosphere through their interaction with one another. This friendly atmosphere in Sixty-nine, Rosecliffe Park, avers to the fact that maintenance of a mixed cultural milieu among all the Canadians is a necessity. Otherwise, the danger of the eventual annihilation of one's own culture is very obvious. So the people dwelling in this building, interact among themselves, primarily to foster and reinforce their own identity. Vassanji has asserted this with the regular behaviour and activities that these people have.

> Some residents come home to Sixty nine to the reassuring clutches of the friendly vapors, and then go up and have a good meal.[16]

The microcosmic view of the Sixty-nine, Rosecliffe Park, projects that though the people living there are distinguished as Indians, but in reality they exist in diversity. They belong to different parts of India. Some are Goan, some are Madrasi, some Hyderabadi, some Gujarati, and some are Punjabi. There are Indians not only from India but from different parts of the world. For example, the Lalanis belong to East Africa. Ram Deen belongs to the Caribbean Islands. Sheru Mama and her busband Ramju, and Gulshan Bai belong to India. Though there is a clear portrayal of diversified cultures of India, it also presents at the same time a single blend of various identities belonging to an umbreella indentity called India.

Sixty-nine, Rosecliffe Park, reminds one of Firozsha Baag created by Rohinton Mistry, another author of Indo-Canadian origin. Firozsha Baag is an apartment building situated in Mumbai, India. The occupants -- ranging from Jaakaylee, the ghostseer, to Najamai, the only owner of refrigerator in the apartment, with Rustomji, the curmudgeon, and Kersi, the young boy whose life threads through the book and who narrates the final story of the collection, 'Swimming Lessons', as an adult in Toronto, in between -- all express an amalgam of a single cultural identity. This apartment building from *Tales from Firozsha Baag,* encompasses the exhibition of a unique cultural identity exactly like Sixty-nine, Rosecliffe Park of *No New Land.*

Vassanji in this novel has focussed on the question of identity from different perspectives. Not only through racial discrimination, generation difference, class differentiation, or cultural specificity, but Vassanji also associates identity with human relationships. Relationships have a major impact on one's identity. Different sorts of human relationships mould identity differently. Through the various relationships among the characters of *No New Land*, Vassanji shows how identity gets affected by different types of human relationships.

The character of Nurdin is the hub of such human relationships. He becomes the main pivotal point around which all the other characters revolve. We have already seen that beyond the bounds of his relationship with other characters of the novel, Nurdin is in a quest for his identity in the new environs of Canada. But the milieu of his personal relationship with others seems to enhance his quest further. Family is very important for human beings to exist in a society. The familial relationships existing among people create an atmosphere of interdependence. From this interdependence, arises a sense of identity because the position of any person in his family moulds to a great extent his relationships with the other members of his family.

As the changing political situation in post-colonial East Africa forced Nurdin and his family to leave Tanzania, the decision of making this spatial movement depended totally on him since he is the patriarch of the family. He took the decision of emigrating to Canada by himself, without taking into account the concerns of other members of his family members. This shows that Nurdin believes

in being a dominant decision-maker in his family -- something which the social milieu of his country did not bind back in East Africa or for that matter still further back in India. He feels that his identity of dominating the family will be continue to be maintained as before, despite their spatial movement which as we know is more than a movement in space. But his conception of taking decisions done alone on behalf of the family soon changes when he comes to Canada. He is unable to find a job for himself. Thus, through the loss of his financial independence, Nurdin loses his sense of security and this in turn affects his identity as the presiding patriarch of the family.

His daughter, Fatima, starts taking decision about her career without consulting her father because she feels that her father would not be able to give her a proper advice as he is unable to provide her with a sense of financial security. Her attachment to her father also undergoes a change due to their moving away from the restrictive African environment to a comparatively more open environment of North America -- Canada. movement. Moreover being an adolescent and undergoing both physical and psychological changes, her feelings for her father get affected. Because at this age when children are unable to find a sense of security in the paternal bondage, their attachment to their parents changes. Fatima is undergoing such a change. Though she still respects Nurdin, she develops a sense of extreme hatred towards the old tradition to which her father belongs. Because she feels that traditional outlook creates hindrances in one's search for security as well as identity. Thus, an atmosphere of a generational gap develops between Nurdin and Fatima. Fatima feels mentally relaxed

in the presence of Nanji, the young professor. She feels comfortable with him because Nanji understands the desires of the young:

> Nanji was also a playmate and companion of her and Hanif; he taught them how to play imaginary cricket, using only a pencil, and chess and backgammon, and went to the library and the Science Centre with them, buying them hamburgers and Pizza without converting dollars to shillings in his mind. So taken she was with this young man whose only pants were Levi's that she swore she would never wear dresses.[17]

Nurdin fails to understand the desires of his children, as he had been brought up in a totally different environment from that of his children. As his children get attached more and more to Nanji, Nurdin develops an envious attitude towards the young professor. It is very common for a father to develop a sense of envy when his children respect and devote more time to someone else who understands their desires of youngsters better:

> Nurdin watched this infatuation with a twinge of envy: What dreams you dream when they are babies. But how can you feel jealous of an educated, respectable young man taking your children under his wing? He was like a younger brother -and do not all children fall in love with their uncles?[18]

Nurdin's relationship with his son, Hanif, has been projected by Vassanji very briefly. Despite his very short appearance in the novel, Hanif is an important member of Nurdin's family. Nurdin has a formal relationship with Hanif and interacts with him very little. Nurdin feels that his son is very young, and at this adolescent age of fourteen, his interaction with the family members is very important. Though Hanif interacts very little with members of his family, but he...

> ....did not really need anybody. He liked to talk to Nanji, though whom he called Eeyore. He would seek out Nanji and get him talking. And then afterwards, feeling his sister's envy, he would talk about what Eeyore had said.[19]

Nurdin has no complaints against his son. He feels a sense of peace with him. He thinks that Hanif gives him strength and power.

Nurdin's relationship with his father, Haji Lalani, was, however, a very different one. Though they also had a very formal relationship, his father had always felt that Nurdin was...

> ...good-for-nothing, a bubbler, one likely to drop a cup of tea when serving a guest.[20]

Haji Lalani never considered him to be a person who had 'survived without giving offence and without special protection'.[21] The dominance of his father had made Nurdin feel that he was in a relationship of bondage in which he could never have prospered. He tried out....

> ... his hands at various jobs, even at running a business, but with no success. At the prospect of working with his father, he sulked and complained to his mother and sisters.[22]

Nurdin felt that his father had 'operated like Fate'.[23] Hence he could not develop his own independent personality. The domination of his father became a hindrance to the establishment of his identity.

His relationships with his brothers Akber and Shamshu, were, however, filled with cordiality. He loved the eldest brother Akber. In his teens, Akber had fallen in love with Sushila, the eldest daughter of Narandas, the cobbler. He used to write and send love notes to her. But once he was caught in his 'serenading'[24] act, and Haji whipped him with a cane. Nurdin could not bear the scene of his brother, Akber, being thrashed mercilessly.

....Nurdin stood glued, tearfully watching from behind a shelf.Muttering "please, please" wishing his father would stop.[25]

But with Shamshu his relationship was a bit different. He was more his playmate than his brother. Later, Akber had gone to Belgian Congo and had 'been looted a couple of times in the civil wars there and finally settled in Belgium'.[26] Much later, Nurdin met Akber's daughter, Nermine, in Montreal. He came to know that his brother had left for his daughter, Nermine, a diamond-cutting business in Antwerp. After meeting his brother's family Nurdin was not very happy. He felt...

> ...as he would have when walking out of the headmaster's office with a sore bottom recently whipped, with an unpleasant experience never mentioned, best forgotten. Not that it was his niece's fault. She was polite enough. But they felt so out of place, he had felt like a bum... .[27]

This relationship changes because of the difference of class. He feels that Akber's family now belonged to the upper class, whereas his family was still the same. This differentiation in terms of class becomes a landmark in delineating the changing relationship between the two brothers.

With his colleagues, Nurdin has had very friendly relations. Back in Africa, when he worked as a sales representative for the Bata Shoe Company in Central Province, he had an African Assistant, Charles. He liked him very much....

> With Charles he developed a friendship and came to learn of African ways. Charles, he learned, had about the same education as he had, but was some years younger. Charles too had a tyrannical father, who was now dead.... In this developing familiarity, Nurdin felt, with some satisfaction, a new experience, a breaking of walls. He let the experience develop its own sure course, take its time.[28]

After emigrating to Canada, he could not forget Charles. He felt a sense of

comfort in the company of Charles. Their companionship also gave Nurdin an identity as a friend, a sense of responsibility and a chance to express the inner most feelings he had. Thus a sense of security developed, and Nurdin felt that in friendship discrimination of colour and race did not matter despite the fact that Charles was a black man:

> he was 'the only person come really close to, in his life there, to whom he opened his heart'.[29]

In Canada, Nurdin comes in contact with Romesh, an Indian from Guyana. Romesh helps Nurdin in getting a job in Ontario Addiction Centre. The companionship of Romesh gives him confidence, which he had lost during the period of job-hunting in Toronto. Although most of his other colleagues were white Canadians, but Nurdin felt a sense of tolerance and, sometimes, enjoyment in the company of Romesh. Nurdin starts adopting himself in the unfamiliar environment, among whites. Romesh helps him in searching his familiar space. Thus the relationship with Romesh makes him confident and acquainted with the unfamiliar surroundings. He develops a belief that with Romesh he can indulge in all those activities his heart had desired. It begins with the consumption of pork. One day when Nurdin and Romesh were having their lunch together. Nurdin noticed a hot-dog in Romesh's plate. He wanted to take it. Romesh gave him half of it. Nurdin enjoyed eating the hot-dog, but even...

> ...before he had finished swallowing it, as it was going down gullet, everything inside him was echoing the after taste, crying, "Foreign, foreign." Yet it did nothing to him.

> When Romesh returned with a second helping, he had finished his half. Romesh nodded approvingly. "That was sausage."
> "Beef, I hope."
> "No."
>
> He pretended shock, and Romesh comforted him. "See, you're the same. Nothing's happened to you. Forget pork, man, I was not supposed to eat *meat*. Even egg. I'm supposed to think you're dirty. You think *they* are dirty. Who is right? Superstitions, all."
>
> The pig, they said, was the most beastly of beasts. It ate garbage and faeces, even its babies, it copulated freely, was incestuous. Wallowed in muck. Eat pig and become a beast. Slowly the bestial traits - cruelty and promiscuity, in one word, godlessness - overcome you. And you became, morally, like *them*. The Canadians.[30]

Nurdin felt a sense of guilt and shame within himself. Because his deed of greed has led him to commit an immoral act.

Gradually, in Romesh's company, Nurdin went to Yonge Street, and tasted beer, because he felt tempted the to taste a new drink. He was afraid that someone known to him might see him and the respect, the people and his family, had for him, would be diminished. Then Nurdin went to a place called Dar-es-Salaam, The Heaven of Love. After Nurdin entered this place, his heart ...

> ... pounded violently against a chest that seemed to have conteracted. He had never seen anything like it, not in ads, not in movies, nor even the girlie magazines of his youth. Sex senses beyond his wildest dreams: dirty, depraved, exciting - how *much* the flesh was capable of![31]

In the companionship of Romesh, Nurdin got a chance to fulfil his lustful desires. So he loved his company. But he lost the strong will-power of purity, and a feeling of shame and guilt enveloped him. His identity got so warped, that he could not develop courage of facing the truth in the eyes of his family and, more than that, within himself.

In the Ontario Addiction Centre, Nurdin came in contact with Sushila, who was the cobbler's daughter. When she was in her adolescence, his elder brother, Akber, wrote love notes and did "seranading" acts to her. She had played with Nurdin because he was much younger to her.

With Sushila, Nurdin developed a clandestine relationship. Whenever Nurdin felt that he needed someone to talk to, he would ' make a detour to Kensington Market'[32] where Sushila lived. They talked about...

> ...the part, her life, her daughter. An overall impression gradually formed of her, getting more detailed every time he saw her.[33]

Nurdin felt a satisfying companionship with Sushila. The identity that Nurdin formulated in this relationship, gave, him a sense of soothing feeling that balmed all his pains. His identity strengthened deep within himself with the love and feelings that he shared with Sushila.

The relationship with his wife, Zera, is the most significant one among all the relationships that Vassanji portrays with Nurdin. The husband-wife relation began with the see-sawing of dominance and recession between the Nurdin and his wife, Zera. When he got married to Zera, he could not oppose the marriage because his father Haji Lalani had made the final decision about his marriage. At the very first look, Nurdin did not like Zera because like adolescents, he had an inner most desire to marry a girl who was...

> ...smart and fair, with boy-cut hair, who was comfortable in high heels, spoke English, and perhaps even had been abroad.[34]

But gradually Nurdin develop a feeling of togetherness, liking, and, even, love towards Zera. Then they emigrated to Canada alongwith their children. Zera found a job as a receptionist. They had put up with Zera's sister, Roshan's family. As the financial condition of Nurdin's family was controlled by Zera, Nurdin accepted the financial dominance of his wife. One friday evening, when Roshan was ironing her husband, Abduls' pants, the children of Zera and Roshan started fighting. Both the mothers ran to pacify the quarrel. In the meantime, the iron burnt a leg of the pant. Abdul became furious, and in anger, slapped his wife. Seeing her sister being slapped by Abdul, Zera could not control her rage and she lunged at 'Abdul with the hot iron'.[35] Nurdin Came in between to block Zera's way and Abdul was saved.

> A loud quarrel ensued, threats and abuses were exchanged, and the police were almost called. Roshan cried and Zera cried and the children wailed.[36]

Nurdin love, his wife so much that he wanted to save her from the problems that would have occurred if Abdul got burnt.

He seem to be very happy with Zera. Though Zera had put on weight but she did not adopt the culture of the mainstream of Canada. She remained the same as she had come from Africa. She....

> ...out of her sense of modesty, did not take to cutting her hair or wearing pants, as many other women started doing, regardless of the size of their buttocks. So there were homely women, who had always dressed in long frocks, suddenly emerging swinging immense hips clothed in brightly coloured acrylic pants, and you could not help looking and feeling ashamed at the same time.[37]

Zera did not like to imitate the mainstream culture of Canada and Nurdin likes this trait of her.

Later one day, when Nurdin brings an Indian couple from Guyana, Mohan and Lakshmi, to stay overnight in his apartment, he has a feeling of wonder what his wife and children would be saying. He feels hesitant despite that the he had helped the couple. But Zera...

> ....seeing them enter, simply smiled, the gracious hostess welcoming her husband's friends. "Sit, sit." Nurdin said. They sat on the couch. Mohan lying back, his feet just touching the carpet; Lakshmi, nervous, watched Zera with apprehension. Zera stood there with a fixed smile.[38]

Later in the middle of the night, Nurdin and Zera thought 'they could be faking'.[39] So they...

> ...decided they could not take chances. They would take turns sleeping, one of them keeping watch, giving ear to the snores already coming from the living room.[40]

Nurdin always obeys his wife - may be to maintain a peaceful relation between them. Though Zera dominates the relationship most of the time, but she never manipulates her husband for any servile deeds. She always considers that as he is her husband, it is her duty to respect him all the time. Nurdin never fights with her, nor does he ever feel that Zera is trying to dominate him. They love each other and lead a peaceful, married life.

But when Nurdin visited the Yonge street in the company of Romesh, his lustful feelings began to surface. He felt physically attracted towards Zera.

> Even though she had grown fat, there *was* still an attraction about her. There was that friendliness, the soft-heartedness, and the sense of humour. Those breasts were still ripe mangoes and the large hips were yet firm. But she did not let him come close. Blocking his attention, in bed, turning against his desires that mountain of a haunch, behind which he felt rather helpless and small. Do you want me to come from behind? If you want to. With this Kilimanjaro facing me? Go to sleep.[41]

Zera feels that she has grown old and so she should develop piety and become more religious. She should not perform any sort of 'carnal sin'.[42] She feels that she is at an when age when people became devouts and to become devout she should try to devote more time to the Lord.

Throughout the novel, the relationship of Nurdin and Zera develops in different perspectives. Nurdin feels that he is satisfied with his wife. He gets a psychological peace in her company. Their relationship gives them the identify of interdependence. Later, when Zera develops strong religious feelings in her, Nurdin tries to create an amorous relationship with Sushila. Though their clandestine affair gives Nurdin a sense of satisfaction, but in his heart of hearts, he feels guilty since he hides the whole affair from Zera. And so he feels restless in Zera's company. Gradually, a kind of wall border emerges between the Lalani couple. Zera moves to religions for peace and satisfaction, and Nurdin moves close to another women. He still behaves like an adolescent, giving importance to physical urges. So Nurdin's identity seems to be grounded more to the physical needs than to the psychological attachment of family and children. The sense of physical closeness becomes very important for Nurdin and thus his identity

encompasses within the limitation of physical existences.

The existential identity becomes important for any immigrant. When he is surrounded by an atmosphere of unfamiliarity, he feels that he does not have a proper space to live in. He experiences that he is being treated as an outsider. He cannot avail himself of any privileges and advantages in the society because he exists as a member of the minority. This sense of minority gets deep-rooted in his mind and soul, because of discriminations and inequalities which he faces every moment of his life. Gradually, therefore, he feels that he needs a space for existence. Enveloped in such a feeling for space, he also feels the need of a distinct identity. Such a need troubles Nurdin too.

Nurdin feels that his existence has been shaped by several individuals. The identity that he exists with, has always been moulded by some other people. He cannot exist on his own. The dominance of his father in his early life, gives birth to the feeling that he has no individual identity. And thus being unable to formulate his own voice or not having any individual identity, Nurdin thinks that he has no space in his family. He is being circumscribed to a particular domain and the boundary is being drawn by someone else. The identity that he exist with is being given to him by the family, the society, the community he lives in.

Not only Nurdin, but Nanji, the young professor, and his friend, Jamal, the lawyer, also try to grapple the question of their respective existences. When one is unemployed, one struggles for one's livelihood, then life becomes too hard to

live, the existence is obviously questioned. The struggle for existence becomes so complicated that one lives an 'absurd existence'.[43]

> "But suppose I use my free will to decide to go on with this absurd existence, as you call it..."
> "Well, if you really *choose* that...to go on living...then you live with that *choice* facing you every moment of your life. You are truly *alive*. Most people go on mindlessly of course, they don't *choose* to live.
> That's because they do what they are told or made to do... . And think of this: when death comes unasked, when it takes you by surprise, it will rob you of even this free choice, because when you thought you were choosing to live, it was only letting you live. The only way you can exercise free will, defeating *it*, is by taking your own life".[44]

Vassanji portrays this question of existence through the characters of Jamal and Nanji. Their sense of survival becomes a big question. Infact 'question of morality and ethics, of good faith and compromise'[45] keeps on tormenting Nanji. When one is tormented by such questions in life, one feels that surviving with an established identity is not possible in a society where one is being categorised as a member of the minority group. His existential identity is very problematic and so to get rid of this problem of life, he likes to live in a world of dreams or illusions. Such illusions make his survival better with real rays of hope. Nanji prefers to lead such a life where his hope for existence will be based on dreams and promises.

> "Wait", he would promise, "when I've made my millions I will have all the intellectuals like you and artists and musicians around me, my own durbar where you don't have to worry about mundane things like where your next meal is going to come from...".[46]

Whether existing in the world of hallucinations or existing in the realm of harsher reality, an immigrant has to live with an identity of the community or

region he belongs to. During the process of existence, he has to make more prominent his regional identity. His roots play a significant role in formulating his identity in an unknown atmosphere. As Nurdin and his traits belongs them to a particular region, their behaviour, attitude, and modes of life, seem to be formulated by their roots. Nurdin has his roots in India. Though his father, Haji, went to Africa many decades ago, but the profession that they adopted, ties them with certain innate Indian characteristics. Nurdin inherited these characteristics, and came to Canada with them.

The Indian characteristics can be seen through its customs, tradition, typicalities, and, even, cuisines that Vassanji portrays in *No New Land*. Indians bear certain typical traits in them. Nurdin and his family seem to bear those typicalities within them. It can be observed in the very beginning of the novel, when Fatima receives an envelop from some university which may decide her career, her future, she becomes excitedly anxious. She was 'as nervous as had ever been in her life'.[47] Becoming nervous at this moment may be a human trait, but whispering prayers superstitiously due to nervousnousness, anxiety, and excitement is a typical Indian characteristic.

> It did not occur to her, that the decision she awaited had already been made a few days before, and she whispered a prayer in much the same way her mother sometimes did; ... .[48]

Even Zera shows this typical Indian traits in her. When the Lalanis emigrated to Canada, Zera had got with her lots of souvenirs and memoirs from

Africa. But when they settled down in Sixty-nine, Rosecliffe Park, most of the things went to the dustbin, except the photograph of Haji Lalani.

> His father's photograph, taken in the 1940s, was one of the prized possessions Zera had brought from Dar. Other things had seen the dustbins - photographs, old books, souvenirs - but not this. It was the first object to go up on the walls.[49]

One may conclude that this sort of respect for father-in-law may be a traditional humane trait. But lighting incense sticks and holding them in front of the photograph is an Indian trait of respect and devotion for the in-laws.

> Sometimes when she lighted incense sticks and went around the apartment consecrating it, she would stand before the photograph and hold the incense to it - as one would to a real person - thus giving it a real presence in the home.[50]

Hanif also has innate some Indian characteristics. When an adolescent boy gets close to any other male person, the togetherness and closeness among them makes the boy feel comfortable. Such a candid relationship developed between Hanif and Nanji. In this friendly relationship, Hanif called him 'Eeyore'.[51]

> He liked to talk Nanji, though, whom he called 'Eeyore'. He would seek out Nanji and get him talking.[52]

'Eeyore' is an accented form of the Indian word for friends. This is a typical way of summoning friends in India. Friends are sometimes called as 'yaar'. Yasmin Ladha, one of the Indo-Canadian authors, also uses this word 'yaar' in her collection of short stories, *Lion's Granddaughter and Other Stories*. She addresses her reader as 'yaar-readerji',[53] invoking her readers to be her close friends.

Not only the Lalani couple, other people of Indian roots in the Sixty-nine, Rosecliffe Park, have such inborne Indian characteristics. Jamal uses the term 'chacha'[54] to summon an aged person. 'Chacha' is an Indian word to show respect for the elderly people. It is an Indian word for uncles. Then when the three girls from New York come to visit Nanji and stay over for two days, people in the building had already started discussing about their relationship.

> The word passed at Sixty-nine, and feeling the curious, amused, kindly eyes on him in the corridors as he passed with whatever else it was he needed, he would blush.[55]

This sort of curiosity is a typical Indian trait.

Vassanji portrays some Indian traditions and customs through the various characters of *No New Land*. In Indian tradition, the welcoming ceremony is always concluded by touching the feet of the elderly guests. When the Missionary, the religious man, comes to Nurdin's apartment, there was a traditional welcoming ceremony.

> As he entered the room the females of the congregation, dressed in white, attempted an elaborate welcoming ceremony, with touching of feet and cracking of knuckles and garlanding.... .[56]

When one visits someone's house for the first time, it is an Indian tradition to take sweets or fruits along. Nurdin does not forget his tradition. When he and Romesh visit Sushila's house at Kensington Market, they take some fruits with them.

> Mangoes were few and expensive here, so they settled for oranges instead to take upstairs.[57]

While portraying Indian traditions, customs, and typical characteristics, Vassanji talks about the Indians cuisines. As we all know, the food one eats, affirms the traits of a particular place. The food that the Indians dwelling in Sixty-nine, Rosecliffe Park, eat, shows that they belong to India. For instance, 'chappatis'[58] is the staple food of people of northern part of India. Gulshan Bai and Sheru Mama usually supply the Indian dishes to the people in Sixty-nine, Rosecliffe Park.

> On the sixth floor, well along the corridor and away from the bustle of the elevators, runs the major local industry. Here one Gulshan Bai prepares full meals for two, to take out... And Gulshan Bai minds the stoves herself.... she rolls the chappatis everyday.[59]

Indians prefer to eat 'chappatis' with pickles. They even tend to put ghee or clarified butter over the 'chappatis' and eat it. Sheru Mama and her husband, Ramju, tend to serve 'chappatis' that way.

> Sheru Mama makes hundreds of chappatis everyday and babysits two toddlers at the same time, while husband Ramju helps with the dishes and puts the required dollop of margarine over every chappati. Her customers tend to be single men who will eat a chappati with a pickle, or butter and jam, or curry canned in the U.S.[60]

'Samosas'[61] are one of the favourite snacks of the people of northern part of India. They like to eat them with tea, especially: "Tea would be fetched and Samosas".[62] Vassanji mentions about having samosas with tea even in one of the short stories in *Uhuru Street*. In 'In the Quiet of a Sunday Afternoon', Zarina sells samosas to the Indian people living in Uhuru street:

> I have tea and wait for the women to bring samosas.[63]

Indian people are well known throughout the world for a variety of fried and spicy food. Even in breakfast, they prefer to have fried food. When Mohan and Lakshmi, the Indians from Guyana stayed back for a night in Nurdin's apartment, Zera made some 'puris'[64] for all of them the following morning. Not only Vassanji but other Indo-Canadian writers also mention the names of various Indian dishes. Uma Parameswaran in her *Rootless But Green are the Boulevard Trees*, mentions several Indian cuisines.

> VITHAL: let me help with something. What's cooking? JYOTI (*Pleased to see him*): That's anybody's guess. Mom's made enough matter paneer to feed an army and pilao will be ready as soon as the vegetables done. Any suggestions?
> VITHAL: How about puris? I haven't had a good Indian meal in ages. Here, I'll get the dough ready. Arun, it is time you washed your eyes. Slice some onions for raita.[65]

The Indo-Canadian authors use the names of Indian cuisines deliberately. They want to affirm their own identity in multicultural Canada. In Canada, when everyone is busy trying to follow the culture of the mainstream, these Indian try to exhibit their distinct cultural identity. Infact, the cultural identity that comes up through food is very powerful because it exhibits the everyday modes of life of these East Indians. Perhaps this is the reason why Vassanji mentions about Indian food in all his works.

It is not only description of about food, but also enumerating the traditions, customs, and typical Indian characteristics that prove the fact that maintenance of culture is an innate trait especially when the question of identity is that of a

minority. When one is categorised as a minority, one has to maintain one's cultural identity through these modes of life. The identity that demarcates one as belonging to a particular region, essentially emerges from these modes of life. As these are innate traits, one doesn't want to get rid of them; rather, one prefers to stick to these cultural identities. Nurdin and his family, and all the other inhabitants of Sixty-nine, Rosecliffe Park, try to maintain such a cultural identity. Traditions and customs are passed from one generations to another for the maintenance of cultural identity.

Though certain trends may develop because of assimilation in the mainstream culture, that generally starts from the second generation. The second generations of Indian in Canada prefer to adopt the mainstream culture of Canada. Thus, a blend of East and West is born. This we can see in Abdul's Don Mills apartment, the dining table has foods piled on it which are a blend of both the cultures – the Indian or the Eastern and the West or the Canadian.

> ... an abundant breakfast on the table – with toast and eggs and juice and jam and paranthas... .[00]

Infact, the identity that evolves from this blend is totally different from that could be called typical Indian. The typicality of their distinct cultural identity fades gradually through generations.

Vassanji places the Candian National Tower, or C.N. tower uniquely in Nurdin's life.

> From their apartment, through the living-room window and the balcony,

> the Lalanis could see, penetrating through the mass of foliage in the distance, the top of the CN Tower blinking its mysterious signal. In rain or shire, a permanent presence in their lives, a seal on their new existence, the god-head towards which the cars on the parkway spilled over, from which having propitiated they came racing back.[67]

Throughout the novel, the CN Tower stands erect to mark the existence of the immigrants, especially Nurdin, with the new identity that has been imposed on them. As it stands tall and proud, it becomes the entity which helps remind Nurdin about his past. The CN Tower takes Nurdin away to his past and he recollects his days back in Africa.

> ....in the distance, in front of him, the CN Tower blinked constantly in the darkness. At times like these, all to himself, he would on occasion think of the old days... of his stern old father who had terrified him so much... of his brothers and sisters and the family... of his schooldays of his buddy, Charles, and the days and nights they spent in the forest together on their way to sell Bata shoes.[68]

The Tower makes Nurdin remember that he does not belong to this country. This tower constantly reminds him of an identity with which he has to exist in Canada. It becomes a symbol through which Nurdin can see clearly the demarcations between Africa and Canada.

> ... the carpeting, the sofas, the telephone, the fridge, the television - yes, luxuries by Dar standards - things you could not have owned in a lifetime. The CN Tower blinks unfailingly in the distance: ... .[69]

Not only of the vast difference of these places, but Nurdin can perceive clear demarcation between life and death. It also reminds him of his age and deeds he had done, the deeds which mark him as a new comer in this country. It shows Nurdin that his mortal life has spent a lot of years attempting to accomplish futile

deeds. His futile deeds categorise him with a particular identity. When Hanif and Fatima spend more time and become more close to Nanji, he feels that his deeds could not keep his own children with him. He thinks that he has lost the power of sharing feelings with his children and he "begin(s) to rot".[70] The Canadian National Tower reminds him of all these deeds.

> "When does a man begin to rot ?" Gazing at the distant CN Tower blinking its signals into the hazy darkness, Nurdin asked himself the question. He sat in his armchair, turned around to look, out into the night. Through the open balcony the zoom of the traffic down below in the valley was faintly audible, as was the rustle of trees. Pleased with the sound of his silent question, he repeated it in his mind again, this time addressing the tower. The lofty structure he had grown familiar with over the months, from this vantage point, and he had taken to addressing it. "When does a man begin to rot ?" he asked. Faithful always, it blinked its answer, a coded message he could not understand.[71]

The CN Tower becomes a reminder of the most important incident that has occured in Nurdin's life. The incident 'booked' him 'for indecent assault on one Maria Viviana Baptista of Kensington Avenue'.[72] One day, in Ontario Addiction Centre, when Nurdin came out of the supply rooms, where he worked, at eleven O'clock in the morning, he was...

> ...pushing a squeaking trolley heaped with bed linen. The door clicked shut behind him, and he turned a corner and pushed towards the elevators. As he approached the small lobby facing the two elevators, he saw in front of him a girl in blue jeans sitting on the floor, leaning against the side wall. Her legs were drawn up in front of her, her hands hung limp on the raised knees, and her head was lowered. Obviously she had been crying, the blonde hair dishevelled, the face-what he could see of it - was puffy and red.
> Instinctively he hurried towards her, parking the trolley on the way. "Madam - Miss - is anything wrong ? Can I be of any help?".
> There was no response. He looked up again, turned around, there was no one coming. He tried again. "Miss, shall I call a doctor?"

> He was almost squatting beside her now, his hand was on her shoulder. He realized he had never been so close to a white woman before. And he realized he had become aware of her femaleness. He caught, quite strongly, the whiff of creamy makeup. Her blouse was white, embroidered at the neck. A button was open and he could see the curve of a breast. The skin there was pale, almost white, and dull. He was waiting for her response to his offer of help. The response, when it came, was not quite what he expected. His hand was still on her shoulder when suddenly she gave the alarm.
> "RAPE !" she cried. "He's trying to rape me !"[73]

How far this charge of rape is true, can hardly be commented on. But this incident shocks wits out of Nurdin. He feels that he has been charged falsely and that the identity of respect he has earned, would be vanquished with this false charge. He perceives that probably because he is an immigrant who belongs to a minority group, he has been charged falsely with such a crime. But when we see that Maria, the victim, is also an immigrant, belonging to a Portuguese origin, the whole perception of Nurdin being falsely charged, turns out to be wrong. Vassanji wants to show probably the clash among the minorities through this incident. The element of truth in this incident becomes a peripheral matter. This incident seems to portray the clash of identities. Various identitites clashing each other in the multicultural situation in Canada, makes Vassanji make fun of "multivulturalism".[74] As vultures are scavengers depending on dead bodies or left overs of other carnivorous animals to survive, similarly immigrants in Canada seem to depend on the mainstream of Canada for their livelihood. Such a dependence of the mainstream makes the immigrants lead a life of scavengers. Moreover, vultures fight among themselves for food, so are the immigrants

fighting for their survival.

If we probe into the change that occures in Nurdin's character at that point of time when he was charged with 'indecent assault',[75] we may conclude that the charge may be true. After Nurdin went to the Yonge Street, his physical urge towards sex starts developing obsessively. But his wife tries to subdue his desires, reminding him of his age.

> "Nurdin's lusty eye, he had discovered, hovered not only on the ample but forbidden body of his wife – which God would surely excuse – but on practically all women, it seemed. Like a boy at puberty he had become aware of Woman, the female of the species, and he found her diverse and beautiful. And what was offered to an eye starved for such visions was simply breathtaking. It was like sending to the hungry of the world not just rations of wheat but whole banquets. Bra-less women with lively breasts under blouses and T-shirts that simply sucked your eyeballs out. Buttocks breaking out of shorts. And when you saw these twin delights nuzzling a bicycle seat, doing a gentle rhythmic dance of their own in the dazzling heat and among the trees and among the trees and flowers and the smells of nature in the park – why, you had to be sure you were dressed right. And Zera marching long ahead. "Hurry, up, Nurdin, stop loitering like a boy." Boy, indeed. His head would be pounding, his body aching with desire.[76]

Nurdin's "problem was lust",[77] and so to get rid of his problems, he went to the Yonge Street with Romesh, to see "sex scenes beyond his wildest dreams". Gradually he developed a clandestine relationship with Sushila. All these aspects show his lecherous character. Now when he is charged with 'rape',[78] it could be true. But it remains ambiguous and arriving at any concrete decision may be very problematic. Anyway, when we probe into the change of Nurdin's behaviour, we can conclude that the charge can be true. The Canadian National Tower gives its "cryptic message",[79] to Nurdin for his crime which he had committed. The crime

of 'rape' may be ambiguous, but the sense of guilt, shame and anguish, are true. Nurdin envelopes himself in such feelings when he starts thinking that the past for him is cruel and disastrous. So the freedom of his future turns out to be unreal and remote because future is based on the deeds of the past, which Nurdin considers to be gruesome. Whether the past or the future, identity of an individual is always moulded more by the community, the society, he exists in, than by his own individual attempts.

Vassanji tries to explore the quest for identity through the character of Nurdin. Throughout the novel, Nurdin tries to make individual attempts to establish an identity of his own, but the family, the community, the society, thwarts his attempts. Whether through relationships with other characters, or cultural interactions, or racial discriminations, or age differentiations, Nurdin faces always certain hindrances where he cannot make attempts to establish an independent individual identity. He realises at the end of the novel that individual identity is only possible when one exists in some place where there is no family, no community, no society. Thus in *No New Land*, Vassanji portrays the quest for identity of an immigrant, first in a familiar space, which his predecessors had created, then in an unfamiliar environment, where everything is unknown.

Notes

1. Aviva Joel, 'One of the First Questions', in *The Toronto South Asian Review*, Vol.II, No.2, (Winter 1993), p.19.

2. Arun P. Mukherjee, 'Introduction', in *Oppositional Aesthetics: Readings from a Hyphenated Space*, (Toronto: TSAR Publications, 1994), p.7.

3. M.G. Vassanji, "How I killed my Father," in *The Gunny Sack*, (New Delhi: Viking, 1990), p. 73.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

6. M.G. Vassanji, "The Administrator", in *The Book of Secrets*, (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1995), p. 39.

7. M.G. Vassanji, *No New Land*, (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1992), p.103.

8. Ibid., p. 30

9. *Ibid.* p. 30.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 94.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 168.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 146-147.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 147-148.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 127.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

36. *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 119.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 138.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 138.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 168.

53. Yasmin Ladha, "Beena", in *Lions Granddaughter and Other Stories*, (Edmonton: NeWest Publishers Ltd., 1992), p. 1.

54. M.G. Vassanji, *No New Land*, (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1992), p. 160.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 185.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

59. *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

63. M.G. Vassanji, "In the Quiet of a Sunday Afternoon", in *Uhuru Street*, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1992), p. 2.

64. M.G. Vassanji, *No New Land*, (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1992), p. 121.

65. Uma Parameswaran, *Rootless But Green are the Boulevard Trees*, (Toronto: ISAR Publications, 1987), ACT TWO, Scene II, p. 20.

66. M.G. Vassanji, *No New Land*, (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1992), p. 36.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

71. *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

72. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

73. *Ibid.*, pp. 178-179.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 111.

75. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

76. *Ibid.*, p. 141.

77. *Ibid.*, p. 141.

78. *Ibid.*, p. 179.

79. *Ibid.*, p. 206.

CHAPTER IV

DIASPORA IN A MULTICULTURAL MOSAIC

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

- Surjeet Kalsey[1]

After East Indians -- that is the term used in Canada for Indians -- migrated to different parts of the world, they tried to capture in their creative writings, their experiences with a sense of alienation. In most of their works, the characteristics of diaspora can be traced. These diasporic traits separate them from the mainstream of the contemporary society where they live. In Canada, the writings of East Indian immigrants are catalogued in a different category -- the diasporic writing. As in contemporary Canadian literature, the term diasporic writing has

come to be associated with works produced by globally dispersed minority community that have common ancestral homelands. So these East Indian diasporic writers hue their works with the sense of alienation, due to the displacement from their homelands.

Diasporic writings are invariably concerned with the writer's or his/her community's attachment to the homeland. Such a trait, for instance, quite evident in the works of Vassanji. Whether it is in his novel *The Gunny Sack* or in the collection of short stories, *Uhuru Street*, Vassanji writes about his own homeland -- Tanzania, in East Africa. Even in *No New Land*, there is an elaborate description of East Africa in Chapter 2. Not only Vassanji, even Rohinton Mistry, another diasporic writer of Indo-Canadian origin, describes about his homeland in his works. His novels, whether it is *Such a Long Journey*, or it is *A Fine Balance*, have in his homeland, India, particularly in Mumbai. Most of his stories from his collection of short stories *Tales from Firozsha Baag* have also been located in Mumbai.

But this attachment by diasporic writers is countered by a yearning for a sense of belonging to their current places of abode. Caught physically between the two worlds, the diasporic writers are, in Victor Turner's words,'*transitional-beings*' or '*liminal personae*'[2] that is they are in the process of moving from one cultural state of existence to another. In this state of transition, some respond ambivalently to their dual cultures or societies. While some others attempt to

assimilate and integrate. For instance, another Indo-Canadian diasporic writer, Uma Parameswaran in her work *Trishanku* includes immigrants of both sexes, of all ages, of varying periods of time in Canada, from many professions and vocations, who like to adapt themselves in multicultural Canada. For others, the liminal or transitional state is too prolonged to cope with, and they may withdraw to their ancestral identity or homeland. Perhaps this is why the protagonist of *No New Land*, Nurdin Lalani, and other immigrants try to circumscribe themselves within their own world.

Whether the diasporic writers are induced to this attachment or are willing to assimilate or integrate with their new environment, they remain attached to their ancestral customs, traditions, languages, and religions. Throughout the novel, *No New Land*, Vassanji embellishes the characters with their ancestral traits. These ancestral traits have endowed the Indo-Canadian diasporic writers with a new identity. Homi K. Bhabha speaks of in his theoretical study of the modern nation, a 'cultural liminality(is) -- *within the nation*',[3] not just in the immigrant community. Referring to the national memory, he says: 'Being obliged to forget becomes the basis of remembering the nation, peopling it anew, imagining the possibility of other contending and liberating forms of cultural identity'.[4]

The cultural identity that the Indo-Canadian diasporic writers try to formulate is an ambivalent conflict between traditions and cultures of their places of abode and homelands. Due to this conflict, the communities get segregated.

Therefore, the East Indian immigrants feel alienated from the mainstream of the Canadian society. So Vassanji has described the East Indian immigrants in segregated apartments in the building, Sixty-nine, Rosecliffe Park. Perhaps with the same intentions, Rohinton Mistry portrays the various chawls and gullies in his Firozsha Baag, in *Tales from Firozsha Baag*, although in a different environment.

According to William Safran, the term diaspora can be "applied to expatriate minority communities whose members share several of the following characteristics:

> they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original "center" to two or more "peripheral" or foreign regions; they retain a collective momery, vision, or myth about their original homeland -- its physical location, history and achievements; they believe they are not -- and perhaps cannot be -- fully accepted and insulated from it; they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return -- when conditions are appropriate; they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their homeland and its safety and prosperity; and they continue to relate personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship.[5]

These characteristics raise complex questions of culture and identity. In Canada, the concept of multiculturalism has tried to simplify these complexities of diaspora.

In 1971, Canada adopted a policy of multiculturalism. According to Sneja Gunew, multiculturalism is a "theory (albiet vague) about the *foundations* of a culture rather than a practice which subsumes cultural ideas."[6] The word "multiculturalism" emerged in Canada during the 1960s. It began with the advent of the immigrants in the eighteenth century, the gold rushes in the nineteenth

century, and the settlement of the West in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that made Canada one of the "world's main immigrant-receiving societies".[7] The country was just a "melting pot", or the creation of new ethnic or cultural groups out of the combined elements in the population. Gradually, the society became an example of a "cultural mosaic", that is, the amalgam of the ethnic and cultural groups, while those groups retain their distinctive characteristics. And by 1971, the term "multiculturalism" was officially adopted by the federal government of Canada. The Canadian government used the term ...

> ... to refer to a society that is characterised by ethnic or cultural heterogeneity; to refer to an ideal of equality and mutual respect among a population's ethnic or cultural groups; and to refer to the policy proclaimed by the federal government in 1971 and subsequently by a number of provinces.[8]

The federal government describes the policy of "multiculturalism" in three distinct meanings. They are the social policy of encouraging retention of group heritages and full participation in Canadian society the philosophy or ideology of cultural pluralism; and a measure of ethnic diversity within a society, that was bilingual, mainly the English and the French, framework.

Amidst this multicultural ethos, the East Indian diasporic writers are trying to establish their own identity. They treat the concept of "multiculturalism" with great insight and draw immense strength from it, looking to cultural roots for inspiration. Vassanji describes this through the portrayal of Nurdin Lalani and his relationship with Africa. These writers also consider themselves Canadian, and

their writing provides an arena for dialogue about reconciling different aspects of their identities. Infact, the characters of *No New Land*, held Vassanji in dealing with the crises of identities in multicultural Canada. Recent trends in immigration prove that ethnocultural diversity is now an integral part of the Canadian experience: at present the majority of Canadians can trace their roots back to origins which are non-British or non-French.[9] Not only Vassanji, Mistry, or other Indo-Canadian diasporic writers, but other immigrant writers from different parts of the world -- settled in Canada -- now trace to their origin/homeland in their works. For example, Michael Ondaatje talks about his Sri Lankan origin in his work *Running in the Family*. Even Josef Skvorecky describes about his Czech roots in his work *The Engineer of Human Souls*.

Generalisations cannot be made without the experience of being "hyphenated" Canadians [10] questions of class, religion, race and tradition affect the lived experience and literary production of immigrant writers in fundamental ways. In *No New Land*, Vassanji elaborates the class differentiation, the racial discrimation, and the generation differences through its characters.

The East Indian diasporic writings in multicultural Canada is at a crucial stage of development. Many of the writers are concerned with describing the experience of its ethnicity. For instance, Vassanji talks of his own Ismaili community in his works. Even Mistry describes about his Parsi community in his works.

The increased output of diasporic writings of multicultural Canada by the East Indian immigrants over the last ten or fifteen years has interrupted the literary mainstream. In achieving such a status, Canada has benefitted from multiculturalism. As Ashcroft, et. al., have pointed out,

> whereas in much European thinking, history, ancestry, and the past from a powerful reference point for epistemology, in post-colonial thought, temporal lineality is replaced with a spatial plurality: time broadens into space.[11]

Canadian literary theory has, in breaking away from European domination, generally retained a nationalist stance; yet, in the wake of multiculturalism, theories of literary hybridity have not yet replaced the nationalistic approach.

For Canada, the present is struggling out of a past heavily laden with cultural baggage and is attempting to construct a future. The cultural encounter between the "center" and the "margin" must function on a level where difference in accepted.[12] While multiculturalism is a political construct resulting from Canada's earlier immigration policies, it tries to divert attention from questions about identity, culture, homeland, diversity, and it focusses basically on a sophisticated form of assimilation.

Dealing with literature produced by marginalised communities, Andrew Gurr says:

> An artist born in a colony is made conscious of the culturally subservient status of his home and is forced to go into exile in the metropolis as a means of compensating for that sense of cultural subservience.[13]

And having moved into exile, the preoccupation of the diasporic writer is to create

a fictive version of home, one which entails a return to childhood and a concern with stasis:

> ...the exile is still more deliberately concerned to identify or even create a stasis, because home is a static concept rooted in the unalterable circumstances of childhood.[14]

These assertions, despite their validity in writers, like Vassanji, Mistry, and others, raise more questions than they answer, but Gurr is in fact right in pointing to dualities that characterise diasporic writing. He suggests that a diasporic writer is an outsider, who must achieve solitude and distance in order to write. Such a frame permits a cohesive stance for his work and is, in some cases, accurate in its description. Because of such a stance, Vassanji has been elaborating descriptively about Tanzania not only in *The Gunny Sack*, but also in all his other works.

The reality, however, is that the phenomenon of exile and expatriation, particularly for diasporic writers is a lot more complex. Aamer Hussein points out, 'the term expatriate is notional or nonsensical in its literal sense for much of the year'.[15] One cannot gloss over or underestimate the difference among exile, expatriate, and refugee; although convenience dictates that they can be seen together as one corpus. The sensibility informs that these conditions result in very different thematic preoccupations. About expatriation Hussein comments:

> ...it implies neither a forced eviction from one's motherland, nor a deliberate rejection; there are no connotations of permanent or obligatory leavetaking. There is, instead, a tremendous inherent privilege in the term, a mobility of mind if not always of matter, to which we as writers should lay claim: a doubling instead of a split.[16]

For the refugee, the notion of home brings to mind disintegration rather than nostalgia. Because they look for a space to live in, which they are denied. As they are refugees, their sense of segregation is much beyond the expatriates or the exiled ones. In practice, however, the distinction between exile, expatriate, and refugee is difficult to maintain.

The effervescence of diaspora gives rise to a sense of disillusionment. This sense is, infact, the consciousness of exile. Such a consciousness is a reflection of crisis of the diasporic community, at being denied a central and nurturing tradition. So the Indo-Canadian diasporic writers like Vasasnji, Mistry and others, keep on embellishing their own traditions and cultures. About this dichotomy, Meira Chand has observed:

> Tradition nurtures, it offers the consistency of a bloodline, a springboard for evolution, growth and experimentation... . The expatriate writer has forsaken all this. He has been cut off from his own tradition and culture from osmosis and introspection, and from his own context within it. How he deals with this trauma, this crisis of identity is perhaps the greatest problem confronting him in his situation.[17]

A strong sense of social ethos deconstructs a complex history in order to forget a sense of identity. And such a sense varies from individual to individual. Within a community there might be several conceptions about the sense of identity. All the characters of *No New Land* have different conceptions about identities. Within the apartment building of Sixty-nine, Rosecliffe Park, we see different people with different identities -- whether it is Nurdin himself, or it is Nanji, or it is Gulshan Bai, or it is Sheru Mama, or even members of his own family.

The East Indian community in multicultural Canada is populated with people not only from India but also from different parts of the world. So different writers of the same diaspora encapsulate the sense of identity differently because of different geographies, histories, ethnicities. They re-create their familial, social, cultural, political histories, and envision different types of experiences. Juggling with new words and new worlds, their cadenced voices portray a different sense of identity.

Different writers of the East Indian community write in different ways which complicate rather than resolve the issue of diasporic writing. Different as they are, they occupy that cusp created by the intersection of two cultures, which one identifies as a space of exile. Vassanji's presentation of his space is siginficantly different from that of Mistry's presentation. Or Bissoondath describes about the space in a different fervour than that of Samuel Selvon's description.

Categorising a body of writing as diasporic raises the question of its relationship to such counterparts as immigrant writing or exile and expatriate writing. Diasporic writing has affinities with, but stands apart from, both. It diverges from immigrant writing in its preoccupation with the attachment to the homeland, for example Vassanji's writings have the prominance of this attachment; immigrant writing does not ignore this but focusses more on the current experiences in the adopted abode of the diasporic writer. Exile and expatriate writings are more immersed in the situation at home and the circumstances that

prolong the individual's exile or expatriation than with the *emigre's* or *emigre* community's relationship with the dominant society. Diasporic writing then is about or by people who are linked by common historie of uprooting and dispersal, common homelands, and common cultural heritages, but it develops different cultural particularities of the dominant society. For instance, different cultural backgrounds of several writers of Indo-Canadian diaspora, induce them to focus on their own experiences and memories. And even within a particular region, there are likely to be differences among the traditions, the assimiliations, and the integrations. This can be noticed in the presentation of different writers of different historical and geographical backgrounds belonging to the same hyphenated identity -- the Indo-Canadian diasporic writers. Given its historical and cultural dualities, conflicts, contradictions, and ambibalances, diasporic writing has an inherent complexity, which is amplified when -- as in literature at large -- the writer's personal experiences are brought into the equation. For instance, *No New Land*, can be said to have personal experiences of Vassanji -- mainly his originating background in Africa. Even Mistry's *Such A Long Journey* has been hued with personal experiences.

The literature of diaspora defines a space that can be distinguished from the literature of 'stay at home'[18] writers. Texts that deal with the pain of having to live on the fringes of another society, are in some ways easier to classify and group. Whatever way one may catalogue such disaporic literature, the Indo-

Canadian diasporic writings germinate a sense of alienation. Such a consciousness informs diasporic texts as predominantly one of alienation. As Arnold Itwaru put it:

> To be in exile is considerably more than being in another country. It is to live with myself knowing my estrangement. It is to know that I do not belong.[19]

The diasporic writers are often concerned with the outer reaches of the immigrant experience, the point at which it intersects with the larger community and causes discrimination and cultural conflict. These sorts of writings capture a feeling of space among the immigrant communities. Vassanji elaborates this feeling of space through the protagonist, Nurdin Lalani in *No New Land*.

With a milieu of exile and expatriation, the East Indian diasporic writers portray their memories and experiences about the "hyphenated" identity that the federal government of multicultural Canada labelled them with. Such an identity has 7developed a feeling of space -- a space that the immigrant community can declare as their own. In *No New Land*, we have noticed this feeling. When Nurdin loses his established space in Africa, and migrates to Canada, he feels that he has lost his own space. Through the struggle for getting a decent job, he also develops a feeling of restricted space within his family.

In multicultural Canada, the East Indian immigrants feel that they are slotted into a category which is easily discriminated. The diasporic writings of these immigrants focus on these issues of discrimation and demarcation. Through their

writings they demand their own space in the *terra firma* or the mainland. They have established an identity with pieces of geographical space, and a sense of place, counterparting with their deepest emotional attachment to the country. Through the incidents and events of *No New Land*, Vassanji specifies these issues of discrimination and demarcation, and even a feeling of space.

Such a struggle for space has germinated the feelings of nationhood in the multicultural ethos of Canada, and due to this the country has become a nation-state.

> The term *nation* is usually applied to a population group, or a *people* with certain unifying characteristics. A *state* is a particular political unit with territorial delimitation, possessing *sovereignty* in the sense of being recognised by others and its antonomy with its boundaries generally respected.... Thus the concept of nation state expresses identity between a people and his soveign geographical space.[20]

Hence, the ethnic groups have not disappeared, but nationhood has become an important source of more power than ethnicity, particularly in multicultural Canada. The East Indians try to authentisize their attachment towards the country by declaring themselves as ethnic minority and demand their territorial space, because the federal government has embraced all Canadians through this concept of nation-state. The role of Indo-Canadian diasporic writers in such an environment becomes vital. They try to abridge their own voices and the mainstream, through their struggle for peace and identity. These feelings of nationhood and space have engrossed the minds, of their community as a whole. To validate the attachment to multicultural Canada, they have accepted the

"hyphenated" identity. Such an acceptance is hued differently by different experiences.

Through vividness, zeal, and spirit, these Indo-Canadian diasporic writers have demonstrated the ambience and sensation of identity. They emphasize the ardent effervescence of warmth and vehemence of being segregated to a "hyphenated" space, as well as identity, in multicultural Canada. So their writings usually focus on the discrimination, differentiation, injustices, inequities, that have been a part of almost every East Indian immigrant. Such treatment of life has compelled them to become nostalgic. Perhaps that is the reason why, the Indo-Canadian diasporic writers tend to draw upon the reservoir of memories from their homelands. Vassanji talks more about East Africa than about anything else. His *No New Land* is the only novel where he deals with the problems of Indian immigrants in Canada. Otherwise his novels *The Gunny Sack* and *The Book of Secrets*, and his collection of short stories, *Uhuru Street* -- are all focussed on the lines of Indians in East Africa.

But the double diasporic Indian writers have certain other problems. While their origin is in India, first waves of immigration dispersed then to different parts of the world -- Africa, South East Asia, the Caribbeans, the Pacific Islands, etc. Later, many of them migrated a second time to multicultural Canada from their respective places of initial abode, which was usually a British or a former British colony.

These 'twice migrants' (Bhachu, 1985, p. 7)[21] have considered themselves superior to the direct migrants because they came with the experiences of an urban development beforehand. But then direct migrants from India have fresh memories of their roots, having parted from their homelands recently. Despite sharing the same cultural identity, the Indian memories of these "twice migrants" seem to have faded away gradually. M.G Vassanji says:

> I write about my own people because we are a people without any sense of history and place. A person without history is like an orphan. We know the name of the palce we stay, we know our immediate surroundings, but we tend to look towards a future -- tomorrow and day after tomorrow -- of a better future may be. But where is our past? Where are our roots?[22]

Though, doubly removed from the Indian reality, these "twice migrants" do try to recall their Indian roots. Such memories are very significant for the diasporic writers. However, being a double diasporic or just diasporic, doesn't matter much for a writer in so far he tries to encapsulate his experiences. He focusses on his present environment with his memories from his homeland. These memories when formulated in a certain manner do give him a sense of distinct identity among various immigrants.

NOTES

1. Surjeet Kalsey, 'Migratory Birds', in Diane McGifford, and Judith Kearns, eds., *Shakti's Words: An Anthology of South Asian Canadian Women's Poetry* (Toronto: Tsar Publications, 1993), p. 40.

2. Victor Turner, 'Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*', in *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 95.

3. Homi K. Bhabha, 'Dissemination: Time Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation', in *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 299.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 311.

5. Satendra Nandan, 'The Diasporic Conciousness: From Biswas to Biswasghat', in Harish Trivedi, and Meenakshi Mukherjee, eds., *Interrogating Post-Colonialism; Theory, Text and Context* (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, 1996), p. 53.

6. Sneja Gunew, 'Denaturalizing Cultural Nationalism: Multicultural Readings of 'Australia'', in Homi K. Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 99.

7. Jean Burnet, 'Multiculturalism', in James H. Marsh, (Editor in Chief), *The Canadian Encyclopedia Vol. II* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers Ltd., 1985), p. 1174.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 1174.

9. Augie Fleras, and Jean Leonard Elliott, 'Multiculturalism: A fact of Canadian Life', in *Multiculturalism in Canada: The Challenge of Diversity* (Toronto: Nelson, 1992), pp. 25-52.

10. Arun P. Mukherjee, 'Introduction', in *Oppositional Aesthetics: Readings from a Hyphenated Space* (Toronto: Tsar Publications, 1994), p. vii.

11. Bill Ashcroft, et. al., *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 34.

12. Augie Fleras, and Jean Leonard Elliott, 'Introduction', in *Multiculturlaism in Canada: The Challenge in Diversity* (Toronto: Nelson, 1992), p. 2.

13. Andrew Gurr, *Writers in Exile: The Identity of Home in Modern Literature* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1981), p. 8.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

15. Aamer Hussein, 'The Echoing of Quiet Voices', in Mimi Chan, and Roy Harris, eds., *Asian Voices in English* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1991), p. 105.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 102.

17. Meira Chand, 'The Experience of Writing in an Expatriate Situation', in Mimi Chan, and Roy Harris, eds., *Asian Voices in English* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1991), p. 51.

18. Andrew Gurr, *Writers in Exile: The Identity of Home in Modern Literature* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1981), p. 14.

19. Arnold H.Itwaru, 'Exile and Commemoration', in Birbalsingh, Frank, ed., *Indenture and Exile; The Indo-Caribbean Exerience* (Toronto: Tsar Publications, 1989), p. 202.

20. J. Anderson, 'Nationalist Ideology and Territory', in R.J. Johnston, et.al., eds., *Nationalism, Self-determination and Political Geography* (London: Croom Helm, 1988), p. 21.

21. Parminder Bhachu, 'Introduction', in *Twice Migrants: East African Settlers in Britain* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1985), p. 7.

22. M.F. Salat, 'The Need to Dis-cover; M.G.Vassaji's Writings', in Jameela Begum, and Maya Dutt, eds., *South Asian Canadian* (Madras: Anu Chithra Publications, 1996), p. 71.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCE

Vassanji, M.G., *No New Land: A Novel* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1992).

SECONDARY SOURCES

Agnihotri, Rama Kant, *Crisis of Identity: The Sikhs in England*, New Delhi: Bahri Publications, 1987.

Amur, G.S., et. al., eds. *Indian Readings in Commonwealth Literature*, New Delhi, Bangalore: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1985.

Amur, G.S., and S.K.Desai, eds., *Colonial Consciousness in Commonwealth Literature: Essays Presented to Prof. C.D. Narasimhaiah*, New Delhi, Madras, Bombay: Somaiya Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1984.

Arasaratnam, Sinnappah, *Indians in Malaysia and Singapore*, Bombay, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, Gareth, and Tiffin, Helen, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literature* London, New York: Routledge, 1989.

Bahri, Deepika, and Vasudeva, Mary, eds., *Between the Lines: South Asians and Postcoloniality*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996.

Barrier, N.Gerald, and Verne A. Dusenbery, *The Sikh Diaspora: Migration and the Experience Beyond Punjab*, New Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1989.

Begum, Jameela, ed., *Canadian Literature: Prespectives*, Madras, Jaipur, Bangalore: MacMillian India Limited, 1994.

Begun, Jameela, and Dutt, Maya, eds., *South Asian Canadiana*, Madras: Anu Chithra Publications, 1996.

Benson, Eugene, and Toye, William, eds., *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature*, Toronto, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. (Ist Published in 1983).

Benson, Eugene, and Conolly, L.W., eds., *Encylopedia of Post-Colonial Literatures in English*, London, New York: Routledge, 1994.

Berghe, Pierre L. van den, *Race and Ethnicity: Essays in Comparative Sociology*, London, New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1970.

Bhabha, Homi K., ed., *Nation and Narration* London,. New York : Routledge, 1990.

Bhachu, Parminder, *Twice Migrants: East Africa Sikh settlers in Britain*, London and New York: Tavistock Publication, 1985.

Birbalsingh, Frank, ed., *Indenture and Exile: The Indo-Caribbean Experience* Toronto Publications, 1989.

_____, *Novel and the Nation: Essays in Canadian Literature*, Oxford, Toronto: Tsar Publications, 1995.

Bissioondath, Neil, *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada* Toronto, London, New York : The Penguin Books, 1994.

Boehmer, Elleke, *Colonial and Post Colonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Brown, Judith M., and Foot, Rosemary, eds. *Migration: The Asian Experience*, London: The McMillan Press Ltd., 1994; New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1994.

Burns, R. M., ed., *One Country or Two?*, Montreal, London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1971.

Canada Year Book, *Canada: One Hundred 1867-1967*, Ottawa: Ministry of Trade and Commerce, 1967.

Chan, Sucheng, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History*, Boston: Twayne Publishers (A Division of G.K.Hall & Co.), 1991.

Chan, Mimi, and Harris, Roy, eds., *Asian Voices in English* Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1991.

Chandney, James G., *The Sikhs of Vancouver*, New York: Ams Press, Inc., 1984.

Cheung, King-Kok, ed., *An Inter-Ethnic Companion to Asian American Literature*, Melbourne, New York, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Chisholm, Michael, and David M. Smith, eds., *Shared Space Divided Space: Essays on Conflict and Territorial Organisation*, London, Wellington: Unwin Hyman, 1990.

Crieghton, Donald, *The Story of Canada*, London: Faber & Faber, 1971. (1st Published, 1959).

Curtis, James, and Tepperman, Lorne, *Understanding Canadian Society*, Toronto, New York, London: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1988.

Dabydeen, Cyril, ed., *Another Way to Dance: Contemporary Asian Poetry from Canada and the United States*, Oxford, Toronto: Tsar Publications, 1996.

Dhawan, R.K., et. al., *Recent Commonwealth Literature*, New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1989.

Dhawan, R.K., and L.S.R. Krishnasastry, *Commonwealth Writing: A Study in Expatriate Experience*, New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1994.

Djwa, Sandra, ed., *Giving Canada a Literary History : A Memoir by Carl F. Klinck* Ontario: Carleton University Press for the University of Western Ontario, 1991.

Dudek, Louis, *Selected Essays and Criticism* Ottawa : The Tecumseh Press, 1978.

Earle, Robert L., and Wirth, John D., eds., *Identities in North America: The Search for Community*, Standard: Standard University Press, 1995.

Easingwood, Peter, Gross, Konard, and Klooss, Wolfgang, eds., *Probing Canadian Culture* Augsburg: Av-verlag Franz Fisher, 1991.

Emmanuel, P.M., ed., *Revised Immigration Regulations of Canada*, New Delhi: Appointments, 1970. (1st Published in 1969).

Esman, Milton J., ed., *Ethnic conflict in the Western World*, Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1977.

Fleras, Augie, and Elliott, Jean Leonard, *Multiculturalism in Canada: The Challenge of Diversity* Toronto: Nelson, 1992.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *A Year Book of the Commonwealth: 1986*, London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1986.

Gerson, Carole. *A Purer Taste: The Writing and Reading of Fiction in English in Nineteenth-century Canada* Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1989.

Glad, John, ed., *Literature in Exile*, Durham, London: Duke University Press, 1990.

Gowda, Prof. H.H. Anniah, *Encyclopaedia of Commonwealth Literature, Vol. II*, New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1998.

_____, *Encyclopaedia of Commonwealth Literature, Vol. I*, New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1998.

Graham, Gerald S., *A Concise History of Canada*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1968.

Gurr, Andrew, *Writers in Exile: The Identity of Home in Modern Literature* Brighton: Harvester Press, 1981.

Hawkins, Freda, *Canada and Immigration: Public Policy and Public Concern*, Montreal, London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972 - in association with the Institute of Public Administration of Canada.

Heidenrich, Rosemarin, *The Postwar Novel in Canada: Narrative Patterns and Reader Response* Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1989.

Henriques, Fernando, *Family and Colour in Jamaica*, London: MacGibbon and Kee Ltd., 1968. (Ist Published in 1953)

Hesse, Jurgen, ed., *Voices of Changes: Immigrant Writers Speakout*, Vancouver: Pulp Press, 1990.

Horne, Alistair, *Canada and the Canadians*, London: MacMillian and Co. Ltd., 1961.

Hutcheon, Linda, *Splitting Images: Contemporary Canadian Ironies* Toronto, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

_____, *The Canadian Post-modern: A Study of Contemporary English-Canadian Fiction* Toronto, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press,1988.

Israel, Milton, ed., *The South Asian Diaspora in Canada: Six Essays* Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1987.

Itwaru, Arnold Harrichand, *The Invention of Canada: Literary Text and the Immigrant Imaginary*, Tornoto: Tsar Publications, 1990.

Itwaru, Arnold H., and Ksonzek, Natasha, *Closed Entrances: Canadian Culture and Implerialism*, Cardiff, Toronto: Tsar Publications, 1994.

Jain, Ravindra K., *Indian Communities Abroad: Themes and Literature*, New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1993.

Jain, Jasbir, ed., *Writers of Indian Diaspora: Theory and Practice*, Jaipur, New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 1998.

Jensen, Joan M., *Passage from India: Asian Indian Immigrants in North America*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988.

Johnston, R.J., Knight, D.B., and Kofman, E., eds., *Nationalism, Self-determination and Political Geography* London: Croom Helm, 1988.

Johnston, Hugh, *The Voyage of the Komagata Maru: The Sikh Challenge to Canada's Colour Bar*, Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras: Oxford University Press, 1979.

Josh, Sohan Singh, *Tragedy of Komagata Maru*, New Delh: People's Publishing House, 1975.

Kanaganayakam, Chelva, *Configurations of Exile: South Asian Writers and Their World*, Oxford, Toronto: Tsar Publications, 1995.

Kanungo, Rabindra N., and Ghosh, Ratna, *South Asian Canadians: Current Issues in the Politics of Culture* New Delhi: Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute 1992.

Kanungo, Rabindra N., ed., *South Asian in the Canadian Mosaie*, Montreal: Kala Bharati, 1984.

Keith, W.J., *Canadian Literature in English*, London, New York: Longman Group Ltd., 1985.

Khan, A. G., *Canadian Literature and Indain Literature: New Perspectives*, New Delhi: Creative Books, 1995.

Kim, Elaine H., *Asian American Literature: An Introduction to the Writings and their Social Context*, Philadelphia: Temple Unversity Press, 1982.

King, Bruce, *Literatures of the World in English*, London, Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974.

King, Russell, et.al., eds., *Writing Across Worlds: Literature and Migration*, London and New York: Routledge, 1995.

King, Bruce, ed., *New National And Post-Colonial Literatures: An Introduction*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

Kosinski, Leszek A., ed., *People on the Move: Studies in International Migration* London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1975.

Kudchedkar, Shirin, and Begum, Jameela A., eds., *Canadian Voices* Delhi: Pencraft International 1996.

Ladha, Yasmin, *Lion's Granddaughter And Other Stories*, Edmonton: NeWest Publishers Ltd., 1992.

Landsberger, Henry A., ed., *Latin American Peasant Movements*, Ithaca London: Cornell University Press, 1969.

Livesay, Dorothy, *The Self-Completing Tree: Selected Poems*, Victoria, Toronto: Press Porcepic, 1992. (Ist Published in 1986)

Lochhead, Douglas, and Souster, Raymond, ed., *New Poems of the Seventies*, Canada: Oberon Press, 1971.

MacDonald, Mary Lu, *Literature and Society in the Canada 1817-1850* Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, Ltd., 1992.

MacLulich, T.D., *Between Europe and America: The Canadian Tradition in Fiction* Oakville: ECW Press, 1988.

Mann, W.E., (Compiled), *Canada: A Sociological Profile*, Toronto: The Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1968.

Marsh, James H., (Editor in Chief), *The Canadian Encyclopedia Vol. II.* Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers Ltd., 1985.

_____. (Editor in Chief). *The Canadian Encyclopedia Vol.I.* Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers Ltd., 1985.

_____. (Editor in Chief). *The Canadian Encyclopedia Vol. III.* Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers Ltd., 1985.

McGifford, Diane, and Kearns, Judith, eds., *Shakti's Words: An Anthology of South Asian Canadian Women's Poetry*, Toronto: Tsar Publications, 1993. (Ist Published in 1990).

McGifford, Diane, *The Geography of Voice: Canadian Literature of the South Asian Diaspora*, Toronto: TSAR Publication, 1992.

McLemore, S. Dale, and Romo, Harriett D., *Racial and Ethnic Relations in America*, Boston, London, Toronto: Allyn and Bacon, 1998. (Ist Published in 1980).

McNaught, Kenneth, *The Penguin History of Canada*, London: Penguin Books, 1988. (Ist Published in 1969 as *The Pelican History of Canada*).

Miska, John, ed., *Ethnic and Native Canadian Literature: A Bibliography* Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1990.

Mistry, Rohinton, *Tales From Firozsha Baag*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India (Pvt.) Ltd., 1998 in association with Faber and Faber Ltd. (Ist Published by Penguin Books Canada Limited, 1987).

Morner, Magnus, ed., *Race and Class in Latin America* New York, London: Columbia University Press, 1970.

Morris, H.S., *The Indians in Uganda*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968.

Mukherjee, Arun P., *Oppositional Aesthetics: Readings From a Hyphenated Space*, Cardiff, Toronto: Tsar Publications, 1994.

Narasimhaiah, C.D., ed., *Awakened Conscience: Studies in Commonwealth Literature*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1978.

_____. *Essays in Commonwealth Literature: Heirloom of Multiple Heritage*, New Delhi: Pencraft International, 1995.

Nelson, Emmuanuel S., ed., *Writers of the Indian Diaspora: A Bio-bibliographical Critical Sourcebook*, Westport, Connecticut, London: Greenwood Press, 1993.

New, W.H., *A History of Canadian Literature*, Hampshire, London: McMillan Education Ltd., 1989.

Nightingale, Peggy, ed., *A Sence of Place in the New Literatures in English*, St. Lucia, London, New York: University of Queensland Press, 1986.

Pandey, Sadhakar, ed., *Perspectives on Canadian Fiction*, New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1994.

Parameswaran, Uma, *Rootless But Green Are the Boulevard Trees*, Toronto: Tsar Publications, 1987.

_____, *Saclit: An Introduction to South-Asian -Canadian Literature*, Madras, Hyderabad, Bangalore: East-West Books (Madras) Pvt. Ltd., 1996.

_____, ed., *The Commonwealth in Canada*, Calcutta: Greybird Publications, A Writers Workshop, 1983.

Parnwel, Mike, *Population Movements and the Third World*, New York and London: Routledge, 1993.

Portes, Alejandro, and Ruben G.Rumbaut, *Immigrant America: A Potrait*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1996.

Press, John, ed., *Commonwealth Literature: Unity and Diversity in a Common Culture*, London: Heinemann Education Books Ltd., 1965.

Rajan, P.K., et. al., eds., *Commonwealth Literature: Themes and Techniques, Essays in honour of Prof. K. Ayyappa Paniker*, New Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1993.

Ramamurti, K.S., ed., *Canadian Literature and Society: National Dream and Regional Realities*, New Delhi: Pencraft International, 1996.

Ramaswamy, S., *Commentaries on Commonwealth Fiction*, New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1994.

Rao, M.S.A., ed., *Studies in Migration: Internal and International Migration in India*, New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1986.

Said, Edward W., *Culture and Imperialism*, London: Vintage, 1994. (Ist Published by Chatto & Windus Ltd., 1993).

_____. *Orientalism*, London, Toronto, New York: Penguin Books, 1995. (Ist Published by Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1978).

Salat, M.F., *The Canadian Novel: A Search for Identity* Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation, 1993.

Sampat - Mehta, R., *International Barriers*, Ottawa: Harpell's Press, 1973 (published under the auspices of the Canada Research Bureau).

Scherf, Kathleen, ed., *The Collected poetry of Malcolm Lowry*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1992.

Sharma, Kavita A., *The Ongoing Journey: Indian Migration to Canada*, New Delhi: Creative Book, 1997.

Sowell, Thomas, *Ethnic America: A History*, New Delhi: Asian Books Pvt. Ltd., 1981.

Srivastava, Avadhesh K., ed., *Alien Voice: Perspectives on Commonwealth Literature*, Lucknow: Print House (India), 1981.

Takaki, Ronald, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*, Boston, Toronto, London: Little, Brown and Company, 1989.

_____. *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*, Boston, Toronto, London: Little, Brown and Company, 1993.

Thieme, John, ed., *The Arnold Anthology of Post-Colonial Literature in English*, London, New York: Arnold (Hodder Headline Group), 1996.

Trehearne, Brian, *Aestheticism and the Canadian Modernists: Aspects of a Poetic Influence* London, Montreal, Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989.

Trikha, Manorama, ed., *Canadian Literature: Recent Essays*, New Delhi: Pencraft International, 1994.

Trivedi, Harish, and Mukherjee, Meenakshi,eds., *Interrogating Post-colonialism: Theory, Text and Context* Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, 1996.

Turner, Victor. *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967.

Turner, Margaret E., *Imagining Culture: New World Narrative and The Writing of Canada*, Montreal, Kingston, London, Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995.

Tuzi, Marino,*The Power of Allegiances: Identity, Culture and Representational Strategies* Toronto, Buffalo, Lancaster: Guernica Editions Inc., 1997.

Vassanji, M.G., *The Gunny Sack*, New Delhi, Ontario, Middlesex: Viking Books, 1990. (Ist Published by Heinemann International In The African Writer Series, 1989).

_____,*The Book of Secrets: A Novel*, Toronto, London, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1995. (Ist Published by McClelland & Stewart Inc., Canada, 1994).

_____, *Uhuru Street* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1992.

_____, ed., *A Meeting of Streams: South Asian Canadian Literature*, Toronto: Tsar Publications, 1985.

Walder, Dennis, *Post-Colonial Literatures in English History, Language, Theory*, Massachusetts, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998.

Walker, Alan, ed., *The Treasury of Great Canadian Humour*, Toronto, Montreal, New York, London: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1974.

Wilson, Edmund, *O Canada: An American's Notes on Canadian Culture* New York: the Noonday Press (A Division of Farrar, Straus, And Giroux),(Published simultaneously by: Ambassador Books, Ltd., Toronto), 1966.

Woodcock, George, *Canada and Canadians*, London: Faber and Faber, 1973, (1st Pubd. in 1970).

Wrong, George M., *The Canadians: The Story of a People*, New York: The MacMillan Company, 1938.

Zaman, Niaz, et. al., eds., *Other Englishes: Essay on Commonwealth Writing*, Dhaka: University Press Ltd., 1991.

ARTICLES AND JOURNALS

Daedalus, Journal of American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 40th Anniversary Issue, vol. 127, no. 1, Winter 1998.

Department of External Affairs, *Documents on Canadian External Relations*, Volume - I [1909 - 1918] Ottawa: Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery (Roger Duhamel), 1967.

Miller J. Mark., "Strategies for immigration control: An International Comparison", *The Annals* of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, vol. 534, July 1994.

Ranade, Sudhanshu, *"Indians in America - I Odd Man Out"*, New Delhi: The Hindu (Weekly Edition) Vol.121, No.45.

_____, *"Indians in America - III Home At Last"*, New Delhi: The Hindu (Weekly Edition) Vol.121, No.47.

_____, *"Indians In America - II Sex in The States"* New Delhi: The Hindu (Weekly Edition) Vol.121, No.46.