

# Others in Their Own Land

## Second Generation South Asian Canadian Women, Racism, and the Persistence of Colonial Discourse

BY ANGELA AUJLA

*Cet article montre que la tradition coloniale a fortement marqué la construction de la sexualité et de l'ethnie chez la femme contemporaine issue de l'Asie du Sud. Les Canadiennes de la deuxième génération de l'Asie du Sud se trouvent donc dans un perpétuel état d'aliénation.*

"Go back to where you came from!"  
"Where are you *really* from?"  
"Paki!"

Though born and raised in Canada, the national identity of multigenerational South Asian Canadian women is subject to incessant scrutiny and doubt, as reflected in the phrases above. They are othered by a dominant culture which categorizes them as "visible minorities," "ethnics," immigrants, and foreigners—categories considered incommensurable with being a "real" Canadian, despite the promises of multiculturalism. Never quite Canadian enough, never quite white enough, these women remain "others" in their own land. Not only are they excluded from national belonging, they are haunted by a discourse which has historically constructed non-white women as a threat to the nation-state. Contemporary constructions of South Asian Canadian women are situated in a larger racist, sexist, and colonial discourse which cannot be buried under cries of "unity in diversity."

In this article, I focus on how the gendered racialization of multigenerational South Asian Canadian women excludes them from national belonging and pressures them to assimilate. The literary production of these women reflects the deep repercussions of this exclusion, and provides a location where issues of identity, otherness, and racism may be articulated and resisted. I will look at poetry and personal narratives by multigenerational South Asian Canadian women as points of intervention into these issues. Beginning with a brief overview of racism against South Asians in Canada, I will discuss how racist and colonial discourses of the past continue to influence dominant discourses and perceptions of South Asian Canadian women today.

### Unity against diversity

Despite the many differences among multigenerational South Asian Canadian women, similar experiences can be identified. These include experiences of racism, feelings of

being "other" and not belonging, colonialism, patriarchy, sexism, and living in a diasporic culture. I use the term "South Asian" because it challenges the geographical locatedness of cultures and identities through its wide scope of reference. Generally, the category "South Asian" refers to those who trace their ancestry to places including India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Tanzania, Uganda, South Africa, and the Caribbean (Henry *et al.*; Agnew). Terms such as "East Indian" and "Indo-Canadian" are problematic because of their narrow reference. Both refer directly to the Indian subcontinent, excluding other South Asian regions. They also refer to nation states and nationalities, implying the idea that ethnicity, identity and "race" are neatly confined within the borders of homogenous states.

Much in the same spirit as colonial cartography, South Asians have been "mapped" and inscribed by the dominant culture through racialized discourse and state practices since they began immigrating to Canada in the late nineteenth century (Buchnigani and Indra). Surrounded by an imposed mythos of being deviant, threatening, undesirable and inferior to the white "race," South Asians were constructed as "other" to the dominant Canadian culture who could not even bear to sit beside them on trains (Henry *et al.*). This attitude is evident in the contemporary phenomena of "white flight" in certain BC municipalities where some white residents have chosen to move rather than live alongside the South Asians who are "ruining the neighbourhood." In the early 1900s, they were not permitted to participate as full citizens, the Canadian state controlled where they could live, where they could work, and even what they could or could not wear. Though they were British subjects, they could not vote federally until 1947 (Henry *et al.*). Though in a less overt form, the traces of this mapping continue to effect South Asian bodies today. Dominant representations of South Asian Canadians are largely stereotypical and impose static notions of culture and identity on them, whether they are immigrants or multigenerational.

---

**Not only are they excluded from national belonging, they are haunted by a discourse which has historically constructed non-white women as a threat to the nation-state.**

---

The history of media images of South Asians attests to this. In the early nineteenth century, the South Asian presence in British Columbia was referred to as “a Hindu Invasion” by the news media; a proliferation of articles in B.C. newspapers stressed the importance of maintaining Anglo-Saxon superiority<sup>1</sup> (Henry *et al.*). Negative media portrayal of South Asians still persists. As Yasmin Jiwani states “...even contemporary representations cohere around an “us” versus “them” dichotomy that ideologically sediments a notion of national identity that is clearly exclusionary” (1998: 60).

Canadian Sikhs for example, have been depicted as over-emotional religious extremists predisposed to violence. Used repeatedly, these images reinforce prejudice against all South Asians, both male and female. The *Vancouver Sun* headlines “Close Watch on City Sikhs” and “Sikh Militancy Grows” have not strayed very far from the cry of “Hindu Invasion” in the early part of the twentieth century. Representations of South Asian Canadian women in the media portray them as the meek and pitiful victims of arranged marriages and abusive husbands or uses them as colourful, orientalized exotica to be fawned over (Jiwani 1998). Such media images subtly exclude South Asian Canadians from national belonging. Their cultures are represented as barbaric and backwards, as “clashing” and “conflicting” with civilized and modern Canadian society. These portrayals imply that South Asians do not “fit in” here, and that they are certainly not “real” Canadians. Edward Said states,

[The] imaginative geography of the “our land/ barbarian land” variety does not require that the barbarians acknowledge the distinction. It is enough for “us” to set up these boundaries in our own minds; “they” become “they” accordingly, and both their territory and their mentality are designated as different from “ours.” (54)

---

**Multicultural goals of unity in diversity do not acknowledge the deeply rooted racist, sexist, and colonial discourse that has constructed “Canadian identity.”**

---

Said describes how the us-them boundary and its accompanying mythos about “others” mentalities has historically been constructed by the dominant culture and imposed onto “others” regardless of their consent. Though Said was referring to relations between colonizer and colonized, his idea remains just as relevant when applied to contemporary relations between South Asian Canadians and the dominant Canadian culture.

Feel-good, multicultural goals of unity in diversity and ending racism are simplistic and certain to fail because they do not acknowledge

the deeply rooted racist, sexist, and colonial discourse that has constructed Canada and “Canadian identity.” As Ann Laura Stoler argues, “the discourse of race was not on parallel track with the discourse of the nation but part of it” (93). Historically, Canadian identity has not been a First Nations identity, or even a French identity. It has been, and continues to be a white, British, Anglo-Saxon identity. As in other white-settler colonies, and in Britain, the civility and superiority of blood and nation was constructed against the “backwardness” and inferiority of the “darker races” (Stoler; Jiwani, 1998; Dua). For example, the modernity of the Canadian state was juxtaposed to the pre-modern South Asian woman, the blood of the superior Anglo Saxon race was juxtaposed to the degenerate blood of non-white races (Henry *et al.*). White, Anglo-Canadian unity was constructed in opposition to non-white “diversity.” But now, with the introduction of multiculturalism, we are suddenly expected to make the very unrealistic leap from unity against “diversity,” to unity *in* diversity.

### The persistence of colonial discourse

South Asian women have been both sexualized and racialized through colonial discourse as oppressed, subservient, tradition-bound, and pre-modern (Dua). They are also constructed as seductive, exotic objects of desire. In another construction they are considered overly-fertile, undesirable, smelly, and oily-haired (Jiwani, 1992; Brah). The legacy of colonial discourse is evident in contemporary racialized and sexualized constructions of South Asian women. In a *Guardian* article published September 5, 1985, a 19-year-old South Asian woman in London recounts the sexualized racist comments she faces walking home from college:

... if I'm on my own with other girls it's, “Here comes the Paki whore, come and fuck us Paki whores, we've heard you're really horny.” Or maybe they'll put it the other way around, saying that I am dirty, that no one could possibly want to go to bed with a Paki ... (qtd. in Brah 79)

These co-existing sentiments of desire and revulsion can be seen as remnants of British colonial attitudes towards South Asian women. While their colonizers considered non-white women savage, and backwards, they were also thought to possess a “sensual, enticing and indulgent nature” (Smits 61). According to Yasmin Jiwani, in British imperialist fiction by authors including Rudyard Kipling, the Indian woman was characterized by her rampant sexuality and her abundant fertility (1992). As can be inferred from the comments yelled at the 19-year-old South Asian woman walking home from college, contemporary stereotypes of multigenerational South Asian women remain deeply rooted in the colonial tradition.

Race, blood, and nation have historically been deeply interconnected and overlapping concepts in the West. Historically, the immigration and presence of women of colour in Canada, and other western countries was seen as a threat to the nation-state. They brought with them the danger of increasing the non-white population and the possibility of miscegenation—a danger all the more immanent given their “overly fecund” nature. Dua comments that “In Canada, as well as other settler colonies, racial purity was premised on the Asian peril—the danger of Anglo-Saxons being overrun by more fertile races” (252). Non-white women endangered western “civility” and national identity; the proliferation of non-white babies was not just a threat to the racial purity of western societies, but to their dominance and very existence. It was thought that miscegenation and too many non-white births could lead to the demise of the Anglo-Saxon race, and therefore, the demise of the nation state itself. As Dua writes,

...the submissiveness of Hindu women was linked to a decline into pre-modern conditions. While white bourgeois women were racially gendered as mothers of the nation, colonized women were racially gendered as dangerous to the nation-state. (254)

Similarly, in everyday the racist/xenophobic discourse of this country, the “real” Canadians complain that immigrants are invading their neighbourhoods, cities, and the country itself. The *Globe and Mail* warns, “soon there will be more visible minorities than whites in Vancouver and Toronto,” and that their number “is the highest in history.” Feeding into fears of non-white women’s limitless fertility, they also report that the number of visible minorities born in Canada is rising steadily and that they are younger than “the total Canadian population” (Mitchell). Such articles reflect the persistence of colonial discourse; while the white woman’s regulated fecundity was supposed to ensure the reproduction of the social body, the non-white woman’s “limitless fertility” was seen as endangering the reproduction of the social body. Non-white and “mixed race” bodies signalled a danger to the State.

#### I am Canadian?

“Are you Fijian by any chance?” the stranger asked.  
 “No,” I replied.  
 “Are you from India?”  
 “No.”

During this brief encounter on Vancouver’s Robson Street in 1997, various thoughts quickly ran through my head: do I reply with the answer that I know he wants to hear? Or do I explain that I’m Canadian only to be met with the standard reply of “Where are you *really* from?” or “But where are you from *originally*?” I walked away frustrated, glad I didn’t give him the answer he expected,

but upset that I didn’t take the opportunity to challenge his preconceptions further by stating that not all brown people are immigrants, or saying “why do you ask?” taking the spotlight off me and hopefully inciting him to question the motivation behind his intrusive inquiry. Kamala Visweswaran states,

Certainly the question “Where are you from?” is never an innocent one. Yet not all subjects have equal difficulty in replying. To pose a question of origin to a particular subject is to subtly pose a question of return, to challenge not only temporally, but geographically, one’s place in the present. For someone who is neither fully Indian nor wholly American, it is a question that provokes a sudden failure of confidence, the fear of never replying adequately. (115)

Even in “multicultural” Canada, skin colour and ethnicity continue to act as markers of one’s place of origin, markers which are used to ascertain traits and behaviours which are associated with certain “races.” It is a question that left me with an acute sense of being out of place and being “other”—if I seemed out of place to the man who asked the question, I must appear so to the people around me. Underlying such (frequently asked) questions are racist assumptions about what a “real” Canadian looks like. In that brief encounter, the stranger automatically linked me to a far away land that I have never seen, a place where I would surely be considered an outsider, and certainly not be considered Indian. His question served as a reminder of my “visible minority” status—that I was not quite Canadian and could never be so.

The “other” does not necessarily have to be “other” in terms of exhibiting strange or “exotic” language and behaviour. Time and time again, the dominant culture reduces identity down to imaginary racial categories. The fact that multigenerational South Asian Canadians are treated as other, as not-quite Canadians, attests to this. At what point do multigenerational South Asian Canadians cease being seen as from somewhere else? As Himani Bannerji comments, “[t]he second generation grows up on cultural languages which are not foreign to them, though they are still designated as foreigners” (1993: 186).

South Asian Canadian women are in a predicament of perpetual foreignness—constantly being asked where they are from and having stereotypical characteristics assigned to them despite their “Canadianness.” Though they are in their country of origin, they are not *of* it.

Presentation of self is one way in which we demonstrate our personal

---

**Skin colour and ethnicity continue to act as markers of one’s place of origin, markers which are used to ascertain traits which are associated with certain “races.”**

---

identities and recognize those of others. This holds true if we encountered someone who had inscribed her body with tattoos, multiple body-piercings, and blue hair. However, it is quite a different situation when a South Asian Canadian woman tries to ground her personal identity in this way; regardless of whether her hair is covered by a *hijab* or is short and chic, regardless of whether she is wearing a *salwaar-kameez* or jeans, she is still subject to an otherization based on an imaginary "South Asian other" constructed through racist ideology. Her own body inscriptions are ignored, as the only signifier needed for recognition from the dominant culture seems to be phenotypical. These phenotypical characteristics stand, as they have in the past, though perhaps to a lesser extent, as signifiers of difference and inferiority.

In Farzana Doctor's poem "Banu," the narrator traces her changing responses and attitudes towards racism at different stages throughout her life. During childhood and as a young adult, assimilation is her response. Eventually she rejects assimilation in favour of resistance. In "Banu," the racist interpellation, "Paki go home" (218) is directed at the little girl in the poem. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, "Paki" is an abbreviation for Pakistani, and is also described as a slang word. In "Banu," however, the common use of the term does not reflect its literal or etymological meaning. The term has become imbued with racist emotions and signifies detest, hatred and intolerance towards all South Asians, regardless of their geographical place of origin.

A generically used term in places such as Canada, Great Britain, and the United States, "Paki" is a common racist insult directed toward those who appear to be of South Asian ancestry (Bannerji, 1993; Sheth and Handa). Unlike racist insults against South Asians that are based on food or dress such as "curry-eater" or "rag-head," the insult "Paki" is based simply on one's "foreign/other" appearance. The insult "Paki" does not simply express disgust at aspects of South Asian cultures as the previously mentioned insults do. Rather, it expresses disgust or hatred based directly toward one's "race" or ethnic background. For a multigenerational South Asian Canadian to be told "Paki go home" is particularly disturbing because she is told that Canada is not her home, but a far away land which she may have never set foot on. Regardless of being Canadian by citizenship and birth, she remains, under racist eyes, simply a "Paki." When the South Asian Canadian girl in the poem is told to "go home," she is not only told that she does not belong in Canadian society, but is also told that she should leave. The man who uttered the slur obviously felt he was a "real" Canadian with the right to tell the "foreigner" what to do. The popularity of this term in racist discourse not only reflects an ignorance about South Asian cultures and their diversity, but also reinforces the opinion that Canada does not have room for non-white "others."

## Others in their own land

In looking at Canadian multiculturalism and its promotion of diversity and tolerance, one would not find any overt pressures promoting assimilation. If anything, it seems that assimilation is not an issue—they tell us that we can all co-exist harmoniously within our respective tile of the mosaic. Yet, unstated, implied, and subtle pressures to assimilate remain a powerful force. As Michel Foucault stated, "[t]here is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints, just a gaze" (155). While official Canadian multiculturalism may promote the acceptance of diversity, the lived experience of multiculturalism is quite a different thing. For many South Asian Canadian women the strong desire to "fit in," as a result of being discriminated against, culminates in an internalization of the gendered racism they receive. Frantz Fanon argues that the consequence of racism from the dominant group to the minority group is guilt and inferiority. The inferiorized group attempts to escape these feelings by "proclaiming his [sic] total and unconditional adoption of the new cultural models, and on the other, by pronouncing an irreversible condemnation of his own cultural style" (38-9).

This is a process multigenerational South Asian Canadian women undergo in their attempts to reject South Asian culture and assimilate. Assimilation has often been used as a coping mechanism not only by South Asian Canadians, but by all visible minorities where the majority of the dominant culture is white. Obvious forms of assimilation include speaking English and wearing western-style clothing. A less obvious form is the desire to change one's physical appearance (Bannerji, 1990; Sheth and Handa; James; Karumanchery-Luik). Based on personal experiences and literature by multigenerational South Asian Canadian women, the desire to be white or possess typically western features is, unfortunately, quite common. The impact of this is compounded for multigenerational South Asian Canadian women who have been socialized into the western beauty ideal.

Internalized racism is a theme common to much of the literature by multigenerational South Asian Canadian women. One manifestation of this is illustrated by the proliferation of ads for "Fair and Lovely" skin cream and skin bleaches aimed at South Asian women, and the desire expressed in matrimonial ads for light-skinned wives. Sheth comments that light skin is so desirable in India that "the cosmetics industry [is] continually pitch skin-lightening products to women" (Sheth and Handa 86). Various cosmetic products promising to do this are also found in Vancouver and Surrey's South Asian shops.

The desire for whiteness is demonstrated in second generation South Asian Canadian activist and theatre artist Sheila James' personal narrative about how she unnaturally became a blond because "All the sex objects on TV, film and magazines were blond-haired and blue eyed. I figured I could adjust the colour in my head to fit

the role" (137). Underlying the desire for "whiteness" is a racist ideology which interprets the world associated with the dark skin of Indian and African people with danger, savagery, primitiveness, intellectual inferiority, and the inability to progress beyond a childlike mentality. Meanwhile whiteness is equated with purity, virginity, beauty, and civility (Ashcroft *et al.*; Arora).

Assimilation pressures and internalized racism experienced by the second generation are captured quite forcefully in Himani Bannerji's short story "The Other Family" (1990: 140-145) in which the second-generation South Asian protagonist of the story draws what is supposed to be a picture of her family for a school project. The picture, however, bears very little resemblance to her own family. She draws her family as white with blond hair and blue eyes, and herself as having a button nose and freckles. The drawing can be interpreted as an illustration of the little girl's desire to belong and to be like the other children—to fit in at the cost of the negation of her own body, of her own physical appearance. An essay by a multigenerational South Asian Canadian woman, Nisha Karumanchery-Luik, reflects a similar theme:

When I was younger, I hated my brown skin. I had wished that I was not so dark, that my skin would somehow magically lighten. When I was younger, I was ashamed and embarrassed of my Indian heritage and the "foreignness" that my skin betrayed. I developed creative strategies of denial and pretense to cope with and survive in a racist environment. (54)

Her choice of phrase that her skin "betrayed" her "foreignness" and Indian heritage is a significant one. It speaks to the circumstance that many multigenerational South Asian Canadian women and other multigenerational visible minorities are in—though they may act "Canadian" in the mainstream-white-Anglo-Saxon-Protestant sense of the word (language, clothes, behaviour), their skin colour and phenotypical characteristics, signifying them as "other," never fail to give them away. Being different from the mainstream is, of course, not a problem in and of itself. It becomes one as the resulting of the othering, gendered racism, and exclusion that multigenerational South Asian Canadian women are subject to. In the following excerpt of a poem by Reshmi J. Bissessar, she reveals the shame she felt over being Guyanese:

I was there last in '86  
 At age fourteen  
 Eleven years ago  
 When I would say  
 Thank you  
 If someone told me  
 that I didn't look  
*Guyanese.*  
 My, how loyalties change. (22)

Often, multigenerational South Asian Canadian women try to hide and mask what it is that singles them out for racist taunts and prying gazes. For example, in another poem, the parent of a young South Asian Canadian woman asks the daughter "why do you cringe when seen by white folks in your sari?/ why are you embarrassed when speaking Gujarati in public?" (Shah 119). Thus the pressures to assimilate and "belong" result in denying aspects of South Asian culture—even to the point of internalizing the dominant ideology and seeing themselves as inferior. Thinking that their food "stinks," that their physical characteristics are less beautiful and undesirable according to western standards, embarrassment over being seen in Indian clothing, or by the accents of their parents, are all aspects of their inferiorization.

### At the borders of national belonging

Multigenerational South Asian Canadian women's efforts at masking their ethnicity are, of course, in vain. The closest they come is to be mistaken for a less marginalized ethnic group or to be bestowed with the status of "honorary white," through comments to the effect of "you're different.... you're not like the *rest* of them." I was given this status when deciding where to go for dinner with a group of people. One white woman asked me if I ate meat, implying that I must have "strange" eating habits as a South Asian. Before I could answer, another white woman exclaimed, "Oh of course she does, she's *just like us!*" But despite the "acceptance" of being just like them, I was still othered by the initial curiosity of "do you eat meat?" If I was "just like them" why was I the only one to whom that question was posed? Thus, even the "honorary white" status given to some South Asians fails to appease a sense of not belonging. Suparana Bhaskaran outlines the limiting typology of the "assimilated South Asian" and the "authentic South Asian" which can be applied to the phenomena of the "honorary white" discussed above:

The logic of purity allows South Asians to be conceptually defined in only two ways: as authentic South Asians or assimilated South Asians. The "authentic South Asian" may range from being conservative, lazy and poor to being spiritual, brilliant, non-materialistic and religious. By this definition, the assimilated South Asian ... pursues the promise of the "postcultural" full citizenship of Anglo life. (198)

Though some multigenerational South Asian Canadian women may, by the above typology, be considered "assimilated South Asians" and therefore subject to the discrimination faced by the "authentic South Asian," we see in the literature by South Asian Canadian women that seeking this identification and inclusion into "Anglo-life" is, for the most part, unattainable and continues to be

fraught with othering and a sense of exclusion.

Being singled out as “other” and the consequent pressures to assimilate has a particularly strong effect on multigenerational South Asian Canadian women. They have been socialized in Canadian society from birth and have thus, unlike their parents, lived their entire lives as “ethnic/other,” and different from the dominant culture. For the second generation, the assimilation process begins much earlier and in the more formative years. Therefore, racism and being othered by the dominant culture has a deeper, more detrimental impact on multigenerational South Asian Canadians than it does on their parents who did not grow up in Canada. Though the parents of second-generation South Asian Canadians may be more “othered” due to their accents, the fact that they wear Indian clothing, and from having been socialized in a non-western culture, they have come to Canada with some pre-established sense of identity (though it changes through their experiences in their new country), which is not the case for their children.

It is likely that many Canadians would be quite content if South Asian Canadians and other “visible minorities” simply integrated into Anglo-Canadian society instead of making a fuss about racist immigration policies, or their right to wear *hijabs*. Of course, assimilation can no longer be overtly legislated, although it continues to be suggested in more subtle ways, as reflected in the literature by South Asian women. Because of “subtle” pressures to assimilate, many South Asian Canadian women have interiorized the inspecting gaze of the dominant culture to the point that they are exercising surveillance over themselves. Foucault argues that physical violence and constraints are no longer needed to control a population once they have interiorized the inspecting gaze—“a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against himself” (155).

The inspecting gaze in this context, are the judgemental eyes of the dominant culture—state officials, journalists, neighbours, teachers, and peers. The pressure to assimilate is no longer over, it is embedded in everyday language and stereotypes used to describe and “other” South Asian Canadian women, in popular culture and media depictions, and in structures such as institutional racism. The content of the literature by multigenerational South Asian discussed earlier reveals that they have interiorized the inspecting gaze of the dominant culture, though it is a gaze which many of them have come to reject. Over and over again, these writers express the desire they have or once had to belong, to be accepted, and to “fit” into the dominant culture.

## Conclusion

Though I have concentrated on how multigenerational South Asian Canadian have been “raced” and gendered

through the dominant ideology, it is important to note that those constructed as other are not merely the passive recipients of power. In many cases, they are remapping themselves by challenging dominant representations of “their kind” through subversive forms of literary production. I would argue that in the tension between imposed identities and those asserted by multigenerational South Asian Canadian women, spaces of resistance have formed in the anthologies and other venues in which they publish, and in the act of writing itself. These venues provide a forum for South Asian Canadian women to creatively express their insights, anger, pain, and reflections. It is a textual space created by and for multigenerational South Asian Canadian women in which their marginalization and repression is both articulated and resisted.

Multigenerational South Asian Canadian women’s literature is considered a new, diasporic form of cultural production. It is new in that these women are writing as both insiders and outsiders to Canadian society. Their literature demonstrates an ongoing negotiation of two intertwined cultural contexts and influences. The positionality of these women allows for a unique vantage point from which to comment on Canadian racism, sexism, and other repressions. Their writing poses an important challenge to the idea that culture and identity are fixed within certain national borders.

*Angela Aujla is a PhD student in the department of Sociology, York University. Her interests include postcolonial theory, studies of diaspora, and “third world” feminisms. She recently completed a Masters thesis in anthropology at Simon Fraser University entitled, “Contesting Identity in Diasporic Spaces: Multigenerational South Asian Canadian Women’s Literature.”*

<sup>1</sup> *The Daily Colonist* wrote: “To prepare ourselves for the irrepresible conflict, Canada must remain a White Man’s country. On this western frontier of the Empire will be the forefront to the coming struggle.... Therefore we ought to maintain this country for the Anglo-Saxon and those races which are able to assimilate themselves to them. If this is done, we believe that history will repeat itself and the supremacy of our race will continue” (Henry *et al.* 71).

## References

- Agnew, Vijay. *Resisting Discrimination: Women from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean and the Women’s Movement in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996.
- Arora, Poonam. “Imperilling the Prestige of the White Woman: Colonial Anxiety and Film Censorship in India.” *Visual Anthropology Review* 11 (2) (1995): (36-49)
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Bannerji, Himani. “The Other Family.” *Other Solitudes*:

- Canadian Multicultural Fictions*. Eds. Linda Hutcheon and Marion Richmond. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Bannerji, Himani. "Popular Images of South Asian Women." *Returning the Gaze*. Ed. Himani Bannerji. Toronto: Sister Vision Press, 1993.
- Bhaskaran, Suparna. "Physical Subjectivity and the Risk of Essentialism." *Our Feet Walk the Sky: Women of the South Asian Diaspora*, Eds. Women of South Asian Descent Collective. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1993.
- Bissessar, Reshmi J. "Struggle." *Shaktee Kee Awaaz: Voices of Strength*. Eds. Shakti Kee Chatree. Toronto: Shakti Kee Chatri, 1997.
- Brah, Avtar. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Buchnigani, N. and D. Indra. *Continuous Journey: A Social History of South Asians in Canada*. Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1985.
- "Close Watch on City Sikhs." *Vancouver Sun* 20 October 1985a.
- Doctor, Farzana. "Banu." *Aurat Durbar*. Ed. Fauzia Rafiq. Toronto: Second Story Press, 1995.
- Dua, Enakshi. "Beyond Diversity: Exploring the Ways In Which the Discourse of Race Has Shaped the Institution of the Nuclear Family." *Scratching the Surface: Canadian Anti-Racist Feminist Thought*. Eds. Enakshi Dua and Angela Robertson. Toronto: Women's Press, 1999.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Toward the African Revolution*. New York: Grove Press, 1967.
- Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon, 1980.
- Henry, Frances, Carol Tator, Winston Mattis and Tim Rees. *The Colour of Democracy*. Toronto: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1995.
- James, Sheila. "From Promiscuity to Celibacy." *Aurat Durbar*. Ed. Fauzia Rafiq. Toronto: Second Story Press, 1995.
- Jiwani, Yasmin. "The Exotic, Erotic, and the Dangerous: South Asian Women in Popular Film." *Canadian Woman Studies* 13 (1) (1992): 42-46
- Jiwani, Yasmin. "On the Outskirts of Empire: Race and Gender in Canadian TV News." *Painting the Maple: Essays on Race, Gender and the Construction of Canada*. Eds. Victoria Strong-Boag et al. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998.
- Karumanchery-Luik, Nisha. "The Politics of Brown Skin." *Shaktee Kee Awaaz: Voices of Strength*. Eds. Shakti Kee Chatree. Toronto: Shakti Kee Chatri, 1997.
- Mitchell, Alanna. 1998 "Face of Big Cities Changing." *Globe and Mail* 18 February 1998: A1, A3.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 1994.
- Shah, Susan. "The Interrogation." *Shaktee Kee Awaaz: Voices of Strength*. Eds. Shakti Kee Chatree. Toronto: Shakti Kee Chatri, 1997.
- Sheth, Anita and Amita Handa. "A Jewel in the Frown: Striking Accord Between India/n Feminists." *Returning the Gaze*. Ed. Himani Bannerji. Toronto: Sister Vision Press, 1993.
- "Sikh Militancy Grows." *Vancouver Sun* 7 November 1985b.
- Smits, David. "Abominable Mixture." *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 95 (2) (1987): 227-61.
- Stoler, Ann Laura. *Race and The Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*. Durham: Duke University Press. 1995.
- Visweswaran, Kamala. *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

## CLARA JOSEPH

### The Cart

On way from school  
 I see an old man  
 Running pushing a cart  
 He's old and thin  
 Yet runs fast  
 Then swipes his hand  
 Across his arse  
 To fling the running shit aside  
 Still keeps running  
 To boss or home  
 I never know  
 But help he did not get.

I reach home  
 Am served my tiffin  
 I see the food, the yellow curry  
 Know I'll throw up  
 So ditch the food behind the dining-room door  
 The ayah might wonder for a minute  
 And then sweep it off.

Today I'm old  
 An old, old, woman  
 The tears it runs  
 Down my eyes  
 I swipe my hand  
 Across my face  
 To fling the running shit aside  
 Still keep running  
 To boss or home  
 You never know  
 But help I do not get.

*Clara Joseph teaches in the department of English at York University. Her poetry has appeared in The Toronto Review and is forthcoming both in Mother Earth International and The Toronto Review.*