

Rupkatha Journal

On Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities

An Online Open Access Journal
ISSN 0975-2935
www.rupkatha.com

Volume IV, Number 2, 2012

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“Element of Romanticization”: Sensory and Spatial Locations in the Narratives of Indian Diaspora in Australia

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Abstract

The “element of romanticization” or the constant yearning for ones roots—sensory and spatial locations—has become a phenomenon for different immigrant groups. As it is the politics of sensory and spatial locations that act as one of the core features that join Indian Diaspora across continents. The short stories analysed in this paper attempt to provide an understanding of the variety of interpretations of the sensory and spatial locations. We can note that in most of these stories the immigrants try to bring the Indian subcontinent to Australia with them by using myths, legends, historical facts, etc. These immigrants besides using myths also display a proudest possession, which reminds them constantly of home. These objects or icons or elements from the past, which the immigrants carry with them as cultural products are used as helpers in making a sense out of the alien situation presented before them. The paper concludes with the assertion that Indian-Australian short stories act as an important expression of the Indian way of life in Australia and may also effectively help in removing misconceptions and better understandings of local conditions thus encouraging fellow Australians to see differently within the cultural context of India and Australia.

[**Keywords:** South Asian Diaspora, Australia, Home, Nostalgia, Short Stories]

The element of romanticization which is present in every nationalism is even stronger among nostalgic migrants, who often form a rosy picture of the country they have left and are able to imagine the nation where it did not exist before. (Van der Veer 7)

I

The “element of romanticization” or the constant yearning for ones roots—sensory and spatial locations—has become a phenomenon for different immigrant groups. As “Diaspora” do not simply refer to a geographical dispersal but it also defines “the vexed questions of identity, memory and home which such displacements produces” (Ashcroft et al. 218). Relationship between a Diaspora and its homeland is an integral component of reading an immigrant framework for analysis. There are of course many Diasporas in Australia and the “concept of home” or “roots” for these immigrants is “as compelling as it is for those Anglo-Australians committed to the ‘core values’ of a monolithic cultural nationalism” (Gelder and Salzman 49). But it is the *politics of sensory and spatial locations* that act as one of the core features that join Indian Diaspora across continents. For these immigrants India is “not simply a space on the map,” but it has been “the locus of *memory, longing, desire, and anxiety*” (Mankekar 52-53; my italics). As immigrants these people draw on their memories of what has been left behind, a romantic past, and live in the present. This individual or collective imagining or romanticization of the Indian subcontinent—of past, linkages, traditions, and attachments help “nourish a psychological appeal among successive generations of emigrants for the ‘mother’ country” (Singh 4). Further, it also acts as a security and emotional refuge against the sometimes hostile new environment.

For noted cultural critic Stuart Hall (2000), the crucial question related to a diasporic identity is not *subjectivity* but *subject position* or *location*. So, the Indian diasporic writers not only provides a fluidity of identity to their protagonists but also “a constantly changing subject position, both geographically and ontologically” (Ashcroft et al. 218). The politics of identity, politics of memory and space, and the narratives (autobiographical or fictional or factional)

that they shape are central issues in the short stories under critique in this paper. It is important to note how diasporic individuals (and characters) exercise their *agency*—“the temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments [. . .] which through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgment, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by historical situations” (Emirbayer and Mische 970). Agency can further be understood as having three broad components based on its orientations:

1. *Iteration*: the capacity of persons to actively select and incorporate patterns of thought and social practices from the past, to give stability to their present situation so that they may cope with the temporal/spatial transitions of perhaps migration and immigration.
2. *Projective Element*: it refers to the imaginations of persons i.e. received traditions of thought and social practices from the past and recast in relation to the persons’ hopes and desires for the future.
3. *Practical Evaluation*: the ability of people to make judgments among the various possible trajectories of action in response to present social situations in order to make sense of future. (Emirbayer and Mische 989-990)

Through “agency” and “reiteration” the past “becomes a stabilizing influence that shapes the flow of effort and allows us to sustain identities, meanings, and interactions over time” (Emirbayer and Mische 975). This reiteration also helps in imagination and identification with the spatial and sensory locations. So in a globalised world the Indian immigrants imagine themselves to have a full identity.

Further, in relation to agency and the analyses of location and its connection within a changing global social order David Harvey (1993) points out that the “real as well as metaphorical territories and spaces of power” or locations must be given equal weight (3). But, what are these *sensory* and *spatial* locations? And, how does the agency affect these two concepts related to memory and space? As memory and space are “neither a flat stage upon which subjects perform their historical task, nor a predefined volume through which they pass” (Papastergiadis 52). Space is both “a transformative force and a field that is transformed by the interactions that occur within it” (Papastergiadis 52). Thus by exploring the spatial politics of location in ways that “articulate both mobility and displacement alongside location and positionality” (Blunt 8) an exploration of sensory productions of knowledge in the Indian Diaspora can be done. As situated within a range of imagined and real nations or locations, Indian Diaspora in Australia embodies a set of (dis)connections between place, culture, and identity. This complex relationship or linkages between facts of geographical location—homeland or hostland—and notions of imagined or metaphorical geographies is thus addressed by spatial and sensory locations.

These connections or links with the “homeland” and “associated myths of origin,” according to Crispin Bates (2001), “often play a large part in identity formation amongst migrant communities” (21). Even though the actual origins of the diaspora Indians living in the hostland can be highly diverse. He further notes that the

experience of migration itself and, second, any racism to which they are subjected by indigenous population are often all that migrants have in common. A selective “remembering” of the culture and traditions of home is therefore frequently employed to build a sense of community. (21)

From this it can be formulated that “the reconstitution of a memory, which veers between an imagination drawn back to the atavistic homeland,” thus making Indianness or South Asianness as “a set of inalienable values” bestowed by the country of origin and “the constellation of signs spawned by the uneasy interaction of the exiled” Indian values with the cultures of the hostland (Carter and Torabully 14). Rushdie beautifully sums up this uneasy interaction and the politics of spatial and sensory locations by observing:

Exiles or emigrants or expatriates are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do

look back, we must also do so in the knowledge—which gives rise to profound uncertainties—that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind. (1991: 76)

This theory cannot be explored without bringing into question the narratives and the ways in which Indian Diaspora represents spaces of home and hostland. The short stories analysed here attempt to provide an understanding of the variety of interpretations of the sensory and spatial locations.

II

Introducing the essays of Günter Grass, Salman Rushdie (1991) observed that literature of migration offers us “one of the richest metaphors of our age” (278). Adding to this viewpoint noted Fiji-Indian author Satendra Nandan (2000) notes that the idea of a “metaphorical being” is perhaps more true about “a writer than of any other member of a society” (35). He further notes that a writer “is almost always and everywhere either an exile or a migrant and, because of this distancing and distress, he may capture more vitally and vividly the very essence of our migratory experience” (2000: 35). The continuance of a dialogue with the past through “plot, characters, actions,” and a constant looking back by the diasporic authors, “through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth” in their stories is to a larger extent the result of the notion of “home” and its “authority” as constructed over the mindscapes of the diasporic individuals. This is not to say that a diasporan will “return” to the origin because there is no point of actual return for him/her. For noted post-colonial critic Vijay Mishra (1996), this inability to return is one of the most dominant and distinctive characteristics of diasporas and he observes that “diasporas do not, as a general rule, return” (75).

Although the immigrants may not actually return home permanently, as they are now located in a new adopted “home,” they however do present an attachment towards traditions, customs, values, religions and languages of the ancestral home, through the use of memory or sensory locations, as can be seen in the themes of their works. How they re-create their Indian identity under diasporic conditions through recreation, continuation, maintenance and nurturing of their social and cultural uniqueness is often the product of their desires to connect with their country of origin, homeland, and with the other subcontinental diasporas present in different regions of the world, thereby giving it a true global unity and identity. In the words of Homi Bhabha (1994), this is the “celebratory romance of the past” (9). It is a result of the restrictions that migration has placed upon them and the creative possibilities it has offered. This romancing with the past is reflected in the creative output of the diasporic author and “continues to depend on the bits and pieces of its origin to hold itself together in the face of the onslaught, rejection or domination by the “other,” by the world which both frightens and fascinates” (Jain 79). This “fascination” with/for what has been left behind, or with the very “home-idea” (Mishra, 1996: 75) in relation to what is to be acquired in the hostland is the consequence of the migratory displacement. And this in turn makes the writer imagine home the way he/she wants it to be i.e. “a romantic idealization that fossilises memories,” and therefore it can also be referred to as the “constant looking back syndrome” (Ahmad 93). The return to home or roots, physically, is also not viable because of the other important incentives that are offered by the hostland. In the very act of returning/re-turning lies the problematic of losing identity and most important of all, losing the opportunity that has been procured through hard work in the hostland or places of migration.

Descendants of Indian indentured migrants, who are now twice displaced because of the coups in Fiji, constitute an important part of “the mosaic of this Indian diaspora” in Australia (B. Lal, 1996: 167). From this part of the world, Satendra Nandan, Brij V. Lal, Vijay Mishra, and Sudesh Mishra have emerged as the most prominent Fiji-Indian voices in Australia. They belong to that special category of the diaspora authors who carry a double

hyphenated identity i.e. of being Indian-Fijian-Australian. These authors, descendants of the indentured labourers, are preoccupied with reassessing their origins in the mini-Indias created by their ancestors in lands outside the Indian subcontinent.

Vijay Mishra in “Ni Sa Moce/Salaam Fiji” (1989) notes “in remote Fiji, a displaced Indian migrant community clung onto traditions that the community brought with it from the India of the late nineteenth century [. . .] this India had effectively been frozen in time” (481-482). Brij V. Lal, in “Return to Bahraich” (1998), calls it the dilemma of the “people caught in-between the tensions of culture and history.” He finds “something strange, something incongruous” about the indentured people, the villagers and writes:

Now in their mellow twilight, they seemed to be shipwrecked by fate in a place they did not, perhaps could not, fully embrace, and they could not return to a place they so dearly loved. They were a people caught in-between the tensions of culture and history, resisting assimilation into the ways of their adopted homeland by re-enacting archaic customs from a remembered past. (92)

Satendra Nandan in his short story “The Guru” (1988) takes a very humorous view of this diasporan situation—“caught in-between” and “frozen in time”—and the Indian way of life away from India. He builds his story on the pattern, however not on the same scale and grandeur, of V. S. Naipaul’s *The Mystic Masseur* and Cyril Dabydeen’s *The Wizard Swami*, two of the best known *Girmitiya* narratives. It is important to mention here that it was Naipaul who started the trend of a distinctive *Girmitiya* narrative or the narratives of the old labour diaspora by providing it with a form, style, language, ideology, fantastic images and also in some ways made it consciously into a discourse to be comprehended and critiqued. According to Nandan in “Antyesti Samskara” (1996): “Naipaul has given us a searing glimpse of our own unexplored, unwritten lives, roadless and rootless” (420). Similarly, in “The Guru,” Nandan presents Pundit Bhondu Maharaj, whose “mumbling” of Sanskrit mantras makes “the hair on his knuckles bristle with holy excitement” (69). He exploits illiterate people and blind believers of Hinduism, its rituals and traditions. He and other indentured labourers, as Shyam Selvadurai (2005) has observed “cut off from South Asia [. . .] were forced to recreate little self-conditioned South Asias and to draw meaning from their landscape” (9). It is their common memories that have united the indentured people in a way that makes them distinguishable from other groups on the plantations. They have re-created a “home away from home” and preserved the rich cultural, religious and social traditions of India over the years of their dislocation in Fiji and carried it to Australia too. This, according to Vijay Mishra, is the construction of an “imaginary belief systems for its own self-authentication, self-generation and legitimation” (1991: 79) by the Indian section in Fiji. Despite the strictures against travelling overseas in the Hindu *shastras*, these early Indian immigrants were indentured as labourers to countries unknown to them. Soon their relationship with the Fijian landscape became solid and they accounted for more than half of Fiji’s population till the coups of 1987 and again in 2000, as a result of which these people migrated to various other countries for safety. The protagonist of Nandan’s story, Beckaroo, can obviously see that his parents, the Pundit and the other first generation or old immigrants are living with an invariable hope of making “a trip to Motherland” (77) because they are still, what Vijay Mishra calls, “trapped in a cultural time-warp” (1991: 79).

Similarly, Sudesh Mishra in his autobiographical short story “Lila” (1994) describes in detail “the time-warp” in the celebration and performance of Ram Lila by the Indian-Fijian community in Nadi, Fiji. A playing field is converted into a “stage for this week-long enactment of Tulasidasa’s *Ramayana*” in *shudh* (pure) Hindi (650). Using *Ramayana*, its characters and the trope of exile, Sudesh Mishra discusses the politics of language—Hindi, English, Fijian, and Fijian-Hindi or Fijian-baat—in the diasporic context. The narrator’s father can speak Fijian in Nadi dialect, and for him language is “an evanescent butterfly and not a thing to cast in bronze. He speaks it and it is gone” (653), whereas for the narrator, on the other hand, says that he “plunge(s) the living butterfly into a vat of molten ore in search of an aesthetic that is durable” (653). Fijian drivers, who work under the narrator’s father, respect

him for the “use of their language as if it were his own” (654). The narrator, having grown up and journeying a lot, settles down in Australia but keeps his connection with Fiji and the language. He again sees the Ram Lila performance and notices “Shudh Hindi has long been altered [. . .] so that his lines are no longer scripted by Tulasidasa. Instead they are the lines of a diasporic self [. . .]” (655). Sudesh Mishra’s story is a celebration of Indian-Fijian culture and Fiji-Hindi—a diasporic language that encompasses within it the history, experience and stories of indenture and shifting or recreation of home in Fiji.

Satendra Nandan in “Nandi” (1990), remembering the stories he was raised on observes: “We lived by such stories—first of our grandparents, then our mothers and fathers, now our political leaders. Our fate in Fiji had echoes of the *Ramayana*: exile, suffering, separation, battles, but no return” (629). In Nandi, Jagat Mahajan, the richest man in the narrator’s village, who worships Lord Shiva, erects under the pandanus tree a temple. The narrator observes that there was a

caved wooden statue of Shiva mounted on a clay figure of Nandin, Shiva’s joyous bull. A mound of red earth symbolised Mount Everest, on which Shiva sat in meditation. These pieces of sculpture were grotesquely coloured and covered with hibiscus petals or small yellow marigolds. [. . .] Shiva looked strong, ominous as a mountain with a hidden volcano. (620)

This temple, however “grotesquely covered,” represented the very memory of the sacred religious space—a temple—that the indentured labourers have left back in India.

For Nandan in “Antyesti Samskara” this re-creation of the “lost” space and re-enactment of sacred customs and religious rituals is the very essence of the Indian-Fijian community. It is also a journey of “going back—into oneself, one’s family, one’s country—the search for a history and identity” (420). Nandan understands that by preserving the rich myths along with the cultural, religious and social traditions of India over the years in Fiji, Indians blinded themselves from seeing the culture and value system in which they were transplanted. In Nandan’s “Mangoes” (1992), the old man, who was once an indentured labourer, remembering the “delicious, juicy and sugar-sweet” mangoes of his village Sultanpur in India notes:

The Fijian mangoes, thick and fleshy, lacked the taste, the character of the fibre that made you suck the mango stone till it shone white like a piece of human bone. Mangoes in Fiji lacked the *mithas* and the people were no different: fruit and flower, fish and flesh reflect the nature of people in a place. (307)

For the old man, the mango tree is also “a symbol of this bountiful land” (309) that he left. He is unable to find the same warmth in social life from the Fijian community. But for some immigrants the small villages in which they settled in Fiji as indentured labourers with their families also became their home. The narrator’s father, son of an indentured labourer, in Shrishti Sharma’s “Saying Goodbye to the Mango Tree” (2003), looking at his family album remembers the “best times” spent in his small village in Fiji. He observes:

I enjoyed ... everyday, I went one step further ... no turning back ... had to ... that’s how you get here. That was village life, see? There was the farm, and the friends, and the family ... but most of all the family. We went along with the simple things. Everyone did. Not enough of nothing sometimes. But the good things were there. In the people ... in the life ... in the soccer! Very little we had, but we had the open field ... different place, different time it was ... not anymore ... but *that was the life* ... the village ... (51-52)

One of the first Australian born South Asian writers Mena Abdullah (along with co-author Ray Mathew) presented in her short story collection *The Time of the Peacock* (1965) delightful and light-hearted descriptions of the transplantation of an Indian family in the outback or hinterland of Australia. According to Corkhill (1995): “the beauty of these brief sketches of life in an alien environment lies in their clarity, simplicity and integrity” (36).

Growing up in New England, a region in New South Wales, and despite many odds the narrator never loses her “optimism, joy and innocence” (36). Despite their problems in this hinterland, the family becomes accustomed to the Australian soil and the landscape. The garden, representing the Garden of Eden, in “Because of the Rusilla,” although like a place of exile, is also an example of their adaptation to Australian land:

The garden was a strange place and lovely. It was our *mother’s place*, Ama’s own place. Outside its lattice walls was the farmyard with its fowls and goats (Suliean the rooster and Yasmin the nanny), and beyond that was Father’s place, the woolsheds and the yards, and beyond that the hills with their changing faces and their Australianness. We had never been to them, and Ama [. . .] told us they were very strange. But everything was strange to Ama, except the garden.

Inside its lattice walls grew the country that she knew. There were tuberose and jasmine, white violets and the pink *Kashmiri roses* whose buds grew clenched, like baby hands. The garden was cool and sweet and full of rich scent. (12; my italics)

The garden, with its mix of tuberose and Kashmiri roses, is not just a symbol of India or the motherland, represented in the story as “mother’s place,” filled with its representative flowers, it is also a security or defence mechanism that this family employs by recreating the environment of the homeland against anything hostile in their present. The garden “provides an important sanctuary for the mother and a place to confine her children” (Tucker 2003).

Three generations of a migrant family are portrayed in Renuka Sharma’s short story “Paternity” (1994). Sharma writes that the grandfather, now a ninety-six year old man, wore a turban and rode a horse “to look at the land and talk to his descendants,” that “he had helped settle almost sixty years ago when as a foreman of the sugar company he was rewarded for his toil” (154). The old man, has the “curious sensation” that he has “achieved” something in his life as a migrant in Australia, but “never quite sure of what” (154). The children from his two wives have merged into the Australian society and are now university educated and they live “in the urban centre with long periods abroad” and come on “infrequent visits” to meet him (155). His only regret is that his youngest son doesn’t believe in the traditions of India and in the eyes of the old man he is “an infidel” with all his modern views:

With much glee the son had told the father that he ate pork. A high caste Brahmin eating pork, the old man had been outraged and asked one of the lurking grandsons to bring buckets of water for his sons’ cleansing, after the visit the house was scoured. (155)

The old man, belonging to a Brahmin family, has, for the past sixty years, performed at various functions the role of a high priest and one man judiciary for his small community. Still, he cannot understand the feeling of loss: “some valuable part of himself which he longed for in an uncertain way” (155). The loss he feels is of the youngest son, who in all respects resembles the old man but with his foreign ways has distanced himself from his father and his traditions. He is a “man toughened and hardened by circumstances” (156) just like his migrant father, but representing modernity, while his father stands for traditions of India transplanted in Australia. It is the grandson who understands what his father and grandfather are truly feeling and muses that “even in seeming opposites there are similarities” (156) and in their “acknowledgement of difference” there is present true love (157). The grandson represents the third generation of Indian-Australians and says that “he would be different, a real radical, a nihilist disagreeing with their ideas on tradition and modernity, going beyond” (157).

Recent migrations are creating new displacements, this recreation of home, the reconstruction of the South Asian way of life and cultural values to produce a home away from home, and this has resulted in what Paranjape (2001), calls an

astonishing cultural continuity [that is seen] when one crosses boundaries these days—one never has to leave India, so to speak, even as one leaves its shores. The

same, or at least similar, music, food, clothes and people haunt one not just on the plane and through the transit points, but also at the final destination, whether it is America, Canada, Britain, or Australia. (vi)

Migration, diaspora and exile offer diverse and complex environments for the renegotiation of social and cultural identities. These phenomena have become everyday experience in our contemporary society in relation to cultural markers and intercultural negotiations taking place between individuals and nations.

Even in the compromises and acceptance made by the protagonists about their new identity as Australians, we see a celebration of the past through constant references to India. Manik Datar, who was born in Calcutta, confidently defines her roots through the kin networks and webs of social connection in Australia and India and uses the same theme in her fictional narratives about Indians in Australia. In her story “My Sister’s Mother” (1995) the younger sister living in Australia “begins to understand that my sister’s mother is different from my mother” (76). The difference is not in terms of blood relationship but it lies deep inside the psycho-sociological conditions before and after the family’s migration to Australia. The elder sister never migrated and stayed back in India—“the country of [our] ancestors” (76), where she proudly “belongs as a native” (76). The real shock for the younger sister is not the elder sister’s feeling proud about India but it lies in how her elder sister perceives even the internal migration taking place within India. She believes fervently that “outsiders from other provinces in India should recognize they are guests and not demand equal rights as the local people” (76). This statement shocks the younger sister and it is obvious because she herself is an “emigrant in a country already taken from its local people” (76). There are further shocks for her as she faces linguistic problems related to the use of English—Indian English and Australian English. At other levels the younger sister to preserve her authentic Indian image in Australia owns, as a proud possession, a “white marble mortar and pestle” (77) and because of it has suffered the jokes of her Australian friends to whom it looked like “a piece of Taj Mahal” (77). The elder sister does not need it as it is very old fashioned and she proudly says that “in India we are quite modern, we can buy all masalas readymade” (78). The elder sister, who is a connection between India and Australia is “caught between two beliefs” (78) but is still very happy and comfortable. While, on the other hand, the younger sister is still trying to balance and hold on to both the cultures for her futures sake in Australia and because of this she is not rooted in either Australian or Indian. As the younger sister is married to an Australian, going back to India is not a possibility for her. The only choices in front of her are either to strike a balance between her Indianness and Australianness or merge in the Australian identity.

III

We can note that in most of these stories the immigrants try to bring the Indian subcontinent to Australia with them by using myths, legends, historical facts, etc. These immigrants besides using myths also display a proudest possession, which reminds them constantly of home. These proudest possessions are “iconic referents,” which perform the signifying function of an icon and to a certain point act as a linkage between personal and national. These “iconic referents” or “cultural symbols,” according to Bhabha (2006), “ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehetoricized, and read anew” (157). For the immigrants, in their everyday life in Fiji or Australia, everything depends on these representations or icons. Thus, the “consumption” of particular commodities in the diaspora might lead an “individual to remember the warmth and laughter surrounding family gatherings and celebrations in the homeland (rather than the conflicts and family politics surrounding them)” (Mankekar 2006). The task is to keep the roots, history and memory, of South Asia alive in Australia by conspicuous consumption. As Satendra Nandan also notes in his story “Ashes and Diamonds” (1989) that for first generation immigrants, like his father, Air India, the connector

between the subcontinent and Fiji or the outside world, represented “the idea of India itself” (65). This acknowledges how the “experience of dislocation, modulated by a nostalgic longing for the familiar, is also deeply rooted in the creation of imaginary fictions” (Mannur 2007). For example in Rani Jhala’s story “Life’s Key” (1999), a rose plant becomes the symbol of “love of today and the promise of tomorrow” (21). And, it does not take time for the protagonist to realize that “thorns are inseparable.” A “white marble mortar and pestle” is the “proudest possession” and an authentic one too for the younger sister to show her Indianness in Manik Datar’s “My Sister’s Mother.” In Mena Abdullah’s “The Time of the Peacock,” narrator’s mother has made her own garden full of Indian flowers, a connection with the old country or in other words with the Indian subcontinent inside their farmhouse—“her own walled-in country.” Similarly, the white peacock, Shah-Jehan, in the same story is a reference to “Indians” or migrants who are settling in Australia. Peacock as India’s national bird symbolizes the national sentiments and an Indian way of life in the diasporas, wherever they are settled. A sentiment well expressed by the noted Gujrati Poet Ardeshir F. Khabardar: “Wherever there is even one Gujarati, there is forever Gujarat.”

According to Bruce Bennett (2002), the “powerful hold of myths and stories brought with migrants, and retained in the new country, recurs in much cross-cultural fiction” (158). These objects or icons or elements from the past, which the immigrants carry with them as cultural products are used as helpers in making a sense out of the alien situation presented before them. As Diaspora writers who are displaced and uprooted, according to Terry Eagleton (2005) usually “clung to the values of order, authority, hierarchy and tradition more tenaciously than some of their less unsettled colleagues”(259). Sticking with them and putting meanings inside these objects or referents in an alien environment can also be seen as, at the initial stages of migration, a way of legitimating their relationship with home from a “third space” for future’s sake. This in a way is the immigrants’ strategy of providing these objects a dominant meaning in reference to homeland by articulating an ideological or socio-religious function different from what they had back home and thus establishing a privileged position. Thus also creating works that deepen our understanding of the ways in which Indian diasporic communities define and use collective memory to negotiate a sense of origins. The Indian diasporic writers with their worldview appear and the cultural life provides other ways of viewing the world. As often, according to Amitava Kumar (2004), distances from homeland produces a “shift in perspective” and “the immigrant writers find that they are discovering not only the new country, but also the place that they have left behind” (xiv). In conclusion, Indian-Australian short stories, analysed in this paper, act as an important expression of the Indian way of life in Australia and may also effectively help in removing misconceptions and better understandings of local conditions thus encouraging fellow Australians to see differently within the cultural context of India and Australia.

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