Hypertextual Frames of Cross Culturalism: Teaching CanLit in India

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Canadian Literature has become an integral part of English Studies in Indian Universities today. This has been partly the outcome of the promotion of Canadian Studies through the establishment of the Shastri Indo Canadian Institute in 1968 and the Indian Association for Canadian Studies in 1985. The SICI, today has a bi-national structure and has a membership of 58 leading institutions spread over Canada and India. The interdisciplinary focus has been strengthened and the interest to generate an understanding of Canada in India and India in Canada has been fostered in many of these universities.The University Grants Commission, which is the apex national body for education in India, has identified Canadian Studies as an Area Study Program since 2002. The four Area Study Centres in the Universities of Kerala, Delhi, Baroda and Mumbai have been able to act as nodal centres for the spread of Canadian Studies. Today, CanLit occupies a strong position in academic circles. Courses on Canadian literature are offered along with specialized ones like, Diaspora Writing in Canada, Native Studies, Arctic Writing in Canada, and Asian Canadian Writing. These courses are offered in a number of major Universities in India. In Kerala University, where I come from, all these courses are offered and their popularity is evident from the fact that students go on to do their projects at the post graduate level on these areas. In addition to this, quite a considerable number of students work on different aspects of CanLit at the M.Phil and Ph.D Programs.

Given the strong interest and financial support, Can Lit has gained a prominent position in the curriculum of many universities generating new avenues of theoretical and textual interaction. Canada and India have reached across the globe, as it were, not only to establish a relationship that exists at the level of trade, technology transfers, and foreign policies but under the more binding force of a global social consciousness rooted in their cultural pluralities, countries so far and yet so near. Globalization has given rise to an expansion of relations across the continents, interdependence between nation states across borders, facilitating diasporic sites of contestation, addressing issues of intersectionalities and fissures of identity whether of race, gender or ethnicities. At the same time, it accepts the world we now live in as “rhizomic,” calling for theories of

rootlessness, alienation, and psychological distance between individuals and groups. Immigration and social structures of cultural, linguistic, and religious pluralities form the basis of an abiding interest of the peoples of both India and Canada in each other. India has a very old heritage that a young nation state like Canada can refer back to, just as Canada's multiracial population signifies for the Indian academics a rich storehouse of myriad images that need to be contextualized in the cultural rooting of different groups of individuals and aesthetically interpreted as works of art. The human mind has become a warehouse of cultural scenarios and a work of imagination in the postmodern world, exists in an overlapping hypertextual frame which makes all texts *virtually co-resident*. The study of Can Lit in India is hence set within a series of parallels that are comparative, multi(inter) disciplinary and culturally pluralistic.

Reading and learning Can Lit within a hypertextual frame accommodates the contexts of writing/reading. For example, the relation it sets up within the contours of interpretation of an Indian's interaction with the text reaches out to many layers of socio-cultural theoretical frames. Native writing in Canada is being read within the context of Tribal/Dalit writing, and subaltern writing in India. The textual frames overlap as much as the changing cultural relationships of the margins to the Centre. Texts of Indian's writing in Canada are read against both regional writing and writing in English in India as well as writings of Indian migrants elsewhere in the world as a reflection of variant individual and cultural representations and processes of accommodation. It is against the context of inter-anthropological, social and historical frames that interpretations emerge. If this is so, then using Western terminology to understand Eastern texts and vice–versa would be an extension of generating new contextual meaning. Essentialisms merge in inter-contextual studies to highlight the possibilities for alternate spaces of meaning. To cite Stuart Hall, "Metaphors of transformation must do two things. They allow us to imagine what it would be like when prevailing cultural values are challenged and transformed, the old social hierarchies are overthrown, old standards and norms disappear or are consumed in the festival of revolution and new meanings and values, social and cultural configurations begin to appear" (Hall, "Metaphors of Transformation" 1996. 287).

The paradigm question in cultural theory is how to think in a non - reductionist way the relations between the social and the symbolic. Cultural theory has moved beyond dramatic simplifications and binary reversals. Here, Bakhtin's notion of the carnival as a metaphor for the reversal of the hierarchy of high and low is highly significant. For Bakhtin, the upturning of the symbolic order gives access to the world of the popular and the carnivalesque releases the energy, life and vitality of the libido thereby making it a potent force of social and symbolic

transformation. Words are "released from the shackles of sense, to enjoy a play period of complete freedom and establish unusual relationships among themselves. True, no new consistent links are formed in most cases, but the brief coexistence of these words, expressions and objects outside the usual logical conditions discloses their inherent ambivalence. Their multiple meanings and potentialities that would not manifest themselves in normal conditions are revealed." In Bakhtin's carnival the purity of the binary is upset, the low invades the high, the hierarchical imposition of order is challenged and the interdependency of the variant cultural islands is established. To extend Bakhtinian terminology, the West and the East cease to be binaries and work towards an interdependence of literary possibilities. In place of the simple binaries of the class struggle, Gramsci's notion of "repertoires of resistance" grounded in an analysis of the balance in the relation of forces, focuses the hegemonic struggle as a "theatre of struggle" a repertoire of strategies and responses - ways of coping as well as of resisting. Each "strategy" in the repertoire mobilizes certain material social and [symbolic] elements: it constructs these into the supports for the different ways the class lives, [negotiates] and resists its continuing subordination. Not all the strategies are of equal weight; not all are potentially counter – hegemonic." Reading texts in this theoretical frame invades the Indian academic response to CanLit today.

Reading Dalit, Tribal / Native Texts

Although Dalit literature acquired prominence only in the 70s individual writers had appeared in the fourteenth century. In 1978,
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution, in his **Marathi,** writes:
"The Hindus wanted the Vedas and they sent for Vyasa who was not a caste Hindu
The Hindus wanted an Epic and they sent for Valmiki who was an Untouchable
The Hindus wanted a constitution and they sent for me."(25)
Dr. Ambedkar's words highlight the Dalit's claim to a tradition and a culture which is not just a pale reflection of the mainstream culture, not a tradition that could be absorbed into the Sanskrit culture. This counter culture sets up a field of contestation and significance. An earlier challenge to the Great tradition had come from Robert J. Miller's provocative essay, "Button, Button… ." based on the folklore of the Mahars, the caste at the heart of the Dalit movement . The case for a widespread counter culture which is rooted in the folk beliefs of the Mahar group, underline the notions of the Dalits as creators of cultures, the original inhabitants of their areas which were overrun by the Aryans, and as militant heroes who sacrificed themselves for their people. Damodar More's poem titled "Poetry Reading" is a classic example of the revolutionary spirit that has been stirred among the dalits, rendered in an incantatory tone and rhythm that form the essence of Dalit culture.

As I was reading out a poem

The audience was listening as I read
And as the audience was listening to me
I was reading the faces of the audience.
As I continued to read …
There came a moment – who knows why –
When a couple of them wrinkled their noses
And astonished, I said to the poet in me
"What is the reason for this?"
and he answered me,
"It was to be expected …
all that' s happened is
the settled sludge has been stirred
and the water's grown cloudy."
As I was reading out a poem
The audience was listening as I read
And as the audience was listening to me
I was reading the faces of the audience.
As I continued to read …
There came a moment when
a couple got up and left
But the eyelids of the others
seemed ready to shed rain
And, distressed , I said to the poet in me,
"Why is this happening?"
And he answered me
"It's only natural
All that's happened is
The moisture pent up till today
Is looking to break out."
As I was reading out a poem
The audience was listening as I read
And as the audience was listening to me
I was reading the faces of the audience.
As I continued to read …
There came a moment when
I saw embers flaring in the pupils of their eyes
And, frightened, I said to the poet in me,
"What's this that's happening?"
And he answered me,
"It was this I was waiting for
All that's happening is

The dynamite fuses, nearly burnt out,
Are trying to flare up again."

As I was reading out a poem
The audience was listening as I read
And as the audience was listening to me
I was reading the faces of the audience.

As I continued to read …
There came a moment when
I saw a dazzling brilliance in their eyes
And, curious , I said to the poet in me,
Why is this happening?"
And he answered me,
"It's inevitable
All that's happening is
They are marching in battle
On this fearful darkness ."

As I was reading out a poem
The audience was listening as I read
And as the audience was listening to me
I was reading the faces of the audience.

The reading of a poem like this raises issues such as the mindset of the reader, and a group of people who had been relegated to the margins, systematically repressed and socially oppressed. This strikes a common chord with Native writing in Canada. The poetry of resistance, the desire to awaken and find a voice, and to assert an existence separate than one of dependency, is a recurring theme of all marginalized communities. Yet, what is different here in both the Dalits and the Native Canadians is the rich heritage that has been smothered by years of oppression. To put this poem or ones similar to this in any culture, we need to refer back to the very past when the word Dalit itself had no existence. It is this search for a past, a history that had been hidden and often destroyed by the politically powerful, which shapes critical thinking in English studies in India today.

To illustrate an example, the search for the word Dalit led me to grounds that were totally new terrains in the study of literature. The word acquired meaning as "ground down" or "broken to pieces" in the context of its usage by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar around 1928 in his newspaper *Bahishkrit Bharat.* In the 70s, Dalit Sahitya in Marathi addressed the issues from a diverse grounding of literary and cultural nuances. History has referred to Dalits as a people without a history of their own. In an effort to bring into focus the plight of the Dalits, in the early 70s, the Dalit Panthers and the Dalit Literature in translation in English began their concerted efforts which culminated in the acceptance of the Dalits as a loosely strung group of the low Hindu

castes, a discriminated peoples. Gangadhar Pantawane, summing up the idea of the Dalit psyche remarks: “To me, it is not a caste. He is a man exploited by the social and economic traditions of this country. He does not believe in God, Rebirth, Soul, the Holy Books teaching separatism, Fate and Heaven because they have made him a slave. He does believe in Humanism. Dalit is a symbol of change and revolution.” (letter written by Pantawane). It was a way of life drowned in penury and oppression that traditional beliefs had forced on a group of people who were considered to be the Other. This led to the question whether the Dalits were to be seen as a tribe. Sociologists claim that the tribes were groups of people who did not have the same experience as the Dalits, because they lived in the interiors of forests and did not depend on the social hierarchies. Since it is impossible to characterize tribals by any single distinguishing feature, we are forced to accept the official listings that make up Schedule of tribes. Beginning with the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, nearly 200 communities were “notified” by the colonial Government as “criminal tribes”. After Independence , these communities were denotified and listed in the schedule of tribes, castes and other backward communities.
They had their own languages and a rich literature that imbibed the spirit of the particular tribe. Such studies have become the rubric for our analysis of Native Canadians who certainly cannot be dismissed as belonging to one group. Students of Canadian literature can see with clarity the issues that the various tribes of Native Canadians project in terms of identity, cultural practices, and above all the use of words. Though culturally they all had a rich body of stories, these were unknown and subsequently have become known to the outside world only through a process of transference of the oral to the written. Much gets lost in any such adaptations, and yet this becomes the only way in which those voices speak to be heard. The language that is adopted is that of another culturally major group, diverse to it and which has been instrumental in victimizing and suppressing them.

This is true of both Dalit and tribal writing in India and Native writing in Canada. At a conference on Aboriginal Writing, Jeannette Armstrong makes this very interesting statement:

> Language in everyday use requires literature, requires story, and requires writers and storytellers to come together and represent the consciousness of the people. That is not happening, and so our languages are slowly dying. I think literature plays a major role in this rebuilding project: we need to re-examine how we are working within our communities to make language revitalization happen. I myself love reading translations from other cultures of the world, written first in their original language and then translated into English, because of the way they position their cultures and their aesthetics , and so on. (22)

Tribal communities in India as the Aboriginals in Canada are, story tellers in their own languages who have been translated into English to find a voice. Culturally similar to tribal communities elsewhere in the world they have stayed close to nature and beat the rhythm of the land in all its moods. Throughout India's long history, communities have migrated, been forcefully displaced and rehabilated. It is impossible to characterize India's tribals in ethnographic or historic terms. However, it is possible to make a collective reading along these terms:

Individual tribes live in groups that are cohesive and organically unified. Like the natives in Canada they have a world view that is cyclical and in close proximity to the concept of time rather than space. They are not materialistic, they have a world view in which nature, man and God are intimately linked. They live more by intuition than by reason, they consider the space around them more sacred than secular, and their sense of time is personal rather than objective. The world of tribal imagination, therefore, is radically different from that of modern society.

Even while we are caught in this identification of cultural differences, as teachers of Canlit, a word of caution need to be sounded here. Cultural studies presupposes that diversity of cultures are set in the context of differences. Thus it is possible to read native texts as opposed to concepts of mainstream writing or even to set up differences between groups/clans. However, as critics we tend to move towards another kind of stereotyping.
What a hypertextual cross- cultural framework provides for us is not a setting up of differences between groups(native groups, or white/ native) or a smoothening out of differences but a layering of one another in an attempt to see the humanizing trajectory of literary studies. The image making faculty is a genetic gift of the human mind: this power of imagination helps us understand the space that envelops us. This space is both similar as well as markedly different, for it is the word that creates. Central to the ancient oral traditions was the power of the word, spoken, intoned or sung. Whether Cree or Ojibway, Iroquois or Micmac, Haida, or Tlinglit, each in story, speech, or song made the word sacrosanct -- of far greater importance than people in literate cultures were generally aware of. The *word* carried the power to create, to make things to happen—medicine to heal , plants to grow, animals to be caught, and human beings to enter the spiritual world. Through the sacred power of the word, aboriginals sought to shape and control the cosmic forces that governed their lives. Such power is not attributed to the spoken word in literate societies. Words did not just represent meaning but possessed the power to change reality itself. One of the main characteristics of the tribal arts is their distinct manner of constructing space and imagery, which might be described as hallucinatory. In both oral and visual forms of representation, the tribal artists seem to interpret verbal or pictorial boundaries as demarcated by an extremely flexible frame. Everyday events

can become part of a tribal epic, just as linearity of a tale can be sacrificed and tales that belong to different epics can be fused.

As G.N. Devy rightly remarks: " The tribal mind has a more acute sense of time than sense of space." Their artists are drawn more to their racial and sensory memory than to imagination which seeks to put meaning into space by perceiving images. In the case of time, we make connections with the help of memory. It is this time sense that urges them to form connections with their dead ancestors. The ritual of conversing with their dead ancestors, is seen in their worship of terracotta or carved wood objects, representing their ancestors. One cannot but set up the totem poles of history beside this.
The focus is again more on the pictorial quality as also the rhythm that holds the song together. Playfulness is the soul of the tribal arts which are intimately related to rituals and occasions. As it is a performing art, experimentation and playfulness with words and colours, situations that twine the sacred and the ordinary, are basic to the tribal art where the medium is the message. Although Indian tribes vary as widely in their music and in the manner of their singing ,there is one characteristic peculiarity i.e. the rhythmic pulsation of the voice on sustained notes.

It is now generally accepted that song, music and dance had occupied an essential place in Canadian First Nation's cultures , because they played a vital role in everyday life.. Songs had a purpose,a function, --to get hold of the sources of supernatural power. There was no act of life that did not possess its fitting song. They were usually humourous, soothing entertaining or instructive ---lullabies, jokes, work songs, dance songs, ceremonial songs that were considered sacred and to have the power to heal.
Words had potential power and magic. Songs not only increased the hunters ability to hunt, they were also thought to influence the animals who feely gave to themselves to him. Whaling songs suggest that the whale desires to be captured and looks forward to being respected on their death. Long before the Europeans came to Canada, even long after their arrival, the natives had an oral literature that had been transmitted by word of mouth from generation to generation through story telling , song, and public ceremony .
The nineteenth century Ojibway, George Copway, the first Canadian Indian to publish a book in English wrote: " I cannot express fully the beauty of the language , I can only refer to those who have studied it as well as other languages, and quote their own writing in saying, "every word has its appropriate meaning, and with additional syllables give additional force to the meanest of most words."

Over the centuries ,the importance of memory in tribal systems of knowledge has helped them to classify material and natural objects into a highly complex system of

aesthetic representations. Without any institutional training tribals, dance, sing, craft, build and speak. They have no hierarchies of caste, respect and share with one another, do not extract labour for their own benefits. Their oral literature has immense potential and cover a range of
subjects and attitudes. Though much of this storehouse of art has been lost , serious attempts are being made to save what remains of this rich heritage by folklorists, anthropologists and linguists .

Native traditions assume the existence of a spirit world as a given, a gift. To speak from the edges is not necessarily to occupy a centre and resist those who occupy the centre. It becomes an affirmation of a speaking subject that demands hearing. Each linguistic group has its own set of oral narratives that accords with its own regional ecologies, its own values, customs and tastes, embodying its own religious and philosophical beliefs. As a result, tribal literatures are unique and culturally specific. An acceptance of cultural pluralities engenders a mind that is willing to listen and draw parallels that are free of limited juxtapositions.

Autobiograhies of suppressed groups, whether it be in Canada or India, essentially reflect not only the personal but the cultural and socio-political as well. *Dalit* autobiography becomes meaningful when read against the background of the caste system in India. Hence they become a site of contestation where hegemonic structures prevail. The Brahmanical hierarchical system, has for long relegated the Dalits as Untouchables and their status as the legitimate outcome of Karma and rebirth. A well known Dalit autobiography, titled*Karukku* by the author Bama, reveals her own degrading experiences that led her to accept Christianity as a way to free herself from the caste hierarchy of Hinduism. But, even here she came to realize , there was a casteism which branded her as Dalit Christian. Her eventual rejection of the convent where she had gone to become a nun, was a reclamation of her identity as Dalit , and the firm determination to reclaim her dignity not through an escape through a process of assimilation but with a renewed vigour that rooted her in her heritage with a voice of resistance to any branding that had earlier been fostered on her community. The richness of nature is what surfaces in the autobiography along with the Dalit history, which goes back to a period of rich cultural heritage, to a period of subjugation and enslavement, to one of resistance and later to the proclamation of equality and right to freedom. The sections of society gets well illustrated here. Bama's village consisted of settlements of the *Nadars* who climbed palmyra palms for a living, the *Koravars* who swept streets, and the leather working *Chakkiliyar*, the *Kusavars* who made earthenware pots and the *Pallas* and *Parayas* (6). The constant fights among the various groups even for simple essentials like water kept them divided. The uppercaste communities kept apart and had their own facilities which was taboo for the Dalits. The Dalits were always on the outskirts, and

poverty was a constant companion. A large body of Dalit autobiography throws focus on this. Bama in her autobiography *Karukka* writes :

> "Because Dalits have been enslaved for generation upon generation, and been told again and again of their degradation , they have come to believe that they are degraded, lacking honour and self-worth, untouchable: they have reached a stage where they themselves, voluntarily, hold themselves apart. This is the worst injustice. This is what even little babies are told, how they are instructed. The consequence of all this is that there is no way for Dalits to find freedom or redemption." (24-25)

This note is sounded in native Canadian writing by Emma LaRocque who writes:

> … the overemphasis on the supposed cultural differences between the "Indian" and the "Whiteman"— as if those are real – has contributed to our extreme marginalization and has created new stereotypes. As have political interpretations which have overemphasized victimization and tended to submerge literary concerns and individual uniqueness. Similar in consequence to the ethnolographic treatment of all things Native, ideological formulations produce a lumping effect. Take the lumping of Native women writers as indistinct, battered, mother-earth bodies. Once again, Natives are generalized as a mass, and "massness" is a sore subject, one may say, to Native Peoples.
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> Native writers, after all, are attempting to undo five hundred years of caricatures by replacing the stereotypes with "real" human personalities. Limiting treatment of Native literature as a "voice" of culture or even of resistance obviously makes it difficult, if not impossible, to *see* Aboriginal persons beyond stereotypes. These are not the only options available to us as writers and critics.(13)

It is here that the study of Can Lit in India meets with the study of our own literatures and become not only more meaningful but also accepts the profundity of experiences and words that reflect these as best as they can. The revival of earlier languages, and the experiments with autotranslations, I am sure, will open up new lines of thinking and of understanding. Identifications as groups with common concerns should only be the beginning of a reaching for the individually aesthetic representation of a virtual reality shrouded in imagination and memory. The blurring of boundaries, for an Indian academic is only the first step towards a process of understanding that will and must lead to establishing differences and singularities. All art raises such issues of originality and mere classifications will tend to level out the particular. I feel that it is this concept of hypertextual frames of cross culturalism that will lead us to successive frames of references.

Another illustration of the theoretical frame work I am putting up here would further clarify this concept. For an Indian academic, the immigrant Indian population in Canada, is seen as belonging to two phases of settlement and hence their experiences are both a continuity and a discontinuity. The first phase can be identified as the colonial period in which natives of Asia and Africa where transported as slaves/labourers across the Atlantic/ Pacific waters to Europe. The second phase in history can be traced to the end of the imperial colonization in the homeland and the large scale immigration to the West. This time, the immigration was voluntary and the immigrants came from the affluent classes. The driving force was the search for an upward mobility in professional and economic status in the West. Homeland had ceased to be a green pasture. Economists see this as the pull factor in opposition to the earlier push factor.

Today, the South Asian Diaspora is over 12 millions. Though much smaller than the Chinese or African diasporas, Indians have made their presence felt in the West. Their contribution to the making of the contemporary society is significant. As builders, professionals, and think tanks in the cyber world, Indians have much to be proud of; they have become a dynamic cultural force in the world.

Indian diaspora writers have contributed significantly to the cultural construct of their homelands. The continuities and discontinuities that they create in their relationship with the homeland transcend the reality and as Rushdie puts it, "imaginary homelands" take shape. While these diaspora writers create a space for the homeland it becomes incumbent for us academicians to create space for these diaspora writers in the homeland. The double vision that constructs two places to inhabit, makes them at the same time, dangle between two homes. M.G. Vassanji in an interview elaborates on this thus:

> I cannot write about Ontario in a way that a person with roots in Ontario would identify with completely. But, at the same time to compensate for that, I have an audience in India, and an international audience that has an interest in India and Africa. And in Canada I've found that people are quite happy with the fact that I am a Canadian writing about different places. Canada has changed dramatically in the last fifteen or twentyyears…. Canadians recognize that this is a country with people who come from different places, and they are happy with that.

The world has changed much the same way, accepting the multiplicity of differences, and being happy to accept new ways of thinking and writing. Academics in India have turned to the question of understanding new concepts of culturalism that defy purity and stasis, the dialectics of longing and belonging , the creation of a homeland to reinstate a belonging, as interdependent to the creation of a longing for a past that stems from a desire for change in the present. For the academic in India the study of this relationship between the diaspora and the homeland is complementary to the ways in which the diaspora creates and defines the homeland.

It is possible to see Diaspora writers as falling into two broad categories…those who wish to retain their separate identity and those that merge with the main stream country. Ramraj refers to these two key types of diasporas as traditionalists and assimilationists. Makarand Paranjape asserts that both these attitudes are present in the Indian Canadian diaspora writers through a complex layering. To my mind, the diaspora writer goes back in time to create in memory or imagination a layering of cultural texts to overcome his seemingly fractured identity and to reassert his place in a multicultural society. M.G. Vassanji is right when he asserts:

> The idea I am putting forward is that new Canadians bring their stories with them, and these stories then become Canadian stories. Canada's past lies not only in the native stories of the land itself, but also in Europe and now in Asia and Africa. Canadians have fought not only in the World Wars but also in the wars of liberation of Africa, Asia, and South America. Our children, however much they sometimes pretend that our past does not matter to them, also demand that. The stories of the Jewish Holocaust , the holocausts in Rwanda , the partition of India, and the massacres of Cambodia are also Canadian stories. (Canadian Literature. 190. Autumn 2006)

He continues with the statement that reality is constantly changing with more than 200 to 300 thousand immigrants coming into Canada every year. In this changing reality, which he calls a "convex reality" ... "the world comes in, gets refracted and reimagined through Canadian writing." History, moves through time frames that are layered. The reality does not root in nostalgia for a lost home but builds on a time frame that transcends linearity.

Uma Parameswaran builds on the concept of time frames of immigrant attitudes based on the two waves of immigration which she calls the colonial, and post independence periods. She identifies these as the first phase of farmers from Punjab, followed by more immigrants in the 1950s, after the long break following the Komagata Maru incident, the 1960s called the "gold rush period" and the 70s and 80s in which the latent racism surfaced. Her own term to signify the predicament of the South Asian is "Trishanku," a state of neither being here or there, caught between the lost country and the new one in which they are marginalized as ethnic minority. As a part of a generation that has the lived experience of home and a sense of belonging , Uma can look back nostalgically, recreate the new land in terms of the Ganga that she has left behind. The issue becomes problematic when the second /third generation who has never lived in India and never experienced the pull of nostalgia/memory, nevertheless create imaginary homelands in their search for roots/identity. It is more a literary exercise for the new generation who seeks a collective as well as an individual identity in the context of an amalgamated identity within a pluralistic Canadian society. The young generation will build on the stories

that the first immigrants have left behind. Thus stories are refracted and reframed. This is a process where the homeland gets fresh representations and academicians in India see another image of India, far different perhaps than the ones of Rushdie, Naipaul, Bissondath, Vassanji, or a host of others who still have their toes in India. Academics in India have turned to the question of understanding new concepts of culturalism that defy purity and stasis,
the dialectics of longing and belonging , the creation of a homeland to reinstate a belonging, is interdependent to the creation of a longing for a past that stems from a desire for change in the present. For the academic in India the study of this relationship between the diaspora and the homeland is complementary to the ways in which the diaspora creates and defines the homeland.
As readers/teachers in India, Can Lit has become not only a study of Literature from Canada, it has triggered the study of our own literatures and established new concepts of reading and recreating. Even as fresh trajectories of interpretations surface, the love of words remain, the aesthetics of each work draws and redraws new images and sounds.

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