Iconographies of Diaspora: Refracted Landscapes and Textures of Memory of South Asian Women in London.

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ABSTRACT

Diasporic journeys of South Asian women are examined in this thesis as a record of British Asian oral history and migration. Biographical mapping is used as a means to interrogate the complex diasporic relationship between national identity and race. The thesis seeks to investigate the relationships between the racialised body and the experience of dislocation lived through by South Asian women in London. Identity, memory and landscape are core themes that run through the thesis. Remembered landscapes and environmental memories are points of identification. These environments and textures of memory have a multisensory nature. These in turn are refracted as icons in the visual and material cultures of the home. Home as a site of belonging becomes a space through which these women express their relationship with citizenship in Britain, their experience of life in the colony, and their experience of rupture with their birthplace. Relationships between various lands, landscapes, social and cultural iconographies are revealed through a study of cultures in the home. Iconographies of "home" are further investigated in the thesis through a visual project conducted with landscape artist Melanie Carvalho, and the study group. A set of 17 canvases have been painted from the women's descriptions of "home". These are, in turn, analysed as visual representations of remembered, idealised icons of intimate landscapes. This results in an examination of the multiple axes within which the diasporic group practises identification, and through which they are themselves configured. The research study uses a process of grounded theorising by examining biographies, oral histories, and investigating visual and material cultures in the home. These are treated as triggers of identification which operate as metonymical devices of negotiation, resistance and placing.

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NOTE ON PRESENTATION

In this document, the text and images have been integrated as much as possible to avoid excessive amounts of white space at the ends of pages. However, there have been pages where this has not been practical as rearranging text or images to fill gaps would break the association between specific arguments and the relevant images. For this reason, layout has not been favoured over the logical structure of the thesis.

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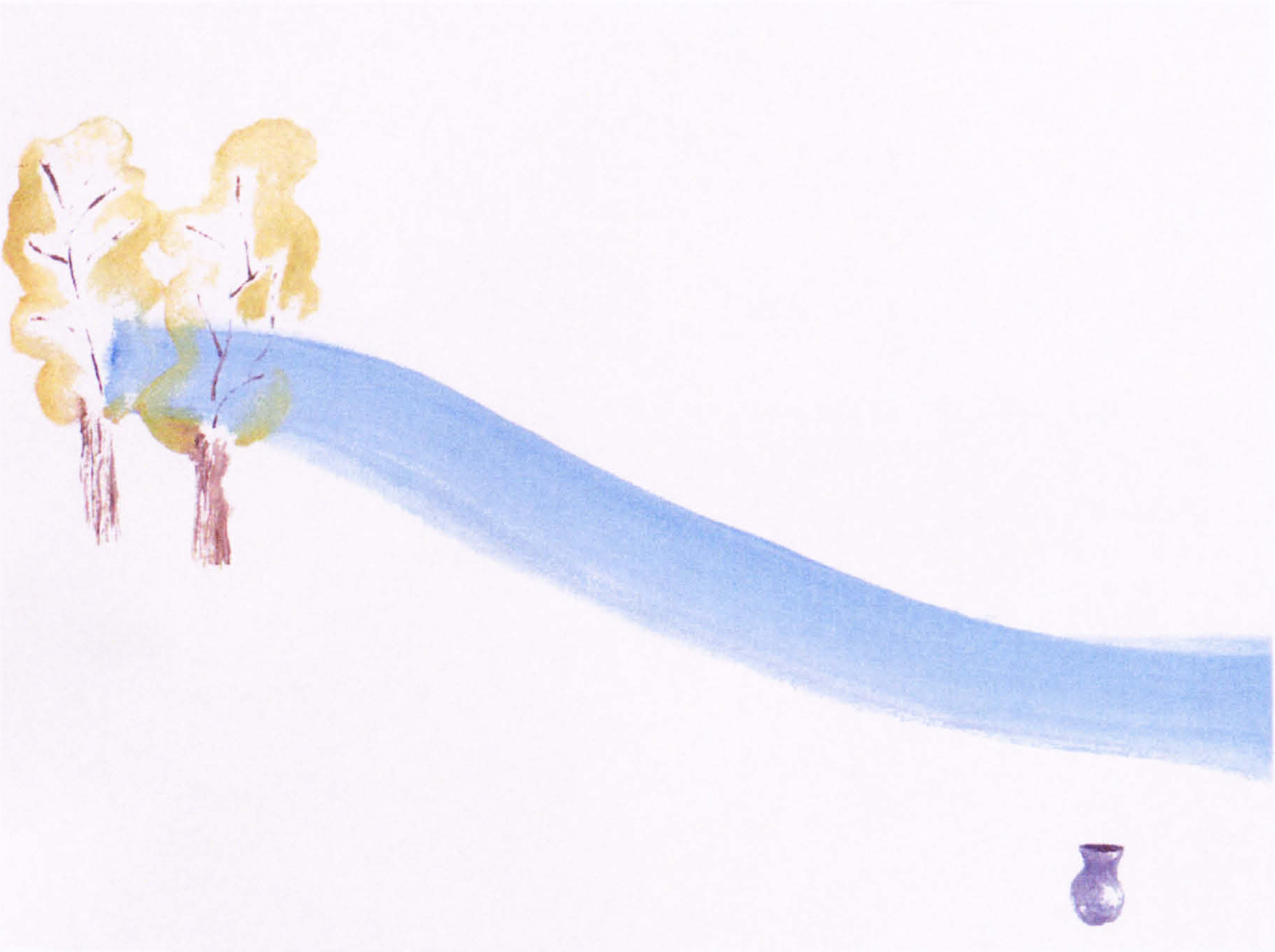
I dedicate this thesis to my late father Praful Dalichand Tolia, without whose inspiration it would not exist.



"Tere mere sapne ekhi rang hai…"

CHAPTER 1 – Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis is an exercise in researching the way in which members of a diasporic group consolidate a sense of identity through their connections with landscapes of home. The theories of landscape, memory and diaspora are the three key underpinnings to this thesis. I have chosen to look at diasporic identity and positioning through the individual's use of visual cultures in the home. I treat these cultures as tangible and material points of identification with other landscapes, national and local, through which settlement in England is consolidated. This is a cultural materialist approach, using the materials of culture as a prism through which diasporic connections with other territories of belonging are mapped out.

My research has focused on the experience of South Asian women and their everyday cultures in the home. I have focused on women because of their particular marginality from the history of national cultures, and their particular role in re-settlement after migration. Women are at the forefront of "home-making". This is not purely in a domestic sense but includes political, economic and cultural building blocks which are essential components of sustaining cultural integrity and which allow this integrity to continue throughout the mutable positioning in new territories and journeys. The two groups of women that I have collaborated with are based in North West London, in Harlesden (London Borough of Brent), and Harrow (London Borough of Harrow). I have privileged these women's experiences as a means of grounding my theorisation of these women's post-colonial[1] positionality in relation to their place of permanent residence in England. The home becomes a fertile site of interrogation of the way in which diasporic communities use visual cultures in the home as a means of connection to the wider imagined community (Anderson 1983). These connections have been materialised through print capital (Anderson 1983), but also now in the 21st century have extended through global networks of electronic cultural exchange through internet, satellite and digital channels, cinematic culture and the transnational movement of goods and services. The materiality of these exchanges offer insights into imaginative geographies of migration. These are figured in the thesis as social memories. Social memory in turn has been treated as a social archive of oral histories and materials of heritage. They are the dynamic nodes of identification, which inform cultural practices of the everyday, and also contribute to geographical knowledges of "landscapes of home". These cultural expressions of social memory also offer us insight in to the practices of self-making, that are in place for this diasporic community in Britain.

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[1] Post-colonial is a term that has several meanings. I use it in this thesis as the experience or identity of migrants from East Africa, and the Indian sub-continent who have migrated to the U.K. post Indian Independence in 1947. I do not accept that colonialism in its political, economic or cultural manifestations has ceased in post-Independence nation states, but I use it as a descriptive term to define those migrants who have experienced a rupture with a national culture, due to colonial rule and subjugation of the population in India and countries of the sub-continent. These countries include India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. This migration has included migration to over 14 countries including the U.S, Canada, Trinidad, Guyana, U.K., Malawi, Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Yemen, Tanzania, Zambia, and South Africa

1.2 Critical Themes

1.2.1 Diaspora and geography

Geography has been crucial in defining and figuring diaspora. The project of a modernist colonial geography has structured much of what diasporic cultures are responding to and are formed as a result of. Diaspora is a scattering of peoples. The journeys that are made in the process of dispersal are common. These diasporic journeys constitute a state of flux, unfixedness, and dynamic history-making. A group on a journey cannot fit into national discourses of linear, fixed and territorially-fixed histories. The activity of journey could be said to constitute the point of departure from a definition of a modern nation, but also a definition of a modern citizen. Members of diasporas form transnational or diasporic cultures. Within these are interwoven ideas about nationhood, national culture, religious identity, cultural heritage and practices. These flows are part of a multi-purpose journey of narratives which have singular and multiple meanings and values for the group. For example, the "return" home may be a desire for first generation Asians in Britain. But on actual arrival, this "home" may not offer the welcome or the comfort that "home" as imagined offered. The same journey for the second generation may not constitute a return but a means of maintenance and recuperation. This intermediary home-relationship may be reconciliation with the disruption, and one that cannot be reinstated as a place of "return". For the third generation this same journey may be one of a cultural tourist, or a rediscovery of a nostalgic site of heritage. However these journeys are not singular and fixed in time, as their experience may affect the same traveller differently in a single journey. At the temple, the traveller may be at home because of religious socialisation. But in the market the traveller may be treated as a tourist because the disruption has led to difference, and the position of the traveller is as an economically powerful, mobile traveller. The influence of place and time are in flux and therefore shift the nodes of identification, belonging, and exclusion.

The concept of national communities is key to understanding discourses of diasporic belonging. The nation state as a modern project sets up international borders, and creates significant political and social localities, which are constructed as bounded, fixed and having a linear history. Belonging is constituted of birth, biology, and state defined culture, synthesised through practices of national culture, ideas of heritage and socialisation. There are also notions of genetic and biological communities which are connected through blood and birthright. Citizenship based on culture, culture of religion, or an evolved culture in a specific place and time is another expression of a national culture. Diasporic peoples are also considered to be threatened in their biological and cultural integrity because of their dispersal, and settlement in "inauthentic" lands.

Nations have traditionally been deemed as bounded geographical units with a national sense of citizenship built into the social fabric of the society. This is traditionally deemed as a relationship bonded through genetic continuity, biological sameness, and a body of cultural heritage that is celebrated and memorialised at a national scale. These structures of social and cultural citizenship are then reinforced through legal definitions of citizenship, legal rights of residency and reinforcement of borders. Therefore, a neat and definable citizenship is constructed in the language of loyalty, belonging and collective allegiance and morality. This neatness, however, is disrupted through processes of uncovering disjuncture in the national story as well as addressing the partiality of national cultures. Discontinuities of land ownership, racial inter-mixing, and cross-cultural practices all reveal fissures in a coherent national story of identity.

Diasporas are often figured in national cultures as being marginal to society as well as a threat to cultural integrity (Gilroy 1987; 1990; 1991; 1993a; 1993b). A modern diasporic community is predominantly relational; defined through a lack of belonging to their place of stay, in a state of placelessness. The ways in which places are figured in the diasporic imagination is essential to understanding the imaginative geographies of diaspora, and the material configurations and connections within which diasporic communities live. These configurations are based on relationships with places in the form of a "homeland"; the reconstructing of a utopian homeland; and the "new" places which feature in the new residence which contribute to the process of re-territorialisation. The positioning of the diasporic subject in relation to these is key to understanding relationships with various lands, landscapes and cultural iconographies learned through oral histories, community narratives, memories, and visual forms. My study is a project of *placing*; a mapping of relationships that diasporic groups have with visual forms and the landscapes projected and refracted through them. This is a mapping of both the temporal and spatial context which signifies the particular position that diasporic groups hold in the context of "modernity". This results in an understanding of the multiple axes within which the diasporic group practices identification, and are themselves configured.

1.2.2 Visual cultures

Another key point of my analysis is the contribution that visual cultures in the South Asian diaspora make to a sense of location, belonging, heritage and national identity. The idea of nation and national identity has been based on modernist senses of bounded definitions of nation states manifested in exclusionary discourses of biological, cultural, political (hi)stories of a land, its people and their expressions of heritage. This perspective generates stories with ethnic and cultural meanings embedded in the expressions of national culture and national history (Hall 2000). Cultures of the visual are a means through which national projects of Englishness and Britishness[2] are consolidated and expressed (Daniels 1991; 1993b). For diasporic groups in Britain, connections with visual expressions of nation are complicated through their post-colonial settlement which allows them biographical connections with multiple locations of settlement as well as their experience of the exclusionary racial narratives of national culture. Culture is a dynamically-placed expression of the dialogue that diasporic groups continue to have with various geographies of home and belonging. These cultural dialogues are dialectical in their relationship with cultural expression of the imagined community of home, and their actual place of permanent residence and citizenship – England. These cultures are formed as expressive of Asianess in the U.K. which, in turn form, and are informed by cultural expressions from the Indian Sub-continent and other territories of colonial rule. These *global ethnoscapes* (Appadurai 1997) are expressions of material and cultural expressions of post-colonial positionality, in relation to post-colonial migration.

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[2] Englishness and Britishness are often used interchangeably in the theorisation of post-colonial citizenship in the U.K..This is because Englishness is privileged culturally, politically and economically in discourses on national culture. This is not limited however to culture and heritage but is manifest in national governance, despite the new parliaments in Wales, and Scotland. I use Englishness as the dominant expression of the national culture of the U.K., which is the defining focus of much of the cultural encounters that diasporic groups make when in the U.K.

I focus in particular upon the everyday role of visual cultures. It is from this particular type of ethnography that I have developed my definition of visual cultures in the home as multisensory. The study uncovers the way that the visual becomes material in the practices of identification and as materials of history. This visual archive represents a set of co-ordinates through which triangulation, positioning and a sense of locatedness are formed and re-formed through time. These two very different engagements with visual cultures are examples of the varied textures that signify connections with a sense of "home", belonging, and a place of identification with "Indianess".

Visual networks of culture are made possible through the development of new technologies of transport, communications and global transmission of TV and film. New technologies are a means for a diasporic group to maintain a connectedness to the rest of the community, as well as an arena to debate, innovate and transform cultural identity, and extend the archive of cultural meanings, values and heritage. This, as a result of a "shrinking world" (Massey 1991), and "space-time compression" (Harvey 1990) has resulted in new ways of imagining communities, and communicating differences.

> "Something like a transnational public sphere has certainly rendered any strictly bounded sense of community or locality obsolete. At the same time, it has enabled the creation of forms of solidarity and identity that do not rest on an appropriation of space where contiguity and face-to-face contact are paramount." (Ferguson 1992, p.9, quoted in Vertovec 1999, p.449)

As Marie Gillespie (Gillespie 1995) has illustrated, film culture within the Asian community can be analysed to understand the social interaction that Bollywood offers the Asian diaspora. This social interaction through the culture of viewing films is not simply an imagined community of viewers, but operates as a catalyst in the socialisation of young Asians. I have sought to understand to what extent memories of events, peoples and places are imbued in the process of watching, and how is this figured against the life of Asians in the past. The social act of watching becomes a means of consolidating a cultural memory of the practices of being "Indian", as well as triggering connections with other landscapes and ecologies memorialised in the process of migration. The tour of cultures of the visual in the home, revealed the very different subjective practices of the everyday, which are only operative because of the aesthetic and material cultures of everyday living. These intimate, imagined geographies are evoked through sight but figured through material objects and cultural practice. The process of cultural identification relies much on the process of location, fixing positions and constructing narratives of appropriation and exclusion within the geographical space around us. Identification with these geographies through the visual cultures in the home operates as a means of engaging with memories, landscapes, and a racialised cultural connection with the diasporic network of South Asians.

1.2.3 Memory

Memory plays a crucial role for people who have been deterritorialised, because of its role in the construction of imagined communities, and in discourses of identity, heritage, and nationhood. Memory is materialised in many ways but, for groups who have lost a material claim to a fixed national homeland, fixed or absolutist histories fall short of being inclusive to those in diaspora. Material objects or material cultures therefore have a role to play in people's day to day processes of remembering, celebrating and "fixing" the past and present. Visual cultures are part of this process of recording, processing and memorialising a past homeland, a sense of heritage, identity, citizenship or a place of belonging. The idea of a national culture is a common memory; there are common landscapes in which these memories are played out (Schama 1996). The coherence of national memories are challenged by many cultural theorists, Gilroy (1993b) particularly places memory as being central to the project of rupturing essentialist ideologies and proposes their value in revealing incoherence in national discourses. The inherently flawed logic of nationalism is demonstrated by Gilroy through his examination of the political, and social struggles, faced by those groups excluded from their history. Memory of past histories is key to the struggle for emancipation, as well as a record of cultural development in spite of repression. For diasporic groups, heritage is memorialised and imbued in many non-material process and material objects. Gilroy uses the musical concept of antiphony to engage with these processes of remembering, identification and retaining identity and heritage; imbued in the sound of black musical production is a *texture* (antiphonal), a signifier of past events, identity, and history. This antiphonal signification is itself an alternative modern form of history making. It is a modern political process, which gains its dynamic power through the creation of a black public sphere. Gilroy describes this as a process where

> "identity is fleetingly experienced in the most intensive ways and sometimes socially reproduced by means of neglected modes of signifying practices like mimesis, gesture, kinesis, and costume. Antiphony (call and response) is the principal formal feature of these musical traditions It has come to be seen as a bridge from music into other modes of cultural expression, supplying, along with improvisation, montage, dramaturgy, the hermeutic keys to the full medley of black artistic practices" (Gilroy 1993b, p.78)

The work of Nobel-prize winning author, Toni Morrison (Morrison 1987, 1990) is the best example of the way in which this process of antiphony can be understood to be part of the present and the past. Memories of past experiences, of past emotional lives, are a cultural record of the diaspora. These become like oral histories, a body of non-material knowledge of previous material conditions. Morrison describes her project of writing as

> "irrevocably black. I don't have the resources of a musician but I thought that if it was truly black literature it would not be black because I was, it would not even be black because of its subject matter. It would be something intrinsic, indigenous...the sentences, the structure, *texture* and tone-so that anyone who read it would realise. I use the analogy of music because sometimes I hear blues, sometimes spirituals or jazz and I've appropriated it. I've tried to reconstruct the *texture* of it in my writing" (Morrison quoted in Gilroy 1993b, p.78).

The focus on what I choose to term a *texture of memory* seems to be critical for both Morrison and Gilroy. This is a conceptual term, which I believe to be central to the project of *Placing*. Mapping identities needs to engage with these *texture*s that are aesthetic in form but political in their nature. The sound of blues resonates with the political history of oppression. The colour of a sky can trigger memories of expulsion from a country. The thesis research seeks to recover the politicised aesthetics of the connective geographies imbued in visual cultures in the domestic sphere of the South Asian diaspora in Britain.

1.3 Outline of the thesis

In the thesis I have sought to produce a grounded theorisation of the processes of diasporic identification. In **Chapter Two** I outline the theoretical contexts to the thesis research. This includes a review of the theorisation of diaspora in relation to work on cultural landscapes, memory and race. I review the theorisation of landscape, its importance in the project of national identity, national culture, and its impact in the process of exclusionary national discourses. The thesis research extends the examination of the cultural importance of landscape to diasporic groups living in Britain. Of particular importance to me are the normally occluded landscapes of the everyday which contribute to senses of "belonging" and "home"; these are examined in relation to feminist and race theory. Part Two of this chapter traces cultural theory as it deals with race and identity, particularly focusing on the conceptualisation of "diaspora" as a means of figuring post-colonial peoples within cultural geography. Culture is privileged as a site of investigation; as a prism that signifies regimes of identification and *positioning* for diasporic groups. Part Three examines the role of memory in the expressive cultures of the South Asian diaspora, these are considered in relation to the work by Toni Morrison and Paul Gilroy. I have limited the thesis research to investigating visual cultures as a means of maintaining notions of heritage, cultural integrity and as important signifiers of connections with 'landscapes of identification' and 'belonging'.

In **Chapter Three,** I outline the research methodology. The methodology is shaped by the theoretical concerns with landscape, diasporic memory and visual culture. The chapter details the orientation towards grounded theorisation of diasporic identity, and the 'triangulation' of methods used. In the chapter I describe the recruitment of the two groups of women for participation in in-depth group discussion groups. The discussion groups were deemed an ideal method for the recovery of oral testimonies of South Asian women, in a social and discursive context. This in-depth group methodology was extended to examine the role of visual cultures in the women's domestic sphere, and to record the women's imagined "landscapes of home". Thus the methodology is designed to consider identity in a multi-dimensional way and as a result incorporates the analysis of a range of ethnographic materials. These were gathered both within the group context, and as part of a one-to-one interviews at home. The three in-depth group discussions include a session conducted with landscape artist Melanie Carvalho as means to recover the women's own visualisation of landscapes of identification. The logic and design of the three sessions are described in detail each providing the source material for the three empirical chapters.

Session One provided the source material for **Chapter Four.** Through the processes of biographical mapping, I have recorded the women's migratory routes and their lived landscapes of 'home'. I have mapped these biographies of displacement and reconnection in a group context which has produced annotated social histories of the South Asian diaspora, as recalled by the participants. This is a process of *placing* the South Asian diaspora within the context of their migratory routes. This chapter records the women's individual biographies as part of a recovery process of oral history.

In **Chapter Five** I have analysed the processes of identification that occur in the daily lives of diasporic women, using visual cultures in the home. The *textures* imbued within diasporic visual cultures are the site of my research into the positioning and *placing* of South Asians in Britain. These cultures are considered as a means of refraction of landscapes of home, and a means of consolidating belonging, post-migration. The definition of visual culture itself has been interrogated through these women's ethnographies. Their definitions and positioning of visually important cultures in the home are a point of entry into the contemporary debates on the meanings and textures of the visual. Diaspora and its geography crucially figures visual culture as something which bridges the geographical ruptures of migration, but which itself is also ruptured from the frame of disciplinary definitions and boundaries.

What are particularly under-researched within Geography are the day-to-day practices of diasporic groups in re-connecting with landscapes of home. These landscapes can be both formalised national landscapes of identity, or those more informal, intimate connections with local ecologies and organic textures of everyday landscapes. I have considered the multiple connections that diasporic women have to these concepts of landscapes of home in **Chapter Six.** By encouraging the women in the research to produce their own idealised landscapes of home in written or drawn form, I have been able to interrogate the imaginative geographies of diaspora, and uncover some of the ecological textures that are remembered by this group. Multisensory connections with landscapes of home have been key to understanding the workings of memory and the concept of landscape in the everyday. This work has been completed in collaboration with landscape artist Melanie Carvalho. Finally, in the concluding **Chapter Seven** I summarise the findings of the research, and evaluate the methodological approach used in the thesis research. I also suggest the broader implications of the research findings in the context of interdisciplinary research.

CHAPTER 2 – Theorising Iconographies of Diasporic Identity: Nature, Culture, and Memory.

2.1 Introduction

This thesis is based on interdisciplinary research into cultural geographies of identity of the South Asian diaspora living in England. The interdisciplinarity stems from the way that culture refracts the many connections South Asians have with landscapes in the post-colonial period. My strategy for researching cultural geographies of identity is to study the materials of culture that are central to migration, settlement and re-settlement. Everyday materials in people's homes ground my theorisation of identity politics and practices of the South Asian diaspora. This has not been a simple ethnographic recording of the lives of members of the community, but an interrogation of the formation, positioning, and creative cultural dialogues which exist for those racialised and excluded from modern notions of national identity, history, and heritage.

Exclusionary discourses are evident in the geographic mobility and appropriation of physical space by South Asians in the U.K..This is no longer an exclusion based on simple biological racism, but a more complex and dialectical relationship between the project of Imperialism (economic, political and cultural) and Colonisation, and, the power, form, and expressive cultures of post-colonial subjects. This dialectical relationship continues to pervade despite what some theorists term a "post-modern culture" where all expressive subjectivities are equalised in the face of a failed Enlightenment. But somehow, the global economic structure sustains unequal powers of subjugation and rule. These dynamics ensure that the term *diaspora* remains a fertile and coherent one to those excluded from national structures of citizenship in the heart of the colony. These dynamics also ensure that terms such as ethnicity, race, hybridity, double consciousness and non-identity resonate with contemporary experiences of post-colonial subjects, white and black. This is evidence of the need to consider processes of identification and dialectics of cultural positioning of those who have experienced subjective discord with their place of residency in England. This is considered in the thesis research through examining the role of visual cultures in this process of positioning.

Culture and geography intersect in three different ways in this thesis: as a theoretical concern with cultural materialism; as a concern with visual cultures, especially in the home; and finally, in terms of the materiality of nature. I shall briefly introduce each theme.

Cultural materialism has been a key theoretical concept through which I have addressed the socio-political ideologies of place within diasporic cultures. The work of Raymond Williams (Williams 1973) made possible the analysis of landscape in relation to specific social and economic regimes. Recognition that landscape has been cultivated as an aesthetic object within which material relations of economy and power are obscured is key to a cultural materialist approach in geography. Studies of the iconography of landscape painting, for example, have laid bare the ideological basis of dominant culture within society. In particular, landscape has the power to consolidate national values and social understandings of national citizenship within cultural discourse. As the work of Stephen Daniels (Daniels 1993) and Denis Cosgrove (Cosgrove 1984) shows, landscape allows national class identities and interests to be muffled, hidden within symbolic depictions of nation.

From a cultural materialist perspective, it is evident that landscape representations in art, literature and other forms of cultural production can support a process of 'ideological mystification' (Mitchell 1994). The heterogeneity of national cultures and their territories of enfranchisement is veiled.

> "As a fetishized commodity, landscape is what Marx called a social hieroglyph, an emblem of the social relations it conceals...landscape represents itself beyond price, a source of pure, inexhaustible spiritual value." (Mitchell 1994, p.15).

Landscape is thus an instrument of cultural power. It has a mask of innocent idealism, occluding moral, ideological and political questions. The dismantling of the ideology behind landscape representation is central to understanding its power in the colonial and imperialist projects which have their legacy in the nationalisms of post-colonial nations and their contemporary iconographies. Exclusionary representations of national culture are crucial in displacing and excluding those who cannot, or will not, identify with them (Gilroy 1987; Gilroy 1993b). A cultural materialist perspective is crucial in consolidating cultures of resistance, or creating alternative cultures of enfranchisement. In the context of the thesis, I shall explore the potential for resistance through a focus on race and gender.

Second, the thesis is substantively concerned with materials of culture, in the everyday social world. I examine the role of the materials of these visual cultures within the domestic scale of *home* drawing on the work of Bourdieu (1979), Appadurai (1997), and Miller (1998). In this geographical context, the definition of visual culture is further problematised in that visual cultures are not just flat planes of paint or print, but cross-over into electronic media, and objects which are normally considered within theories of consumption and material culture (Mirzeoff 1998; Holt and Barlow 2000). In all cases, specific objects garner meaning through their presence in people's lives. Materials are not separate from the political, economic, and social structures of society but help to constitute these material realities. In the thesis, I explore objects as expressions of material visual cultures in the home and the ways in which individuals use them to *fix* and *negotiate* residence in Britain. There is a politics to the collection and display of these objects which can be interpreted as a visual grammar, as well as allowing a "highly individualised presencing" through their being. The active appropriation of cultural objects are considered by McCannell in the post-modern sense of identity-making (MacCannell 1992).

Lastly, there is the materiality of nature as it is experienced by the South Asian diaspora. Nature is defined in this thesis as the *organic textures* that are experienced as part of *being* in the everyday world of particular places. Embodied experiences of nature are used to complement the idealisations of landscape. Over the last two decades, geographers have given little attention to the materiality of nature – the sights and sounds, smells, tastes and textures which constitute human experience with the world. Yet, it is arguable that these experiences contribute powerfully to a sense of identification, especially in memory. The experience of nature is largely an unselfconscious experience of *being* or *dwelling* in a particular place. Geographically, dwelling is considered as a space of being which is simultaneously rooted and transient. It operates in relation to a sense of self in the environment. The multi-sensory nature of these connections are also considered important geographical cultures of *being* (Urry 1990; Macnaghten and Urry 1998). I have developed a focus on the materialist expression of nature because this ensures a grounding of cultural theory and an understanding of iconographies as expressed in material relations. It is necessary to reaffirm "an absolute founding presumption of materialism: namely that the natural world exists whether anyone signifies it or not" (Williams 1979a, p.167-8). Daniels (1989) identified the neglected ecological dimension in a Marxist materialist approach through which nature contributes to cultural process alongside material relations. I shall pursue the question of cultures of nature for the South Asian diaspora through the thesis.

In this chapter, the literatures examined include work on identity issues in the context of landscapes, race and gender; visual cultures and their cultural positioning in identity practices; ecological connections through migration; and visual cultures in the home. The chapter is divided into three main sections. In **Part One,** I shall examine landscape and identity, review the development of landscape studies, and seek to recover work on vernacular landscapes which has significance for understanding certain kinds of memories in the context of migration. This will be followed by **Part Two,** in which I consider the importance of using cultural materials as a prism for the refraction of dialogues on race, identity and geographical positioning. Theories of race, identity, and exclusion are considered in relation to 'Englishness'. Landscape iconography is considered in relation to gender and race through the work of feminist geographers. In **Part Three** I will outline the relationship between memory and migration and explain the way that I have positioned memory in the thesis as a source for the recovery of diasporic migration history. I will also consider the relationship between memory and materials of culture as they connect with racial identity.

PART ONE – Landscape, Nature and Race

2.2 Landscape and identity

Landscape and its importance in the study of culture was first recognised in work by geographers of the Berkeley school, under the leadership of Carl Sauer (Sauer 1925; Sauer 1956). The first to coin the term 'cultural landscape', Sauer recognised within the cultural landscapes of the different regions of the USA, an expressive and dynamic force as different cultural groups inscribed themselves on the land. The Berkeley School of cultural geography adopted an historical and anthropological approach to land-people relations (Sauer 1925; 1956). Although the work of Sauer and his students has been subject to a powerful critique from more theoretically-orientated cultural geographers (Duncan 1982; Jackson 1988), the cultural landscape approach will be of some relevance to the empirical work discussed in my thesis. The Berkeley school did engage with the material presence of landforms, water, plants and artefacts, and the patterns of associations found in particular places and regions.

Historical geography rather than cultural anthropology provided the inspiration for the 'geographical imagination' (Prince, 1961) brought to bear on landscape interpretation in the UK. The seminal papers by David Lowenthal and Hugh Prince (1964; 1965) suggested, for the first time, that landscapes in their materiality and their representation were a coded visual language inscribed with cultural values and expressive of a dominant cultural identity. 'Englishness' was inscribed in the landscapes of England, from the pastoral bucolic world of the Costwold Hills to the wilderness of the high moors. Lowenthal and Prince were clearly the first geographers to recognise and identify the significance of 'genius loci' – the unique sense of place which imbues English landscapes with cultural value.

Yi Fu Tuan insists on the inclusion of human values and emotions in relation to landscape and its meanings, describing the relevance of landscape as being part of a universal desire for an "ideal and humane habitat...Such a habitat must be able to support a livelihood and yet cater to our moral and aesthetic nature. Landscape allows and even encourages us to dream." (Tuan 1979) Humanist writings include a focus on the individual's emotional relationship with the landscape which is sometimes highly localised. This is an important consideration in the study of diasporic groups, as these groups have been forging new relations with new territories which are based in non-home spaces. This de-centring effect of displacement is a constant; yet within the Humanist theorisation there is no problematising of an individual's ownership of the localised place, or territory of home. Instead, there is an assumption of a universal experience of "home", of space and time. Post colonial writers have agreed that all of these three have been disrupted for post colonial peoples.

The concept of a sense of place became a fertile means of bringing a philosophical perspective to landscape and place studies in the 1970s. In particular, through the work of humanistic geographers such as Yi Fu Tuan and Anne Buttimer (1993), 'place' became linked to identity. Drawing on the work of Heidegger (1969; 1971), it was possible to argue that *dwelling* centres all understandings and relationships between identity and place. The concept of *dwelling* is fundamental to Buttimer's explanation of the humanistic approach to geographical knowledge. These human-centred geographies have been projects of re-inscribing emotion, experience, contact and multi-sensory nature of the phenomenon of being and existing in place, into geographical approaches to the study of place. Tuan (1976) was able to argue that places are centres of meaning constructed through experience, carved out from boundless, formless space through everyday life. The concept of meaningfulness provided the basis for Edward Relph's (1976) influential book *Place and Placelessness* which schematised place belonging along a continuum from existential alienation to total, unselfconscious belonging: 'concern with the entire range of experiences through which we know and make places' (Relph 1976, p.6).

The work of humanistic geographers, created a conceptual bridge from the largely a-theoretical work of the cultural landscape approach to the theoretically sophisticated work of cultural geographers on landscape and place which began to dominate discussions during the latter part of the 1980s. In landscape terms, for example, two collections of essays published around the turn of the 1980s (Meinig 1979; Gold and Burgess 1982) laid the ground for the rapid growth of interest in representational practices through which specific landscapes acquired meaning and value.

A fundamental weakness of the humanistic approach, however, was that *being* in places and landscape was postulated in such a way that the *human* was an all-encompassing, singular, universal experience. There was no conception of any politics of positioning within the landscape due to either race, gender, or class. The strongest differentiation made in the literature followed Relph's classification of place experience on the basis of a phenomenological positioning as either 'insider' or 'outsider'. The fundamentally a-political nature of this work meant it was highly vulnerable to critique from radical geographers such as Gregory (1981) and Cosgrove (1979; 1984) as I shall go on to show. But I believe some useful concepts about the nature of belonging, about the importance of the vernacular, about the sensory textures of environmental encounters were discarded in the critical attack on humanistic approaches. It is evident for example, that alongside work which idealised the human spirit, others were addressing questions of material links between human agency and ecology. See for example (Ley and Samuels 1978; Samuels 1979). The valued environments of the everyday are significant in their non-alienation (Gold and Burgess 1982). The materiality of these intimate ecologies may be understood as common ground for local, political action (Mabey 1980). Before I consider these in more detail, I want to consider the iconographic power of landscapes in the cultural materialist tradition of geography.

The introduction of a critical perspective to landscape studies owed much to the work of historical geographers, notably Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels, culminating in their influential book *The Iconography of Landscape*. Cosgrove and Daniels (1988) state that

> "a landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolising surroundings. This is not to say that they are immaterial. They may be represented in a variety of materials and on many surfaces – in paint on canvas, in writing on paper, in earth, stone, water and vegetation on the ground." Cosgrove and Daniels (1988, p.17)

The iconography of landscape is the understanding of the landscape as text which embodies within it patterns of power, domination and hegemony (Crang 1997). The concept of iconography originates in the reading of visual art through the deconstruction of the symbols, and initiated in the writings of Ernst Cassirer and Eric Panofsky (Cassirer 1946; Panofsky 1939;1970; Edgerton 1975). The theories of iconology proposed the metaphorical nature of images in painting which secreted symbolic meanings. Landscape iconography is the development of the theorisation of visual culture of landscape representation revealing political and national iconographies which inform cultural practice.

In his individual work Cosgrove (1984) takes a Marxist analysis of the role of capitalism in its direct cultivation of landscape discourse as a means of dominating and consolidating power relations in society. Historical materialism allows for the re-contextualisation of landscape perspective and situates the commodification of land and art as the developments in other fields of trade. For example,

> "the mathematics and geometry associated with perspective were directly relevant to the economic life of the Italian merchant cities of the Renaissance, to trading and capitalist finance, to agriculture and the land market, to navigation and warfare" (Cosgrove 1984, p.50).

The concept of landscape, Cosgrove argues, is 'a way of seeing' – a concept taken from Berger's (1972) work – in which the viewer becomes a mobile subjective force, and the observed is immobilised subjugated object. This has been considered as a "masculinist gaze" by Rose (1993), or as the gaze of a powerful, mobile, male capitalist, who commands ownership of the scene before him (Cosgrove 1984). This landscape perspective has been traced by Cosgrove to 15th Century Flanders, a period where Europeans were considered to be preoccupied with the visual, for visual perspective was the key to consolidating capitalistic enterprise (Berger 1972). Appropriation becomes possible through objectification of the landscape. Perspective freezes a scene from history for the owner of the view, "a static image for appreciation or better appropriation" (Cosgrove 1984, p.26). Collective human experience is marginal to the individualism of this capitalistic occularity. Thus, economic materialism places landscape iconography at the heart of the capitalist elite, who celebrate individualism and whose dominant ideology is framed within the landscape tradition. This visual grammar of landscape is central to understanding the positioning of landscape as a means of visualising national citizenship and inclusion as it exists as in cultural dialogues of identification.

Cultural materialists have ensured that social class has a significant place within research on the cultures of landscape, national identity, and heritage. However, political economic analysis is centred on historical and elite cultures, and little attention has been paid to popular texts (Hebdidge 1988) and their contribution to discourses of national identity. In the age of mass communications and global "ethnoscapes" (Appadurai 1997) the dynamics between the elite exclusionary stories and popular imagination are a fertile area of enquiry. If culture is "a record of our reactions, in thought and feeling, to the changed conditions of our common life" (Williams 1958, p.285) the values imbued within cultural forms should tell us much about the tensions between elite and popular versions of national cultures. Marxist analysis uncovers land relations that are obscured by a naturalising aesthetic of a 'green England', exposing a class-based and selective story of Englishness in cultural forms. Landscape becomes the site of a stabilising sanctuary for an economic elite in periods of shifting social relations. These cultural forms are part of the broader fabric of history and heritage within Britain. Heritage and its narration of national culture and memory are considered by cultural historians such as Hewison (1987) and Wright (1991), as consolidating an elite and politically conservative vision. Cultural difference between classes has always been central to the debates on heritage, national citizenship and moral geographies of Englishness (Matless 1997; Matless 1998).

The work of Stephen Daniels (1989; 1993) has been especially influential in deconstructing landscape in cultural discourses of national identity. Daniel's contextualising of the production and consumption of landscape paintings unravels multifarious historical narratives and meanings. Landscape paintings and representations have a deeply political relationship to national identity. These identities are defined by "stories of golden ages, enduring traditions, heroic deeds and dramatic destinies located in ancient or promised home-lands with hallowed sites and scenery" (Daniels 1993, p.8).

In Daniel's "*Fields of Vision*"(1993), the iconography of landscapes is central to the framing of nation and national identity. Positioning landscape iconography in an exclusionary discourse of nation is based on the figuring of the moral citizen, as well as a state identity.

> "Imperial nationalists, almost by definition, have been intent to annex the home-lands of others in their identity myths. They have projected on these lands and their inhabitants pictorial codes expressing both an affinity with the colonising country and an estrangement from it" (Daniels 1993, p.5)

Following this reasoning, it may be argued that the position of post-colonial South Asians has always been disfigured from a wholly inclusionary national project into a complexed positioning as "in-between" citizenship of an Imperial domain/Empire at the same time as being a citizen.

National identity is always consciously characterised by both a historical and geographical heritage (A.D. Smith 1986, quoted in Daniels 1993) This is a symbolic activation of time and space, activating imaginations, mobilising emotions and peoples under the banner of nation. Within this process, visual icons of landscape emerge as signifiers to this communal relationship, as

> "exemplars of moral order and aesthetic harmony ...There is seldom a secure or enduring consensus as to which, or rather whose, legends and landscapes epitomise the nation. ...The very process of exclusion is integral to the nationalist enterprise." (Daniels 1993, p.5).

National identities articulated in singular or limited discourses are unrepresentative, and are constructed out of exclusion, annexing and limiting historical narratives. Excluded peoples therefore have other stories to tell. Some of them are offered as a resistance to the dominant, some as an alternative nationalist story. As Daniels and other members of the Nottingham School of landscape studies argue, interrogation of visual media can offer an understanding of "the fluency of landscape, not its fixity, its poetics as well as its politics. An apparently simple picture of a country scene may yield many fields of vision" (Daniels 1993, p.8).

2.3 Occluded fields of vision

The cultural materialist's approach to landscape iconography, has emphasised art and elite representations. The 'fields of vision' the ordinary, vernacular landscape – the everyday nature which surrounds and embeds social life have been neglected. To recover the significance of these unremarked and unremarkable landscapes, it is necessary to return to the work of earlier cultural geographers and local historians. The writings of work of J.B. Jackson (1979), Donald Meinig (1979a; 1979b) and others reflect interest in the meanings of the vernacular, local, lived contemporary landscapes. The textures of everyday landscapes are an important feature for research that values the grounding of identity politics in the local environment, although writers vary in their political engagement. A significant British contributor is local historian W.G. Hoskins (Hoskins 1955) who wrote an antithesis to the valuing of elite country estates as the representation of history and national culture. Hoskin's project was a series of excavations of a national past, represented in the vernacular *texture*s of day-to-day experience of local landscapes. He argues "(t)he English landscape itself, to those who know how to read it right, is the richest historical record we possess."(1955, p.14) In the U.S., J.B. Jackson stands on a par with Hoskins. In an insightful essay comparing their work, Meinig (1979), describes these two pioneers as seeking "the logic that lies behind the beautiful whole" (p233). Jackson and Hoskins are representative of two opposing attitudes to modernity. The vernacular landscapes of the hedgerow, the lane line of trees, are for Hoskins the *texture*s which reveal the whole. It is a rural whole, for Hoskins prefers the *texture*s of organic land-and-people relations, considering modernity as "acid" (Matless 1998). The corrosive power of modernity's staining corrupts the cultural *texture* of Englishness in Hoskins vision of the English landscape. There is a call for the preservation of certain *texture*s as well as a way of seeing the land in the work of Hoskins – a celebration of the pastoral from below.

Jackson however locates himself in the modern – "doing fieldwork from a car, truck, plane, and motorcycle"(Meinig 1979, p.234), embracing developments in US landscapes and looking to the future. Jackson was eager for a continuation of the modern, materialist aesthetic that American society represented, seeing it as a creation of continued cultural interaction within an organic process, as opposed to being evidence of a 'corrosive' modernity. J.B. Jackson was, however, fascinated by the working class because of their positioning; in-between the culture of small towns and remnant, vernacular cultures, and historic or futuristic landscapes of the cities. Hoskins (1955), advocated a moral and intellectual requirement from those engaging with the landscape, not only from scholars but those pursuing leisure and local interest. His vernacular had a peculiarly English, middle-class sensibility of reverence for historical time and this meant, to some extent, an abandonment not only of 20th century landscapes, but also the value of the people who are currently shaping it. J.B. Jackson much more readily centres his work on the active factors in the landscape and focuses on the cultures of the living. Jackson is concerned with peoples' way of being and living in their landscapes whereas Hoskins is unravelling the aesthetics in the landscape text.

When reviewing this body of work, it is clear that there is a separation in the meaning of vernacular and the idea of "the common", both of which can be set off against elite aesthetics and values. This separation is made apparent in the definition of 'vernacular' that Hoskins employs: vernacular is ordinariness located in a distant romantic past, preserved through the particular middle-class sensibility. Jackson, in contrast, sees the vernacular in a manner sympathetic to Carl Sauer as an organic relationship. Even modern settlements demonstrate this vernacular wholeness as described below.

> "As a man-made environment every city has three functions to fulfil: it must be a just and efficient institution; it must be a biologically wholesome habitat; and it must be a continually satisfying aesthetic-sensory experience." (Jackson 1979, p.10).

This is an aesthetic-sensory experience which, in US terms, is able to embrace the commercialisations of landscapes. In the spirit of Lowenthal's (Lowenthal 1968) interpretation of the cultural dynamics shaping the American Scene, Lewis (1979) investigates the vernacular through the texts of the everyday, and the trade journals which inform commercial vernacular design

> "nestled among the esoteria. There is remarkably candid advice on restaurant design that has been road tested to catch the travellers eye; outdoor signs and landscaping formulas that are based on cool, even chilly appraisals of American popular taste, a matter that lies at the very roots of culture" (Lewis 1979, p.20).

Lewis treats the landscape as a cultural record; culture does not operate on it, but is symbiotically connected to material and psychological processes. While the emphasis on the contemporary, the ordinary, the everyday landscape is very welcome, the work reviewed above ignores issues of cultural fragmentation and power relations. In the case of North America, for example, the cultures of Native Americans (Merchant 1992; Merchant 1993), or Africans are discordant in an organic cohesion. Implied in the land-people approach, their presence is contradictory to the humanistic understanding of a community or unified social and cultural processes. An understanding of historical power relations would expose the fracturing and incoherent nature of class relations, and their effect on uneven human control on shaping the land, and shaping the dominant culture in a region. Social exclusion was not considered as a vital factor in understanding parallel cultures which interact with the landscape over the same period. Culture is conceptualised as singular and whole: a democratic expression of social values and relations, it leads to an idealised vision of social hierarchies and enfranchised citizens (Crang 1997).

Embracing the values of Jackson and Hoskins for vernacular landscapes would expand the field of enquiry from an assessment of elite landscapes of national cultures in landscape paintings and high art, to a more democratic version of national cultures. Furthermore, landscapes of elite and vernacular explored through a cultural materialist approach could contextualise diasporic environment/land relations in a more comprehensive way. Understanding tropes of elite and vernacular "ways of seeing", could enable the exploration of the particular positionality of diasporic groups in the English landscape. It would allow for the possibility of *placing*, not just against elite national cultures as Julian Agyeman (1990; 1991) and Ingrid Pollard (1984; see also Kinsman 1995) have done, but also in context of the material and aesthetic environments of "in-between" landscapes of urban design, local ecology and regional iconographies.

2.4 Nature, aesthetics and Common Ground.

In the 20th century groups, such as Common Ground[3] are evidence of a new type of aesthetic appreciation of nature, within the notions of ecology. Fuller (1988) argues that the vernacular base to such voluntary groups ensures an inclusive appreciation of aesthetic beauty in nature, as opposed to the exclusionary framework of the 19th century theological naturalism of John Ruskin. Within the environmental movements the "common" is regularly overlooked in favour of the rare and the exotic (Mabey 1980). In understanding the relationship between the common, aesthetics and nature, I would consider the work of Common Ground's 'Parish Maps project' to be unique. The project's aim was to encourage people to produce community maps of their local place. The maps produced were a collection of tapestries, collages, in a variety of textures – stitched, painted, sculpted, and included collages of organic material such as leaves, twigs and flowers. The project also invited artists to produce their versions of local maps. The aim was not of making an art object out of place, but re-contextualising the forms found in their local parish and representing them within a map form. These allowed for a celebration of the vernacular *texture*s of local place, but *placing* them as central to the meanings that make the local valuable, and the common as a site of reverence. This project was effective in exercising the contradictory politics of place, with the emphasis on the local. This production process was a democratisation of the mapping process thereby usurping the power structures that are perpetuated in the formal mapping processes (Harley 1992). The emphasis was one of celebrating local distinctiveness and valuing the different depictions of the parish. The Parish Map project was an exercise in "*placing* the aesthetic" (Crouch and Matless 1996) whereby aesthetic questions were put central to the debate on environmentalism. The project was emancipatory to a local vernacular in that it offered the makers of these maps a possibility of their own vocabulary, iconography and expression of their connectedness to the environment and place of 'belonging'. The focus was on collective imagination as opposed to elite iconographic practices. The Parish maps can be considered to be alternative to national iconographies of landscape and expressive of local cultures of the visual, as well as local cultures of ecology and environment.

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[3] Common Ground is an environmental organisation, founded by Sue Clifford in 1983, it is committed to promoting voluntary action to preserve local, common, cultural heritage.

The different means of connection to landscape embodied in the Parish Maps project is important in its expression of aesthetics and environmental value and its politics of the local. In chapter 6 of the thesis, I will present the products of a 'mapping exercise' conducted as part of a collaboration with landscape artist Melanie Carvalho. These "landscapes of home" are a means to investigate the extent to which national iconographies and local cultures are pivotal to the positioning of diasporic subjects. The mapping of the ecological and iconographical *textures of identification* also allow both elite and vernacular connections to landscape to be expressed in this grounded methodological approach in the paintings discussed in Chapter 6. The iconographical *textures* are engaged with on several geographic scales. The local, national and global senses of place figure alongside identification on the basis of gender, and race.

The research for the thesis has secured landscape as a productive paradigm of investigating diasporic relations with environmental iconographies. This strategy attempts to continue the productive dialogue between historical materialism and humanism begun in Kobayashi and Mackenzie (1989). This is different to the engagements of the 1980s which failed to engage with any radical ecological thinking, and thereby failed to connect feelings of 'belonging' to nature with the economic, socio-political, and environmental structures which shape contemporary society. In the early 1990s, Harvey (1994) called for a re-inscribing of economic materialism with environmental sensitivity, centring on an understanding of a dialectical relationship between environment, capital and the human condition. Harvey's manifesto does not concern itself with *being* within environment but since then, 'cultures of nature' have made a significant impact on geographical thought (see Wilson, 1994; Coole et al. 2000). Within the thesis, race and gender are the basis for understanding South Asian women's identification with landscape, environment, and ecology within a political framework of post-colonial migration history. These identifications are considered within the context of understanding *human-land* relations informed by an American tradition of environmental history (Merchant 1992; Merchant 1993; Worster, 1977). Identifications with nature are interrogated by figuring visual culture as a prism through which these socio-political relationships are refracted.

PART TWO – Culture as a prism for identification

In Part Two, I will trace cultural theory as it deals with race and identity. The importance of culture as a means to study the positioning and practices of diasporic groups is dealt with first through looking at cultural materialism and its roots in Raymond Williams' work. This has influenced schools of thought including the Birmingham School of Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS). Stuart Hall's work has been critical to contemporary research on the identity politics in Britain. This is a move away from essentialised identities to an understanding of the dialectical relationship between the racialised body and the legacy of colonialism. Critically, Hall (1990, 1992, 2000) analyses the processes by which issues of representation, signifying practices, and relational identity leading to cultural formations. Paul Gilroy's work on the mutual exclusivity of Black and English (Gilroy 1987; Gilroy 1993a), progresses examination of racism in modern cultural dialogues on Britishness and national identity. Theories of post-colonial identity are examined in the thesis, through theories of post-colonial and diaspora identity. I have examined these theorisations to understand South Asian identity, geographical positioning and the global connections that are refracted through their cultural practices in Britain. This contextualisation allows for an understanding of Asian women in Britain's identity politics and practices. This theoretical review sets out the debates within which I will ground my own theoretical exploration.

2.5 Culture, identity and 'positioning'

Culture is considered as a form of signification and, as such, can be interrogated as a store of important cultural co-ordinates of the imaginative geographies and material routes of identification, for the diaspora. The process of identification is founded in particular landscapes and environments experienced through biographical migration flows. The interrogation of cultural forms therefore offers the possibility of *placing* and understanding geographical connections that relate to the negotiation of modern diasporic identities. Within citizenship debates, racial identity becomes the focus of importance over culture (Dyer 1997), residency, and history. Identity has become the site of much research on what constitutes a national citizen. A good example of this in relations to questions of culture were the papers presented at the Tate Britain in 2001[4]. Colonialism and Imperialism have their legacy in the creation of these new ethnicities (Hall 1990), new black public spheres (Gilroy 1993b), and in-between spaces of identity (Bhabha 1994), that define black positionality in a post-colonial period. The study of culture is therefore linked to regimes of identification rooted in colonial and imperial subjugation of colonial peoples and places.

Within this thesis, culture has been examined as a means of formation of subjectivity, identity and politics. Regimes of representation (Hall 1992) in relation to black[5] identity-politics have a constitutive role in contemporary cultures: they do not simply reflect the world, but are a force in the creation of it. Cultural practitioners offer the most pertinent interventions to cultural theory and the body politics of black positionality within the space of Britain. Their contribution derives from the tensions that exist within art history and heritage discourses on the contribution that black practitioners can make, particularly to cultural heritage and expressive cultures of the nation (hooks 1994; Kinsman 1995).Their cultural products have been signified, defined and subjugated through prejudicial attitudes which frame their work as representative of an essential voice of the "other" as opposed to the definition of 'contemporary British art practitioner'. Ingrid Pollard (1989) effectively intervenes in this cultural dialogue through her own representations of black presence in the English countryside. Through this work Pollard challenges exclusionary access to the countryside, ownership, and appropriation of public space. This is extended further by her positioning as a black artist who defies being essentialised as an "other", discordant figure. She communicates her politics through a Romantic sensibility in the tradition of English poetry. Pollard's work is just one example of the way that black artists have taken up the incongruity of the Black English subject positioned as discordant within the icon of English national identity – the rural idyll (Kinsman 1995).

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[4] "Picturing Whiteness" (a conference on the chromatics of visual culture), chaired by Richard Dyer at the Tate Gallery, Tate Britain, London. 27th January 2001

[5] Black is my definition of the non-white population. It encompasses the politics of the 1970s and 1980s where oppressed people defined themselves as black as a political expression of the experience of racism in Britain. For me definitions of

Stuart Hall (1990) argues that *positioning* is key to understanding diasporic identities. 'Positioning' considers the black subject in the context of geography and history: it is a time-space identification. By using 'diaspora', the temporality of identity is not fixed in the past but is also about the movement and fluid networks in the present. As they are linked into history and social processes, cultural identities are being transformed and mutated. Hall calls for the understanding cultural identity incorporating a recognition of the power relations within which these transformations are taking place. Hall argues that the formation of cultural identities are temporally complexed and describes this below:

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race, religion, skin colour (chromatics) are secondary to the political definition of racially oppressed minorities in Britain. Black incorporates the way in which racism focuses on the non-white, creating this as the "other". This term has been productive and definitive in the politics of anti-racism, and does not get diluted by the paternalism of multiculturalism, it remains expressive of the nature of racial prejudice. I do not however subscribe to an essential definition of black or white subjectivity, these are complex and varied. Black is simply a definition used as an expression of a political position on racial politics.

> It [identity] is not a fixed origin to which we can make some final and absolute Return. Of course it is not a phantasm either. It is something – not a mere trick of the imagination. It has histories – and histories have their real, material, and symbolic effects. The past continues to speak to us. But it no longer addresses us as a simple factual 'past', since our relation to it, like a child's relation to the mother, is always-already 'after the break'. It is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. Cultural identities are the points of identification or suture, which are made within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a positioning. Hence there is always a politics of identity, a politics of position, which has no absolute guarantee in an unproblematic, transcendental 'law of origin'. (Hall, 1990, p.226)

In this quotation, Hall outlines most of the considerations that I seek to explore in the thesis. The concept of "return" is live within all diasporic narratives but most dominant in situations where exclusion from new national cultures is being faced. The desire to operate within paradigms of nationhood, "home", return, and belonging are exposed as retrospective desire. Time and space have been disrupted by the positioning of the diasporic subject as being pre-modern, but at the same time as being post-national (Clifford 1997). The experience of the diasporic subject could be considered to be beyond paradigmatic structures of social, political, and economic definitions of citizenship, national identity, and race. But they are bounded into these structures through settlement, and are marginalised by them. There is a disjuncture between the evolving consciousness of being a post-national; operating beyond notions of fixed territory, and the experience of being defined within rules of legal citizenships, and national borders. This sets up diasporic subjectivity as spatially and temporally in dynamic flux. This dynamism is in opposition to classic 'fixing' of racial identity in racial theory, dominant in the colonial period.

It is important for cultural theorists to move beyond essential understandings of race which have emerged through colonisation, on both sides of colonial subjugation. The work of Frantz Fanon (1961; 1967) considers the psychological and sociological consequences of colonisation on the colonised. Fanon recognised the deliberate alienation and suppression of self-conscious autonomy, that the scientific, cultural and political facets of the racialised colonial project achieved. This suppression was through a subjugation of physical, intellectual and psychological processes of positive identification and expression. As a consequence of his theorisation, Fanon advocated the celebration of the essence of "other" identity, as a positive enfranchising and liberating sense of being. This was a political project of Blackness. Fanon fought was against Black disenfranchisement from a universal human consciousness. Imperialism had ensured a rupture in the Black subjective and expressive consciousness. As Spivak (1987) has famously pointed out, the voice of the colonised Indian has been ruptured so that now Indians can only speak of their experience in the voice of the colonised. The inscriptions of imperialism have scarred the very processes of expressive cultures because of this legacy and regimes of subjugation. Thus, expressive cultures and their 'producers' are locked into a difficult position of being defined outside of a 'modern' culture, and being defined in relation to racial identity. It is important, therefore, for cultural theorists to dismantle the power-knowledge dynamics set up by imperialism, precisely because it is reliant on a racialised identification.

The post-colonial theorisation of identity centres on disrupting the history of modernity and the moral cultures set up by Modernism. Edward Said's (1978; 1993) thesis on *Orientalism* is the beginning of the body of work that is known as Postcolonialism. This body of work figures identity, knowledge and representation as being bound up with colonial regimes of power and exploitation. These regimes of colonialism justified slavery. They shaped the nature of knowledge and its use in the disempowerment and subjugation not only of colonial bodies, but also of the development of consciousness, and creativity. These fix "other" subjectivities, bodies and cultural expression as something beyond (usually before) modernity, and spatially outside of the occidental space of Western Europe and North America. A consciousness of what it is to be a modern subject has evolved with these prejudicial histories and scientific discourses embedded within them. The influence of modern consciousness has extended beyond definitions of peoples, but its "regime of truth" (Bhabha 1994 p.67) has ensured a "process of subjectification". This is a process whereby colonial discourse has been able to draw out colonial subjects from modern consciousness, to a position of fixity, in a pre-modern past. This regime of subjugation has been identified by theorists in their deconstruction of cultural products and practices, including literature, (Bill Ashcroft, Griffiths et al. 1989; Said 1978; 1993; Williams 1973); fine art (Araeen 1987; Araeen 1991; Araeen 1992). This racialised other therefore is fixed within and by culture, this is through body and intellect.

The post-modern theorisation of subjectivity allows for a variety of identifications to exist alongside a shifting self conscious identity. This account accurately describes the experience of many post-colonial peoples and has been taken up as a point from which to critique modernity and it's fissured claims which have framed and informed questions of national identity, social formations and cultural expression (Hall and du Gay 1996). I believe, however, that a postmodern theorisation of race is also disempowering. An acknowledgement of incoherency in the experience of individual subjectivity, the freedom from essential identities and partial histories offers only a temporary consolation from a definition of identity as essential and bounded. National identity is a means by which culture is defined through these bounded, essentialised notions of *being. Being* is linked to *belonging* in notions of citizenship. The position of Black identity in relation to belonging in England often results in a mutual exclusivity between being Black, and being English. Discourses of national identity in Britain are effectively cultures of *displacing* Black subjectivity.

2.6 Englishness as an exclusionary culture of *dis*placing

For diasporic groups, there is an intrinsic duplicity in belonging to a utopian, sometimes memorialised home country (for the purposes of identity and identification) and not belonging due to a disenfranchisement from territory – both from the "homeland" and the dominant national discourse of Englishness. Within Britain, there is a significant *placing* of Englishness in the rural which can be traced from the 1880s (Howkins 1986). The consolidation of a rural pastoral both in high art and popular texts is a reaction to the landscape of the industry of the North, and the alienation of the city (Howkins 1986; Weiner 1981). This vision of the pastoral centred on Southern English landscapes, classless countryfolk, and symbolised an "olde England", with genetic purity and morality. The "English" were set against the urban working classes who were in a site of moral and genetic defilement because of the racial mix living within the cities, and modern industrial production methods which were considered "artificial" and de-humanising.

Wiener (1981) and Howkins (1986; 1987) argue that the cultural response reflected a crisis of Empire as well as the shift of emphasis from the Northern manufacturing industries which were at the heart of Empire's project, to the creation of a commercial economy relying less on manufacturing and more on banking and insurance. This was a decay in the heart of Empire and thus in the national spirit which was exposed to degeneration. The country became all that the city was not – a psychic balance and refuge (Williams 1973, p.51). This ruralist strain in English culture is as old as tradition itself. It is a recurring envisioning of the heart of Englishness.

The envisioning of Englishness – morally, biologically, culturally and textually continues as an exclusionary discourse of cultural identity. Discourses of Arcadia, are the site of protected indigenous culture, roots and biological store of authenticity is part of a longer historical tradition in England and other European states (Schama 1996). Diasporic groups exist in England as a legacy of Empire. Their stay in Britain, although it has been traced back to medieval times, became most visible in the 1950s for African-Caribbeans, and the 1970s for South Asians (Hesse 1993). Part of their engagement with the environment of England is the confrontation with the rural pastoral aesthetic. The "newness" of their presence, their urban settlement and the blackness of their skin is discordant with the Englishness of the pastoral scene (Kinsman 1995; Pollard 1989). This can also be translated as an exclusionary moral geography encoded in the English countryside, based on class and race. English landscape iconography perpetuates marginalisation on various spatial scales, including national discourses of identity and at the regional-scale, ecological discourses of non-native species.[6]

The environmental discourses of native species and foreign bodies extend into the racial prejudice that dictates the feelings of ownership and belonging that non-white people are forced to negotiate (Agyeman 1990; 1991). Vital cultural relationships are lost when feelings of exclusion from the countryside, green spaces and nature prevail. For the Black British community, this represents a lack of possibility to develop an organic culture of environment, ecology and nature in the U.K.. Julian Agyeman and the Black Environment Network[7] are key players engaging with issues of environmental and racial justice in Britain. Black aesthetics, environmentalism and the countryside are considered by Agyeman with regard to environmentalism and local environmental meanings and aesthetics.

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[6] See Buchan, U. (1998). "*Blending in*". The Garden: journal of the Royal Horticultural Society. **123:** p596-598. for contemporary debates on non-native species in the English landscape.

[7] The Black Environment Network is a provider of training and consultancy in the field of ethnic environmental participation, it also operates as a networking co-ordinator amongst Environmental organisations. It originated as a campaigning organisation for ethnic minority access to the countryside. A key campaigning aim was Black Environmental Justice.

> “The British Environmental movement has played a key part in propagating the myth of the countryside as the repository of the “true” national spirit. Ask a conservationist or an ecologist about the idea of adding “alien” plants and animals to our “native and natural” flora and fauna. Their response is likely to be of muted hostility” (Agyeman 1990, p.234).

This culture of the local is a sense of connectedness which Mabey (1980) celebrates as being integral to human culture. Mabey believes that there is a crucial cultural importance of the connectedness that people feel to local ecology is expressed as a connection with common species on a micro scale.

> “the field at the back, the churchyard rookery, the primrose bank along the lane. They are small links in the chain, ecologically, but the largest of all in terms of the human meanings that attach to them, and they cannot easily be replaced or interchanged.” (Mabey 1980, p.41)

Mabey’s project is conservation of local species; as opposed to an emphasis on the rare, and exotic on the global scale. The loss of common species on a local scale have a deeper meaning and therefore need to be preserved, the familiar scenes with thier

> “uniquely private network of meaning and association that attaches to them . . .the day-to day intimacy and associations, the neighbourliness, that builds up around a plant or animal that has lived on close terms with a human community” (Mabey 1980, p.37)

Running through the whole of Mabey’s argument is the identification of the relationship of local environments to human well-being. The creation of a sense of belonging and dwelling are central. Local aesthetics are essential to feelings of belonging and the place of local *texture*s in the forms of specific trees, hedgerows as well as the specific local flora and fauna.

For Diasporic groups, I believe that the construction of landscapes of identification depend on national iconographies of state and the *texture*s of the local and intimate environments left behind. These include the plant species, and the particular aesthetics of the biome of residence. This is a vernacular thread in the construction of new national cultures, after migration, layered upon the bigger discourses of nation and iconography of the nation. The *placing* of these *texture*s in the geographical imagination and memory of diasporic groups can contribute greatly to understanding the process of re-territorialisation. Engagement with domestic cultures that resonate with or express these ecological and iconographical *textures of identification* are not only a means of *placing* diasporic groups, but also illustrate the continuing influence of landscape and ecology on identification with places of belonging. However, Mabey's particular environmentalism and progressive preservation is accessible only to those with an "attachment" to the local. For diasporic groups this attachment is a problematic one. In the context of belonging to the landscapes of Englishness, diasporic connecting with local environment is made difficult on the national scale as well as the local scale.

Connectedness to local environments is problematic for diasporic groups where cultural exclusion is an exclusion from the right to value, and develop an environmental heritage located in Britain. Migration of both natural species and foreign bodies is discordant with local, ecological environmentalism. For diasporic groups however, experiences of nature are equally significant in their identification with a national identity, as are relationships with cultures of national landscapes and stories of heritage. Diasporic peoples have migrated with their own sense of local ecological relationships and values. These are set up against the cultural expressions of moral environmentalism that is exclusionary to Black migratory groups in Britain. A major part of enquiry for the thesis is the way that "local" ecologies emerge and are expressed through cultural practice as a result of experiences of resettlement, and re-rooting.

2.7 'Diaspora' as a conceptual tool

The writings of Paul Gilroy have been crucial in my own defining of post-colonial subjectivity, and my research into the expressive cultures of South Asians as a geographical and anthropological recording of their positioning, and political practices of transfiguration. Gilroy refers to understanding diasporic identity using Du Bois's concept of double-consciousness, this has resonance in processes of South Asian identification and appropriation as expressed in material cultures.

> "After the Egyptian and the Indian, the Greek and the Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is the seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second sight in this American world- a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others..." (W.E.B. Du Bois 1903)

Although there are considerable differences in the shaping of Black African subjects within Imperialist narratives, the cultural and racial defining of colonised peoples through skin colour continues to inform identity politics and prejudicial racist practices. For the South Asian population there exists a tension between a lived experience and the signification of identity that skin colour gives. A continued sense of doubleness is experienced. Double-consciousness has been a productive way for me to deconstruct the subjectivity of racial identities and to be able to relate them to the experience of physical migration from "home". The South Asian population who have migrated continue to have cultural practices that are cited as being an "authentic", cultural legacy of the "homeland".

These are expressive cultures that are traced to a sense of "Asianess", or "Indianess". Double-consciousness allows for a deeper, progressive understanding of identity politics away from these stereotyped external signifiers, and into the lived and intimate subjectivities of South Asians living in Britain. There is a continued dialogue with the home country but this remains as a dialogue as opposed to an evolution of a syncretic bond, where one is part of the other. There is a physical, economic, and political Transnationalism (Vertovec 1999) that informs cultural practices, but which do not together become evidence of a singular "Indianess" or "Asianess" that is sustained as an international syncretic bond.

Diaspora, as a conceptual tool is a productive way in which to imagine the South Asian community in Britain. It encompasses a concept of geographical positioning, and a sense of non-identity with the place of residence, but also allows for a grounded investigation in to the cultural practices within the country of residence. *Diaspora* offers a sense of multinodal connections that occur simultaneously, that are directly connected to senses of identity, belonging and home (Brah 1996 , Gilroy, 1993b).

Clifford (1997) reviews the literature on diaspora concluding that all diaspora discourse can only be coherent within the context of a utopian ideal. Narratives of loss and survival are driven by an understanding of a possibility of a non-oppressive welcoming territory, either by re-territorialising and politically challenging the current state, or by maintaining an imagined homeland. Clifford (1997) believes diaspora has shared and discrepant meanings, adjacent maps and histories. Old types of thinking or "localising strategies" may obscure as much as they reveal. They consider communities as bounded by an organic culture, by region or by centre and periphery. He concludes that -

> There are no post-colonial cultures or places; only moments, tactics, discourses. "Post-" is always shadowed by "neo-". Yet "post-colonial" does describe real, if incomplete, ruptures with past structures of domination, sites of struggle and imagined futures. Perhaps what is at stake in the historical projection of a genezia world or a black Atlantic is the "prehistory of post-colonialism. (Clifford 1997, p.277).

Clifford is describing here the conflict in temporal projections of cultures, the disruption of a cultural evolution can only be considered in light of a utopian projection, this position cannot be deemed as true in light of our cultures shifting and changing in a dynamic spatial and temporal schema of a global society. In contrast to the concept of bounded national communities, diasporas are transnational. Transnationalism is a new area of theoretical work focussing on the social and cultural impacts of transnational flows. Vertovec (1999) in his analysis of research in this field outlines the different approaches to transnational movements, peoples and the value of research in this area. Drawing on Safran (1991) Vertovec defines diasporas as a social form which draws on a "triadic relationship": i.e. where the diasporic group has a global dispersal yet a collective self-defined ethnicity; there are territorial states where such groups reside; and "homeland" states where the group or their ancestors came from (Vertovec 1999). These essentially are networks of people who form, to some extent, a self defining public sphere with geographical imaginations about the "homeland" or "utopian homeland". These networks are in the form of migration flows, or audiences for technological satellite networks, or consumers of particular goods. A group could be considered as bonded through a collective memory of heritage and national culture. The public sphere contributes to a re-positioning as well as a space for the considering of location.

This *placing* and positioning are not always in relation to material places, sometimes they incorporate utopian projections.

In my thesis I am particularly interested in focusing on women and their positioning as diasporic subjects within England, and their particular relationship with the project of sustaining, developing and inscribing cultural identity, and home building. I do not seek to essentialise their subjective positioning but am investigating this partial sense of their role within the Asian migrant community. Clifford (1997) clearly explores the effect of dispersal of communities on gender relations, and roles. He comments that women may find themselves maintaining the old way of life in the form of maintaining connections with kinship networks and socialising children in the religious and cultural traditions. This may lead to a renewal in patriarchal power systems. It is possible that "diaspora women are caught between two patriarchies" (Clifford 1997 p.259). The new patriarchies are strongly reinforced as a refuge in situations where exclusion and prejudice are in operation in the host country. Community, therefore, can be a site of support, oppression and exclusion. Gender and diaspora offers a new disruption to be considered when mapping the positioning of diasporic groups. In landscape research, the positioning of women in the discourse of landscape perspective and visual culture offers much theoretical material on the subjugation, and disempowerment of the female gaze and, thus, female relations with the material world.

2.8 Defining 'Asianess' against cultural, racial or ethnic categories.

I have chosen in this thesis to define the study group as 'South Asian'. In this section I want to discuss how I understand and use this term and make explicit some of the debates underlying the use of such descriptors. The term South Asian has been used because it is commonly used as a geographical definition of the community living in Britain. These are the particular geographical origins of the community in Britain which is dominated by the Indian-Subcontinent countries of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. Due to British colonial interest in this region these communities have subsequently had rights of citizenship and residence in the U.K..Some portion of these early migrant groups have arrived in the U.K..as a secondary point of settlement after being resident in British East Africa, South Africa and other number of smaller settlements across the globe. (These migrations are illustrated in map 4.5 in Chapter 4.) The "twice-migrants" (Bhachu 1985) from the Indian sub-continent who have arrived via East Africa feature strongly in the thesis, their definition as being South Asian has opened up questions of how to define the group researched. The 'twice-migrants' are African-Asians and thus don't fit neatly into the ethnic, racial or social categorisation that is normally used. I have decided that the term South Asian is the correct and useful term of reference for the group despite the African experience. The definition resonates with the group members themselves and has been significant in the East African groups definition of themselves whilst in East Africa. By using the term South Asian within the recruitment process it has become clear that 'Asian' and 'Asianess' are valid when researching 'twice-migrant' communities, as their 'Africaness' is an example of the heterogeneity of the South Asian community in Britain which is often considered as a singular ethnic community. South Asian as a descriptive term for this group has been productive in terms of the geographical self-identity of the group, and thus privileged as my definition of these migrants.

Despite using the term 'South Asian' I want to emphasise that I do not understand this term as describing an essential and geographically or socially bounded ethnic community. In fact the aim of the research is to elaborate on the dynamic nature of cultural identity and the way that migration ensures that it is a continuingly shifting process rather than a fixed state of being. This theoretical premise of 'Asianess' has resulted in the definition of 'Asian' within the thesis as being counter to ethnic, cultural or biological fixing of Asian subjectivity and lived experience. The aim of the research has not been to view the research group respondents through a lens of ethnicity; one that visually fixes a type and thus frames the oral testimonies of the interviewees as a means of measuring, and texturally fixing identity onto a set of bodies. Instead I consider the thesis as a political act of fracturing such methodologies which fix and define a static identity formed by a static culture, which in turn is attached to a static biological type. It is a political break away from biological and cultural essentialism. Instead 'ethnicity', 'identity' and 'race' become processes of engagement figured through cultural materials which signify geographical mobility and idealised 'landscapes of home'. The processes of 'Asian' identity are considered as the politically dynamic operation of self-definition through social, political and cultural practices within Britain. However this is not a thesis in the performance of self-definition divorced from race, class and material processes, but an interrogation of how the 'positioning' of Asian identity in Britain is figured through culture which prismatically expresses the dialectics of post-colonial race politics in Britain.

My own decision to use of the term 'South Asian' in this way is consistent with contemporary commentators who state that 'Asian' as a term has "no consistent historical or global use" (Sharma 1997, p218). Asia is a geographically vast continent encompassing numerous nation states which renders the term Asian as problematic when using it to refer to any smaller community or origins of a national grouping. This use of the term 'Asian' in the thesis is based on British use and context. The term 'Indian' has also been interchangeable with 'Asian' in some British contexts, however greater public knowledge and understanding has allowed for differentiation between 'Indian', 'Pakistani', 'Bangladeshi' and 'Sri Lankan' to be made. In the U.S.A. Asian refers particularly to South East Asian, Chinese, Korean or Japanese. Some cultural theorists such as Guyatri Spivak explain that "the name (Indian) lost specificity in the first American genocide" (Spivak 1993, p54). Erasure has made the term unstable and irrelevant to the newer post-colonial settlers from the Indian sub-continent. (The American context and use is relevant in that I have referenced theories of Black African American writers such as Toni Morrison and bell hooks, who focus on a Black experience, which is African American.) The term Indian within a British context refers pre-dominantly to those 'Hindu' migrants as opposed to 'Pakistani' who are labelled 'Muslim', these definitions are neither accurate or useful in defining this South Asian group. Modood (1992, 1997) however argues that 'ethnicity' is the most important framework needed to define minority groups. For him the Asian community is figured through religious practice and definitions such as 'Muslim', are privileged as ethnic categories over geographical definitions such as Asian, Indian and Pakistani. Modood chooses to privilege religious identity because of the oppression he believes that the Muslim groups face politically, socially and economically. Modood considers these discriminations as part of a broader analysis of the hierarchy which exists within the British South Asian community leading him to identify a 'Muslim underclass' (Modood 1992). Modood breaks down distinctions within the Asian community crudely as material and cultural differences between 'achievers' and 'believers' (Modood 1992, p43). Although belief forms the forefront of cultural oppression, and resulting material and social reality, a definition based on religion as indicating ethnicity becomes reductive despite its attempt to recognise cultural prejudice. This treats the group as having a static, bounded ethnicity which is also fixed as such by prejudicial commentators and writers. Bobby Sayyid (1997) describes the signification based on religious practice as a continued orientalist approach to defining Muslims living within Europe. Sayyid's 'Islamism' is a theorising of Muslim fundamentalist activity, based on a political self-determination based on religious belief, as being a counter-narrative to orientalism. Islamism, then becomes a "project which attempts to transform Islam from a nodal point in discourses of Muslim communities into a master signifier" (p 48). Sayyid's thesis is predominantly a counter-orientalist thesis, but does reveal that a solely ethnic definition is disingenuous to the groups experiences and practices but also instrumental in polarising the debates. As Claire Alexander (2000) also argues such ethno-religious definitions are a remaking of bounded and absolute identities.

In the research I sought a politicised identification that incorporated the South Asian group as both politically Black and culturally Asian, but not limited to these over determined accounts of ethnicity which are common place in academic writing (Sharma 1997, p3). In Sharma *et al.* music is the expressive cultural production through which a new sociology of cultural studies can be positioned. They are against the exoticisation that can occur through researching *difference.* In their work they apply a code of ethics to their research practice which is "against simplification, against anti-politics, against victimologies" (Sharma 1997, Introduction). The political definition of Black is most pertinent when dealing with a theorisation of identity that considers a political and cultural materialist account of identity. This is the position from which I identify the dynamics of cultural and political identity that are important components of expressive and lived identities. Black as a political term is one which signified the united oppressed minorities in the anti-racist movement in Britain post 1960s.

The terms Black and Asian do not have to be mutually exclusive, unless you consider American race politics where Black does mean specifically of African-Caribbean origin. This difference between American and British terminology is a symptom of the different anti-racist movements in Britain and the U.S. The anti racist movement in Britain has always been led by united Asian and African-Caribbean activists in a movement that has been dominated by the slogan "Black and White unite and fight". In the U.S. however the legacy of Martin Luther King and the 1960s civil rights movement has been dominated by the politics of Black nationalism, as described by Gilroy (1987; 1994). However cultural critics such as Tariq Madood (1994) and Stuart Hall (1995) believe that the term 'Black' in contemporary race politics holds less resonance and is in decline. There is continued discussion in contemporary literature of the value and definition of Black as a term of identity (Gilroy 1987, 1994; Alexander 1996; Sharma et al 1997), it is quite clear that it can be reductionist as it can be inclusionary, and has been a tool of oppressive discourse as well as a uniting an anti-racism based on culture and biological prejudice. The value of Black as a political term has been to position cultural theory within race politics. The subject of socio-anthropological analysis can no longer be reconstituted through cultural, religious or biological essentialisms but ensures that the politics of race are central to the analysis. A cultural vignette of an 'ethnic' community is no longer possible without an analysis of the racism experienced for the subjective identities within that community being redrawn without reference to the power of colonialist orientalism.

When dealing with expressive cultures it is important to examine them in the context of the political, social and economic relationships within which these cultures are imbedded. By using cultural materialism as an entry-point into understanding the value of expressive cultures Sharma wt al (1997) decide that is essential to continue with considering Black as a political identity, which needs re-contextualising and defining.

> "a premature closure of this debate is liable to reproduce the historical amnesia of the post-modern condition. The valency of 'Black' as a political positionality that strategically united disparate groups against increasingly organised and viscious manifestations of Euro-racism." (p7)

Within the thesis I have used Toni Morrison precisely because she locates expressive cultures within a politicised and material geography of Black identity. However whilst Morrison contributes to my understandings of culture as a metonymical and metaphorical store and expression of dialectical identity politics, Morrisons' Black identity is referring to an exclusive African-American experience. Her writing is described as "irrevocably Black". This presents a problem of the transferability of Morrisons theories on memory, race and culture to the Asian experience in the U.K.. This would result in my search for an "irrevocably Asian" writer who expounds theories of memories, race and culture. This is a not an antiessentalist position. Morrison treats the expressive culture of literature in its power to evoke and create dialogue about identities of the present being linked to a past colonialism which has ruptured a Black subjectivity through oppression and subjugation. The value of expressive cultures in resonating and opening up a dialogue which becomes dialectically positioned across spatial and temporal zones along the axis of a racialised experience is exactly what I wish to examine. Morrison theorises Blackness not as an essential experience despite her exclusive definition of Black. She offers a dialectical basis from which to view identity and within this memory and culture are fused as the space of unhindered cultural cohesion through spatial and temporal experience. This is a move away from a recording, measuring and defining cultural texts and products, instead they are considered as crucial points of dynamic dialogue within and without the community. A public sphere is also materialised amongst the members of a racialised community in relation to their geographical context. Kaur and Kalra (1997) re-examine this view of culture in their theorising of Br-Asian and Transl-Asian where Britain remains at the core of their notion of Trans-continental expressive cultural network

> " However this is not a fixed centre but one in oscillation with other centres . . .(it is an) arena of cultural flows, not entirely geographically grounded, not always nationally bounded, but constantly on the move out new spatial configurations" (Kaur and Kalra, Chapter 9, Sharma et al 1997, p224)

Within the thesis the geography of expressive cultures of British South Asians is framed using a notion of *diaspora*. Diaspora is a productive in that it offers a framework for these spatial configurations which are connected to specific points of reference within the Asian community in Britain. This is not an essential notion of 'origin' and 'home' but a way of looking at routes that are the basis of the Asians' communities' common identification. The migratory experience from the same nodal points of post-colonial South Asian migration offer a way of understanding their positionality here in Britain. The concept of 'circulation' and 'flows' may have been an alternative to viewing the group as a diaspora, however the thesis does make explicit heterogeneity and difference in the origins of the individuals included within this definition of South Asian. The theorising of identity using the concepts of 'circulation' and 'flow' does not easily allow for a set of fixed nodal points relating to colonial history and the related contemporary points of cultural intercourse. Diaspora locates specifically a framework from which I have mapped counter-origins, idealised homes and unfixed routes of cultural integrity that are beyond biological, and culturally essentialist understandings of diasporic communities.

2.9 Gender, landscape and culture.

Discordancy in different scales between the national environment, local environment, and ecological textures is a common experience for diasporic women. This raises questions of which landscapes are non-alienating environments for diasporic groups. My interest is in how senses of belonging are attained and negotiated on all these scales. The embeddedness of cultures of exclusion within national discourses ensure the possibility of a mobile, included, freely appropriating, racially and culturally essentialised body as white, and English. Such free citizenry is indeed rare. The exclusions that I want to focus on are those based on gender and race, particularly the experience of Black women and their positioning within cultures of landscape iconography and environmental textures of belonging. Within all the work on landscape and identity there has been a particularly historical focus on elite cultures.

Gillian Rose (1997), and Catherine Nash (1994; 1996; 1997) offer critiques on some of these positions on landscape and culture. Rose (1993) in particular examines the work done by cultural geographers who have theorised landscape, as part of her critique of geography as a masculinist enterprise. She argues :

> *"I argue that the structure of aesthetic masculinity which studies landscape is inherently unstable, subverted by its own desire for the pleasure that it fears." (1993, p.85).*

Rose traces the landscape tradition within geography to the project of imperial geography and its masculinist rationality. This positions the male geographer as a "master subject", claiming his knowledge as being exhaustive and universal. "The pleasure and emotive force which landscapes may provide.." (Daniels 1989, p5) according to Rose, is an ambivalent pleasure which disrupts the construction of modern masculinity as scientific, rational and distanced. The pleasure ...producing a "tense oscillation between knowledge and pleasure" (Nash 1996) Rose argues that this intellectualising of landscape is a deliberate masculinist tactic to evade the questions of pleasure and bodily experience. This is a "blind spot" in the new cultural geography. The blindness is further justified by other tactics, including that of treating the landscape as text (Barnes and Duncan 1991). Rose argues that this removes accountability and reflexivity on the part of the author. Whilst the text is being interpreted, the author is removed from social relations. It "makes him invisible, because his texts then remain part of the anonymous voice of geographical discourse" (p99). This lack of marking, specificity and disembodiment of the author are replaced with a distance and authority. The process, Rose argues is one of normalising the masculine gaze as well as obscuring the phallocentricism of the geographical gaze.

Nash (1996), however, argues for a move away from fixity of definitions of gender, place, and identity.

> "However tainted the concept of landscape is by colonial and masculinist discourse, a feminist and postructuralist understanding of identity allows its recuperation" (Nash 1994, p.245).

Nash and Rose open up a space for allowing the connections that women make in their day-to-day lives with real and represented places to be considered as powerful, meaningful. The separation of women's experiences from men's within some feminist theory romanticises the possibilities for both in a society where all that is required is the constant disruption of the masculinist, aesthetic gaze. This disruption evades the material and psychological poverty that results from the commodification of land, bodies and culture which put at risk the engagement with landscape and creativity as unalienated activities. The liberation of oppressive systems lies not in the psychoanalysis of sexual desire but in the analysis of landscape as the geographical component of the commodification process which ensures the greater exploitation of women in the labour market as a "flexible" production (Harvey 1990). There are multiple experiences of male and female desires (sexual and otherwise). When considering landscape, notions of "homeland" are live for men as well as women. These are not necessarily constructed from powerful, autonomous, and objective viewpoints. Collective experiences of places, and the collective investment of meaning in places is another means of disruption of power relations.

Asian Women have a complex positioning as they are firstly gendered, and doubly feminised through their race (Bhattacharyya 1998). In the thesis, I extend these debates into the consideration of Black femininity and landscape but without essentialising Black femininity. For example, the Occidental gaze is recognised, disrupted and displaced through practices of Asian women artists in their work (Tawdros 1989; Mathur 1996-7; Bhattacharyya 1998), or through the practices of the everyday appropriation of places by Asian women despite a sense of not "belonging" (Sibley 1995). However, their double exclusion is made worse by their role within the Asian community, where women have been figured as predominantly unequal to men in their power, economic position and their marginality in cultural structures of citizenship. This has been termed a form of 'triple oppression' by Black feminists. In the research I intend to acknowledge the marginality, and oppression that Asian women experience by allowing them a voice within a recovery of their histories, and their experience of landscape in the context of their own theorisations. Within the thesis research I have collaborated with an Asian woman landscape artist (Melanie Carvalho), who engages with issues of landscape, identity, and belonging. Our aim was to disrupt the dominant ideology of landscape iconography through a process of recording, painting, and exhibiting Asian women's ideal landscapes of identification.

PART THREE – Memory and migration

For diasporic groups, networks of the *cultures of identification,* which operate *transnationally,* offer imagined utopian futures and a myriad of possible configurations in terms of identity and landscapes of belonging. This self-making through *cultures of identification* is an important consideration for diasporic groups. Heritage for diasporic groups in Britain is not material in historical architecture, artefacts in national museums; or displayed in visual cultures of national history. Their story is marginal, and confined to prejudicial discourses of 'otherness'. Heritage, therefore, becomes a project of collecting the ephemeral. Identification with places, and being in a relationship with place is constituted through the visual materials that are not solely the materials academics would consider visual culture, but include the visual importance of material cultures in the home. Fluid diasporic identities are created and configured through cultural imprints in the form of landscape iconography. But this iconography is not limited to formal national iconographies, rather to icons of local and intimate textures of nature, remembered and refracted through texts and textures in the domestic sphere. This third section is an examination of the relationship between memory and history in recording the past. The nature of memory compared to the workings of formal heritage and history reveals the value of social memory as a force of identity-making for diasporic groups. Diasporic memory is considered through the forms of social memory, narrative memory and antiphony, and are theorised in relation to the Black diasporic experience.

2.10 Romantic memory and visual mnemonics

The legacy of the Romantics is their belief in a separation of history from memory resulting in opposing ways in which to engage with the past. History was defined as an objective, empirical project, a result of analysis and reason. Memory was configured around subjectivity, which was not fixed, stagnant, but a dynamic active, shaping force the antithesis to an archival store. My premise in this research is that diasporic histories are informed, articulated and appreciated through the triggers of individual and collective memory. I also consider the way that memories are change and shift in terms of what is emphasised, and in the meanings they stir. This approach to social memory could be considered inclusive and progressive in that it offers a process of recovery of diasporic histories, through memory and the triggers of memory. As argued above, diasporic culture is positioned as marginal to dominant cultures of national history and cultures of heritage. The consolidation of these through iconographies of nation, memorialised in the cultures of art, literature and heritage, ensure a discordancy with the diasporic presence. Heritage and history are formal memories of nation and, therefore, represent a partial, exclusionary story. A Romantic appreciation of memory-work would therefore assist in the project of re-inscribing diaspora subjectivity and history, in national heritage discourses.

In this section, I will deal with the ways that memory influences processes of identification, and the way that these processes have similar matrices to operate within; those of elite and vernacular, individual and collective, and real and imagined *textures of identification.* The key differences between heritage and history relate to the politics of production. Whose heritage and whose history are key to any analysis of the relationship between memory and the materials of historical narration (Hall 2000). These have a critical impact on the ways that people remember collectively and, thus, result in the materials of cultural identity. Diasporic groups are constantly marginalized within national heritage stories. There is a relationship between the counter-narratives produced, the processes of memorialisation as well as the means by which coherent networks within a diaspora connect with an identity. It has been important for me to engage with the British debates on heritage, history, memorialisation and collective "pasts" which can be detected through the practices of heritage.

Heritage can be, although it is not often, considered as a practice of self-making in the everyday landscapes of domesticity. Samuel, for example, argues that heritage

> "offers an ideal home which is defined not by pedigree but by period, and which can be decked out with make-believe family heirlooms. Still more pertinent, through the medium of family history it gives us a second identity and allows the most humdrum and ordinary, so far as present occupation is concerned, to indulge in a romance of otherness." (Samuel 1994, p 27)

Samuel in his argument counters the dismissive and reductionist critiques of heritage of Patrick Wright (1985; 1991) and Robert Hewison (1987)[8]. Samuel, describes a process of collection, display and identification with a past landscape through the procurement of everyday objects. This process of recreating a past aesthetic is quite central to the sustenance of the self. He demonstrates that the enthusiasm for 'heritage' was not just active in the field of country-house preservation movements but the working class, and middle class professionals were part of different types of preservation movements in the vernacular. Samuel's analysis illustrates the power of human agency in producing heritage sites, stories and ways of framing the past which are empowering to working class people who engage with them. He challenges the "social condescension" running through arguments which assume that there is a mass consumer who is passive, unchallenging and moronic. Samuel's argues for a critical, intelligent public who ironically, wittily, and questioningly engage with the heritage industry. The importance of Samuel's approach, for the thesis, is this celebration of the everyday spaces of heritage-making. His analysis questions the dominant culture as being all powerful and argues for the possibility of counterculture and counter-history making through the practice of collection, photography and predominantly a vernacular based in the every day. Samuel classifies these practices as identity-making, as a counter culture to insecurity in a national context. The recovering of the past through home decorating, and re-living past histories or environments allows for a safe and secure process of identification. This is an alternative to modernity but ironically relies on modern technology and modern networks of capital, transport and communications to achieve itself.

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[8] Hewison and Wright define the new heritage industries of the 1980s as the result of an economic boom benefiting the elite, conservative minority in Britain, who have as a result further inscribed an exclusionary and Conservative set of values within the new hertage industry. These are newly established interactive museums and preservation sites which have been commercialised and reductive in their recording of the past. These are 'dumbed down' versions of an unrepresentative of class, and race histories.

Self-making through environment and heritage practices is an important consideration for diasporic groups. Heritage for diasporic groups in Britain is not easily expressed through the historical architecture, artefacts in national museums, but becomes a project of collecting the ephemeral. Objects are relatively significant, as history making is on the domestic scale. Cultural expressions of past histories, or collecting artefacts cannot be done in a temporal scale of antiques and relics; instead they are in the scale of the last thirty to forty years. In these circumstances, self-making is a contemporary project. For most, history and heritage become projects of memory rather than archival records of elite histories. Memory for diasporic groups becomes the archive alongside cultural objects which are not preserved in the context of national stories but local, intimate narratives of personal biographies and experience – the vernacular, the everyday relationships with objects becomes the material of heritage. The politics of heritage and the *texture*s of history that Samuels describes, can become relevant and not peripheral to "indigenous" national cultures of heritage, valued alongside them. Anna Bohlin (1998) illustrates the way in which heritage (the preservation of memories of past environments), can operate through the materials in the domestic sphere. This is where objects trigger memories which are dynamic, and do not operate as one bounded cultural reference, but can connect to a historical lived environment. The cultural objects that effectively operate as signifiers of memories of past environments are effective due to their everydayness; their *texture*s are significant in limiting the distance between viewer and landscapes of the past. The memories of environments like material cultures are mobile and transportable and therefore are crucial in diasporic identification with environment and place.

2.11 Landscape aesthetics, heritage and memory.

In this section I develop my argument that memories are recalled through the process of metonymical triggers, in the everyday. These are what I term collectively as multisensory textures. These operate as a means of connecting with memories through sight, sound, feel, touch and taste, and I term them *textures of identification.*

Landscape and aesthetics have been discussed in the context of "home" and belonging. I would like to look at the importance of visual aesthetics as they are inscribed in historical landscapes and heritage sites. David Lowenthal (Lowenthal and Prince 1965) was the first to open up a seam of research in the area of visual aesthetics and national landscape.

Lowenthal's (1985) premise is that the past is not a fixed or immutable set of events, as interpretations of the past are in constant flux. What we have left of the past are the artefacts. These, combined with memory, are two different but complimentary routes to the past. There is a dialectical relationship between the meanings of historical landscapes and the contemporary politics of a dominant culture. This is through three clusters of activity: recognition and celebration; maintenance and preservation; enrichment and enhancement. Recognition of something as being historical marks it as different from the present. There is a discontinuity set between the artefact and the present. The process of exhibition and attaching meaning begins[9]. Restoration of the past results in an enhancement. This, in turn, is a process of correction, coherency as well as reifying a particular history or view of history. This process also is partial, priviledging certain elite versions of history. The distance that diasporic migration brings ensures that processes of reification, and the consolidation of partial histories are inevitable in the memorialisation of the past. This is the process of ensuring an artificial coherence, substantiated by the collection of 'the same'. Lowenthal believes that historical specificity is also lost in this process "When the past becomes highly popular, ancient sites lose historical specificity in a romantic blur ...catering for any cult of the ancient" (Lowenthal, 1979, p.117). The nature of memory is that it too is partial, and dynamically connected to the present. It can subsume key events in the past or can enliven the present "by remembered or imagined pasts that all present experience resonates with memories of them; to others the past has little to say..."(Lowenthal 1985, p.186) This is a relevant observation when dealing with diasporic groups, whose memory is triggered in new environments. The connection with past memories is dialectically related to the fact that memorials and artefacts of history in the new country are not usually inclusive of their histories or pasts. The past is used by all of us to confirm our place in the present. Memory ensures a validation of personal identity and history as perpetuating "collective self-awareness" (Lowenthal 1985, p.215). Memory however, is problematic in its confirmation of the past. We remember fragmented experiences after they have been classified and ordered. It is also important to note that primary and secondary memories are seldom distinguished, the memory of other people often "occlude and masquerade as our own. In fact we need other peoples memories both to confirm our own and to give them endurance" (p196). Recollection is malleable and flexible.

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[9] Lowenthal (1985) refers to the British Ordinance Survey as discontinuing their recording of archaeological sites on their maps, this decision has effected the recognition that local authorities give them in the planning process. In this case the assignment of a marker originally for information has become the only way in which the marked site is given any legitimacy, the marker and not the site are assigned as having historical value.

Memory has its own dynamic temporality. It can jump time zones in its influence, resonating within current experiences in the landscapes and cultures. These recollections, and triggers are operative in contemporary visual and material cultures.

> "While reducing reliance on written history, audio visual devices expand other consciousness of the past...Films make history both intense and plausible.. And they not only serve but enormously amplify personal memory". (Lowenthal 1985,p.258)

The technologies of the twentieth century again shift our experiences of it, they become triggers for political and social processes in the present. Landscapes of belonging in the past are signified through triggers within the these contemporary cultures. These offer a sense of fixing, stable, but dynamic identifications with "home" and places of belonging.

Anthropologists have engaged with landscape as a point of unification of communities through the memory of them, or through narratives of heritage which are located within particular places. Lovell (1998) seeks to identify processes of identification and the consolidation of belonging which is predicated upon locality or a memory of locality. This is where a collective identity crystallises around a place as a result of displacement. Lovell believes that traditional anthropologists are

> "erroneously localising others, whilst themselves remaining highly deterritorialised and sited in between cultures and locations." arguing for flexible concepts of location and of culture, "not necessarily tied to particular places, but rather created at the interstices between people in their interaction with one another in everyday discourses which may be localised, but also in the everyday experience of extraordinary events such as forced migration or exile." (Lovell 1998, p.8)

This embraces an idea of identity which is also deterritorialised, located in the "in-between" (Bhabha 1994, Apurdurai 1997).The lived experience of migration, exile or other forms of dislocation may uproot settled locality, but is not itself a condition in between, since meaning is derived in situ from dislocation itself. In addition, memories of settlement, of particular belonging to a highly localised place, may act to counterbalance the dislocation and displacement fell at particular junctures in history. Locality can be viewed as a multilayered *process* which mobilises loyalty to different communities simultaneously. Also the memory of landscapes or environment are not always of a concrete experience of place, but can be a learned memory of a society, where its cultures operate as a collective memory. This cultural memory is recorded and refracted in the domestic and built environment, as well as through cultural practices. This learned memory is imbued with *texture*s of past environments, figured through the present which effectively unify the present group defining practices of identification. The collective memory of a place which has been lost, can be reconceptualised as part of the process to consolidate a political identity in the present landscape/environment.

2.12 Diasporic memory and expressive cultures.

Like visual and material cultures, stories and narratives are, Toni Morrison believes, the means by which self-identity, memory and history are fused to ensure a connectivity to the present and situate the resonance's of that memory in the present. Her novel *Beloved* (Morrison 1987) is exemplary in its ability to thread together the way in which memory operates as a trigger, and the way that it is reworked, and manipulated through emotional or physical trauma. Morrison's work is an example of text where the order of fictional narrative, space, and time can be disrupted. The spirit of the future can inject the events of the past. Memory can become a means of recording, logging the unspeakable. It also becomes the site of an alternative national story, the individual pieces of personal experience becoming part of a patchwork history of the domestic sphere. This recording of everyday experiences, family histories, can evolve to become a record of narratives and *texture*s of the day-to-day. The recreation of past worlds become a three dimensional collage of colour, feel, sound, and smell of past lives. Morrison deals with memory as a complex process of recording past events and cultural practices, but also as something which offers a window onto the "interior" life of the past. Memory is treated by Morrison as a set of encoded messages in behaviour which reveal a lost history, a lost identity or a lost connectedness with others based in subjective, psychological experience (Morrison 1990).

In *Beloved* (Morrison 1987) memory is inscribed in the day-to-day practices, it is embodied in skin, smell, touch and in spiritual form. Morrison considers the imagination as essential in achieving a connection to the whole story this can overcome the disrupted story. For

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Morrison the visualisation of the past, offers an image that has a mnemonical relationship to memories of a past life. The image becomes an access point to a deeper sense of the "interior" life of her characters.

> "What I want to do is to track an image from picture to meaning to text – a journey which appears in the novel that I'm writing now , which is called Beloved" (Morrison 1990, p.304).

Imbued in ***Beloved*** is a slave narrative, a record of a *texture* of life, trauma, alienation, and dislocation. Memory therefore becomes the only site where singular biographies or histories, can be disentangled from these multiple experiences and identifications. Memory becomes a *place* where "nothing ever dies", and all that is imagined has a material impact in the day to day living. These memories become material obstructions, they have a powerful presence which disrupt the flows of living in the present. For diasporic groups, recalled memories reactivate connections with past histories and environments. Materials in the present activate these, and often recollections of the past environment are not separate from the lived experience in the present, but a dynamic negotiation of identity in relation to past and present. This is theorised as *rememory*, by Morrison, which is illustrated here below as a type of memory operating in the diasporic imaginary.

2.13 Text from "Beloved", Toni Morrison, 1987

Seethe to Denver

"You know. Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But its not. Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, its gone, but the place-the picture of it-stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world. What I remember is a picture floating around out there outside my head. I mean, even if I don't think it, even I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened."

"Can other people see it?" asked Denver.

"Oh, Yes. Oh, yes, yes, yes, yes. Someday you be walking down the road and you hear something or see something going on. So clear. And you think it's you thinking it up. A thought picture. But no. Its when you bump into a rememory that belongs to somebody else. Where I was before I came here, that place is real. Its never going away. Even if the whole farm-every tree and grass blade of it dies. The picture is still there and what's more, if you go

> *there-you who never was there-if you go there and stand in the place where it was, it will happen again; it will be there for you, waiting for you. So, Denver, you can't never go there. Never. Because even though its all over-over and done with-its going to always be there waiting for you. That's how come I had to get all my children out. No matter what." (Morrison 1987 :36)*

Like Morrison, Paul Gilroy (1993b), considers slave memories as evidence against notions of a comprehensive bounded modern consciousness, and thus a bounded modern identity. However the place of tradition in modern black political discourse has increased in importance. Tradition for diasporic peoples offers a safe haven from the instability offered by the modernist project, namely disenfranchisement from social and state citizenship. As Gilroy suggests tradition

> "appeals to the notion of purity as the basis of social solidarity, this is a cultivation of the political school of Afrocentricity. This is the celebration of a single story of Africans, with a tradition forming a racial subject that is unified through history and consciousness." (Gilroy 1993b, p.188)

The elevation of tradition represents an essentialising of Black identity; a reductionist politics which denies the experiences of modern racial subjectivity. The experience of post-colonial subjects is one of splitting, doubling of identification and experience are common; plurality as opposed to a singular, linear relationship with time and space. Tradition offers a single story, in a single space in a linear temporality. To be Black and British would for traditionalists be a regressive step, a rejection of African identity, and thus a defilement of the race. The modern Black subject is made peripheral to history, their story is undervalued and their position undermined. This is an oppressive history which denies a true account and therefore erases a pertinent social memory which shapes black cultural identity. Afrocentricity, figures social memory as modern, and therefore as reactionary. Gilroy (1993b) draws out the problems of memory for those dislocated, and unbound by territory of an essential history, and territory of belonging.

For South Asians the stories of tradition is manifest in the notions of cultural continuity in religious, linguistical and cultural expression. However these are not singularly practiced and expressed. Tradition has been dynamically rewritten and expressed in relation to migration, the experience of migration has created new expressive practices which bridge and rework the relationship between essential understandings of identity and the lived experience of ruptured identity. Gilroy argues that the practice of reinventing tradition, occurs in diasporic communities through the materialisation of social memory. This is in the performance of rituals and rites as well as in the garments worn and objects, which are revered as part of traditional cultural events. These practices provide a "bulwark against the corrosive effects of racism, poverty, and immiseration on individuals and communities." (Gilroy 1993b, p.193) Social memory grows in response to oppressive practices and exclusion. Social memory in diasporic groups is not inscribed in national heritage sites and museums, instead they are locked into the tones and forms of sound and light in cultural products. These are sensual, iconographic, textural, and aural signifiers of a sanctuary constructed in a space and time which is intangible.

Memoir and autobiography are the only way that Black history has been recorded and passed on. This form of memoir – unwritten and non-material is a form of cultural heritage in the sense that the ownership of material objects were not a right for slaves, therefore they were not able to maintain links with the past through souvenirs, mementos or family heirlooms. Memorialisation and heritage therefore are part of the imaginative realm, and maintained through the oral tradition. For the South Asian diaspora, narrative identities are part of the day-to day oral narratives of the past. These experiences are often descriptive of fissures from a located home, an oppressed subjectivity or experience of colonial subjugation. There are few Asian women writers who have recorded these narratives of dislocation, disjuncture and non-identity. Amrit Wilson's *Finding a Voice* (1978) was a moment in the beginning of these recorded experiences through fiction in the British context. Within the thesis I want to privilege the voices of the women who have experienced migration and to record their histories of senses of formal connections with land and nation alongside informal and "internal" senses of connection with the journey of diaspora. This journey is one of the trauma of displacement, but also the celebration of difference and the way this is expressed in their homes. Through the process of recording narratives of the migratory journey and recording of the narration of their connectiveness through visual cultural networks, I believe that this research will go some way to uncover processes of testimony, memory, and re-memory that operate in the daily lives of South Asians in London. The thesis research will also uncover processes of *placing*, and *triangulation* through the materials, and narratives triggered through cultures of identification.

The act of remembering is a political act of preservation for diasporic groups it is evidence of a heterogeneity of experience of race, and gender; of modernity and history. The act of remembering for any dispersed community has to be completed within material as well as psychological cultures. The importance of social memory is that it acts as an adhesive force, providing the social memories of the diaspora as a cohesive force. Story telling is the social memory; sustained through rituals, religious fables, and oral histories. In this context modern fiction is also key to the process of weaving links within the community and part of a process of identification. Although Gilroy does not discuss visual cultures in depth he clearly parallels the *antiphony* of musical forms with the potential of visual cultures. Music for Gilroy acts as a powerful catalyst for social memory and of history; tone, form, and rhythm are antiphonal stimulants to a social experience and social identity. This type of memory of a collective past, a rememory of the journey from this past can be inscribed within visual texts, which operate as archives of a social memory, a history of dispersal, and as a body of material which offers an alternative inclusionary history. Social memory can be imbedded within artefacts and objects, narratives of fiction, biographies as well as in tone, form and aesthetics of music and film. The range of material that could be considered as a project of *placing* diasporic communities through recovering of connections, triggers and relationships is growing as modern technology, and communication networks advance and expand. I have therefore chosen to focus on visual cultures which are defined by the South Asian women as important in their sense of "home" and "belonging".

2.14 Conclusions

In this section I have reviewed the theoretical basis to the thesis research. This includes the theorisation of landscape in relation to identity, cultural materialism as a means of interrogating identity and the theorisation of memory which defines and informs processes of identification in the present. Cultural geography has occluded engagements with theories of landscape that are relevant to the experience of diasporic groups. I have considered diasporic identity in relation to their connectivity with everyday landscapes and textures of nature, as they are made and retained through visual and material cultures with which these groups are engaging. Diasporic culture is the prism through which to understand these geographical relationships of identity and belonging. These cultures are expressive of the experience of migration, dislocation and renegotiations made by these groups within and through various lands.

Geography as a discipline has had a critical role in cataloguing and marking the land in the form of cartographic information, and within this process geographers have objectified the landscape and all that was within it (Livingstone 1992). All the people within a territory became subjects of the view, objectified, and racialised without power or agency. This process has ensured the fixing of the identities of racialisation of colonial subjects as part of the justification of domination and control (Fanon, 1959; 1961; 1967; Nandy1983). By studying the materials of culture of these post-colonial peoples, geographers can better understand the current 'positioning' of Black identities as they are experienced and defined within the diasporic groups themselves. This is an examination of self-theorisation of heritage, racial and cultural identity, and notions of citizenship. By examining social memory through these expressive cultures, identification can be located and 'unfixed' from previous essentialised subjectivities. Landscape, nature and nation all have resonance with individual's creation of 'home' and belonging. In this thesis research, these are situated in narratives of memorialised landscapes, and imagined landscapes of belonging. By recovering oral histories and memorialised territories of location, and by figuring both of these within cultures of heritage, I have attempted to triangulate South Asian identity. Landscape, Memory and Culture are the three axes of this triangulaton. This is a grounded approach to the recovery of life histories and lived geographies, of diasporic groups can reveal much of the fluent narratives of identification. There are a multiplicity of narratives and mythologies imbued in diasporic narratives of belonging that are integral to national history, but denied recognition. This thesis focuses on the marginalized cultural relationships of the everyday, in the home, in contemporary cultures of those excluded from national discourses. The relationship between the dominant and excluded; the local textures and national textures of landscape and the expressive cultures of a racialised "other" are as important as analysing one or other exclusively. The discourse of national history is often separated from the lived experience and memories of these migratory groups. A process of recovery of this disenfranchised memory could contribute to an inclusionary national history expressed in inclusionary archives expressed as a national heritage. This thesis research is an attempt to recover diasporic memory and geographies of post-colonial history and culture.

2.15 Thesis Research Questions

The readings that I have undertaken in this field of cultural theory and its contribution to understanding South Asian identity have left me with the following research questions and objectives:

a) To conduct a mapping of biographical migration history of South Asian women as a process of recovering diasporic biographies, and the women's connections with the landscapes of migration.

b) What are the day-to-day engagements with cultures in the home that are visual, which are central to a positioning of the women's identity and cultural practices of being in Britain

c) How are landscapes, environments and cultures of nature figured through these visual cultures in the home?

d) How are cultural practitioners engaged with the South Asian diasporas sense of belonging, identity and place?

e) To conduct a collaborative project which involves the women in a creative process that reflects their own relationships to landscapes of belonging.

CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

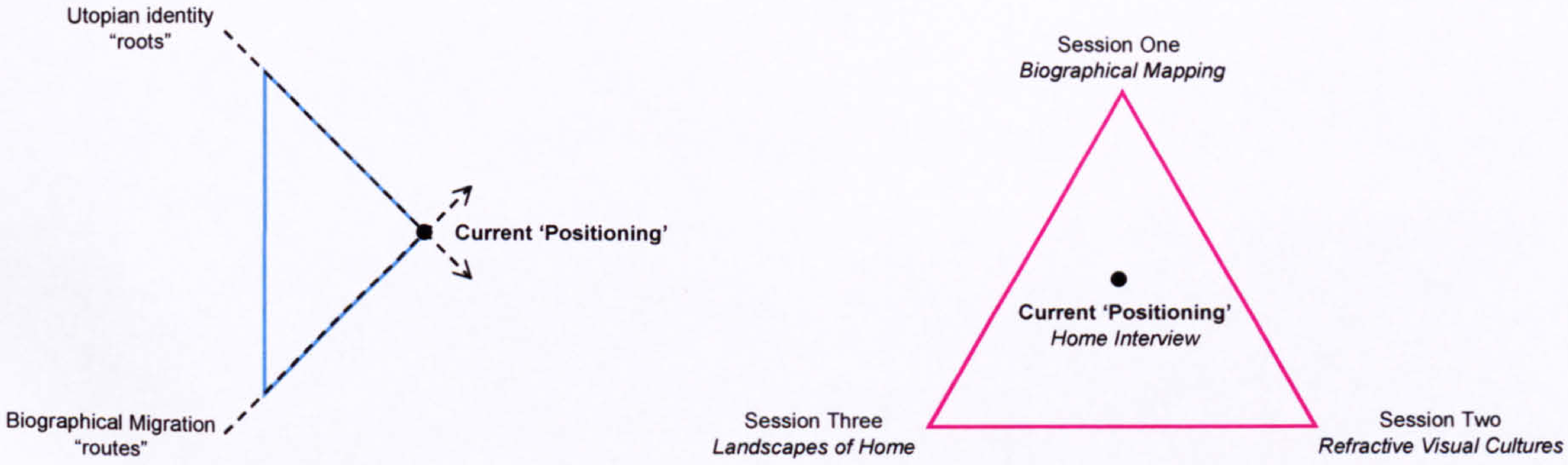
3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide the methodological orientation of the study. I have outlined the relationship between the theory and research practices, providing a summary of the research design, and the process of data collection. The chapter has six sections. Section **3.1** is an introduction to the research design and the theoretical principles that informed this design. Section **3.2** is a review of the significant politics inscribed in the research design. This is a reflexive description of the decisions made in shaping the methodology. Section **3.3** is an account of the fieldwork process. This includes a description of my design before the start of the fieldwork. Section **3.4** is an account of the actual events, the research in practice. Section **3.5** is a summary of the data generated and the strategies that I used to analyse the data and to formulate the grounded theorisation as presented in Chapters **5**, **6**, and **7** of the thesis. Section **3.6** is a summary of my reflections on the research process.

3.1.1 Theoretical contexts

The research design has been shaped by the complexity of the factors that inform and define practices of identification within the South Asian community in Britain. The central theoretical concept that has informed the design of the methodology is *triangulation*. Triangulation has emerged as a theoretical geographical concept relevant to the positionality of diasporan subjects. Within the methodology it is conceptually important as the means by which to further the grounding of the theorising. This is what May (1994, p.87) refers to as 'theoretical adequacy' and has been discussed by Cook and Crang (Cook and Crang, 1995). The complex positioning of diasporic groups has been conceived as a process of triangulation which enables the figuring of the diasporan relationships with three geographical nodes. These are :- (i) the actual route of migration; (ii) the imagined landscapes of belonging; and (iii) the place of residence and home in Britain. This is the triadic relationship that has been theorised by Brah (1996) and Safran (1991). This triangulation has been conceptualised as a simple model of the diasporic networks that are operative in identity-making. In the research design, I have used a triangulation of methods to capture the ways that these geographical nodes shape the lived experience and practices of South Asian women in London (see figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 – Diasporic 'triangulation' and methodological 'triangulation'


Utopian identity
"roots"
Current 'Positioning'
Biographical Migration
"routes"
Session One
Biographical Mapping
Current 'Positioning'
Home Interview
Session Three
Landscapes of Home
Session Two
Refractive Visual Cultures

Diasporic *Triangulation*

Methodological *Triangulation*

The research questions were thus divided into three research strands (see Table 3.2). These strands formed the focus for discussions in a series of group and individual interviews with two groups of South Asian Women, living in North West London.

I have used Gilroy's (1993b) concept of antiphony to consider visual cultures as refractive devices in the process of identification with the wider diasporic community. This is multinodal identification and is explored through the way that diasporic positioning is figured through the materials of visual culture. This includes the way that the materials of visual culture in the home operate, as a means of understanding the socio-political relationship between location and national identity. Visual cultures are themselves examined as important in what they reveal about imagined geographies of belonging that are constituted through them. The design of the three sessions has incorporated a recovery of oral histories of migration; an examination of visual culture as it is figured in the home; and the imagined landscapes of home. These three parts of the research triangulate the discourses of identity, belonging and home as they are figured through lived routes of migration; imagined geographies of home; and visual materials that form a dialogic element of diasporic positioning in Britain.

Table 3.1 – The three research strands

A **Biographical Mapping**

- To what extent do visual cultures resonate with different icons of landscapes of identity, both lived, memorialised and utopian images of home?
- What are the triggers for remembering landscapes of identification.

B **Visual Culture and home making**

- What is the process of positioning, and signifying that occurs through the everyday visual cultures of the home?
- How is the South Asian diasporic identity figured through visual cultures in the home?
- What are the landscapes that they connect with through these visual cultures?

C **Imagined Geographies of home and belonging**

- What are the women's landscapes of identification lived, imagined and memorialised?
- What the symbolic iconographies of identification?

The approach considers visual culture as operative in the practice of heritage and identity-making that Samuel (1994) advocates, as well as the notion of positioning (Hall 1990) of identity through everyday cultures that I outlined in Chapter Two. The life-worlds of the women would be the site of my interview as in May (1996), but these would be framed within a sociality of knowledge, attitudes and experiences recorded in a group dynamic. The lived landscape of the home environment would also allow for a further triangulation, in that the concept of home was examined in people's houses. The methodology has been informed by work within anthropology on consumption and material cultures, most notably the work of Daniel Miller. (Miller 1995a; 1995b; 1998; 2001) Inevitably, this approach raises important questions about the politics of objectifying and potentially exploiting the participants. To make the analysis transparent and myself more accountable, in the following discussions, I will pay close attention to my positionality in the research process.

3.1.2 Grounded theory and participant-centred design

The methodological approach used in the research has ensured that a grounded theorisation is developed from the research data. Grounded theorisation is an approach based on the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990). This approach politicises the relationship between the researcher and the researched, and the collection and analysis of the research material. The grounded approach encourages reflexivity which seeks to induce the patterns and ideas inscribed within the material collected. A researcher is then able to develop theory from the dynamic process of data collection and analysis, rather than the researchers' own preconceived theoretical convictions overshadowing the process.

Grounding theory in people's lives and experiences involves understanding them in a muti-dimensional way. This is the way that ideas and theories are expressed and lived in everyday life. The gathering of the research material should be situated in the social context of meaning and expression. I decided to use a participant-centred research design in the form of in-depth groups to ensure this social context in a collective forum. Given the sensitivity of the research topic and the marginalised voice of Asian women (Farquhar and Das 1999), I have chosen in-depth groups based on the model defined by Burgess et al (1988a; 1988b). The use of small groups offers a flexible, yet ethical framework for ethnographic research, which frames the research material as it is understood in a social context. This research method is participant-centred and is committed to four principles of group research – sociality, reflexivity, liminality and empowerment, as outlined by Goss (1996) and Burgess et al (1988a; 1988b). These principles address the equalising of the power dynamics between researcher and researched, and also aim to ensure that the group evolves its commitment to the research questions. This ensures meaningful participation, with the group taking joint responsibility for its work. To ensure that I addressed the politics of participation in recruiting and conducting the groups, I also drew on social anthropological methods, including P.L.A. (Participatory Learning) (Pretty, Guijt et al. 1995), P.A.R. (Participatory Action Research) and feminist research methodologies (Oakley 1981; Gluck and Patai 1991; Patai 1991; McDowell 1992).

Chiu and Knight (1999) have used group methodology in P.A.R. to implement specific policy changes in the health service. Their experience affirms the benefits of focus group elements in attaining participation in a non-judgmental and sensitive approach. The flexibility of the group situation and the reflexivity within the group, used alongside a sensitivity to power dynamics amongst different race participants has proven a good model of participatory research. The in-depth group's size and multiple meeting schedule would allow the whole group time to build up trust, and to evolve a 'voice' for all participants in an empowering process. Within the group dynamic there is communal responsibility to be accountable and to challenge any risk to the respectful integrity of the group. I also decided to ensure additional space for individual contributions by recognising the need for interviews with the participants at home, in "their space".

3.1.3 Recruitment of South Asian Women's groups

The search for participants involved mobilising the gatekeepers in the South Asian community. I wanted to use a non-religious, more neutral social space where groups may already exist. It was rare to find groups of women-only group meetings. I decided to recruit women from Asian advice centres because they facilitated activities that could provide ready-made women-only groups who were familiar with each other, and familiar with a secure space that the centre provided. The **Asian Women's Resource Centre (AWRC)** in Harlesden is a centre, highly politicised in its work with local authority policy and practices. The staff are vital in providing support and advice to women facing homelessness, domestic violence, enforced deportation and problems accessing their rights. The AWRC's position in the community and its resources are exceptional, in that it is an organisation effective at providing confidential, secure and supportive advice in an environment that is purpose-built for groups of women to receive information and to take part in discussion groups and activities. In 1998, the AWRC was awarded £250,000 lottery funding to purchase premises in Harlesden that are fully equipped and spacious.

The **Sangat Centre (SANGAT)** in L.B. Harrow was approached because it, too, has a reputation in the Harrow community for good impartial advice and support to clients. The Sangat Centre has less secure funding than the AWRC but has premises familiar to a user group, and provides a secure, confidential and supportive environment. In particular the Sangat centre has an enthusiastic and encouraging attitude which was reflected in their commitment to the research aims of my PhD. Staff in both centres helped me to recruit two sets of women to attend an initial scoping session. From these I recruited participants for the series of three group sessions, and an individual interview at home.

Harrow and Harlesden are places with different social-economic demographics. The profile of Asians in Harrow was described in a specially commissioned report[10] as having the highest percentage of owner occupation ratio, and the lowest ratio of people in privately rented accommodation of all London Boroughs. Harlesden residents are representative of a poorer community with a higher percentage of private-rented accommodation and dependency on welfare benefits. The decision to work in these two geographically different communities was based on the possibility of comparison between them, explaining in particular the effect of social-economic positioning in individuals' contributions to the discussions.

The Asian community in London is varied by religion, language, and culture. In this research project, I chose to run mixed group sessions on the basis of the women defining themselves as Asian. I am fluent in Gujarati and have some Hindi. This encouraged me to maintain the mixed groups already active in the centres with some additional support provided by an interpreter[11]. My advertising posters were printed in four languages- Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu, and Punjabi (see Appendix One). There are debates about the advantages of mixed or homogeneous groups when conducting group research (Morgan 1988; Barbour and Kitzinger 1999). I believed that a mixture would encourage a deeper level of engagement through debate. The women were used to the dynamics of a mixed group, and a level of trust existed due to their familiarity with each other which eradicated much of the tensions that difference can sometimes create. The women recruited through these two centres had different class and ethnic backgrounds, the AWRC was dominated by directly migrated women from India, and Pakistan, and the Sangat group dominated by 'twice-migrants' (Bhachu 1985). The women themselves defined themselves as 'Asian' and therefore I have continued with the mixed group methodology. The interview material generated within group discussions reflects the heterogeneity of 'Asian' experience and complexity of the processes of identification resulting from these varied inter-continental migration routes. The participants' profiles in table 3.4 reflect the diversity of the South Asian community as it exists in London.

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[10] See "Profiling Ethnic Minority and Refugee Communities in Harrow" by Paddington Consultancy Partnership, published in June 1999. This report was a source of a profile of minority communities in the London Borough of Harrow and the funding support provided through public sector partnerships.

[11] The groups recruited at the AWRC and Sangat had a mixed group of women with different language skills and different ages. In terms of language barriers, although I speak Hindi and Gujarati, I employed an interpreter to assist with translation. I picked an interpreter who was a previous user of the Centre but who had no relationship with it presently. Having two facilitators would ensure some support for me if the discussion got tense or difficult. It would also help with the smoothness of exchange through ensuring all the women understood each other's contributions. In the first group meetings, I found that because the focus of the sessions was one relevant to Asian women users, it also drew out some issues for the translator. I found it much more difficult having the translator there because of her over-contributions and her need for space within the group. I found that because she had been set up as a translator the women allowed her space disproportionately to other voices because they saw her as being in a more important role than other group members. I decided therefore to run the second group without an interpreter.

Table 3.2 – Schedule of sessions

Session One	*Scoping Session*
Session Two	*Biographical Mapping*
Session Three	*Visual cultures from 'home'*
Session Four	*Imagined Landscapes of 'home'*
Home Interview	*'Tour' of visual cultures in the home and interview*

Table 3.3 – Materials for analysis generated in research group sessions and interviews

Research Strand A **Biographical Mapping**

- Oral histories.
- Maps of migration routes of the women, and their parents.

Research Strand B **Visual Culture and home making**

- Pictures of visual cultures in the home essential in the women's identity and belonging.
- Interview transcripts the way that the women's identities are figured through visual cultures in the home.
- Pictures of, and testimonies about, the importance of material cultures in the house.
- Interview transcripts describing the landscapes that they connect with through the visual and material cultures in the home.

Research Strand C **Imagined Geographies of home and belonging**

- Descriptions of ideal landscapes of home, made by the participants.
- Paintings made from these showing the symbolic iconographic representations of these landscapes of identification.

The group sessions were designed to meet the needs of this particular group of South Asian women. As Burgess et al (1988a; 1988b) and Burgess (1996) have demonstrated, to recruit and maintain a series of group discussions with this community is particularly problematic. In the Greenwich Project in 1985-6, and subsequent work in 1993, the UCL researchers found that cultural barriers existed which affected attendance and participation, especially in a sequence of meetings. I deferred to the advice of Centre workers as experts in the community. The AWRC had recommended only one or two sessions in a series. This was due to constraints of time and caring responsibilities that the women had, as well as the Centre's own experience of the failure of some of their own activities that required a higher level of commitment to attend from the women. As a result of these early meetings with the women's centre, I decided to design a series of sessions which had a specific focus, where a "task" was undertaken by the whole group. This specific focus in each session enabled me to elaborate on the purpose of the series, as well as secure a commitment and interest in attendance because the aim was less abstract or discursive (see table 3.2). The commitment became therefore one of "doing" rather than "talking". This fitted with the types of activities held at the centre, as well as fitted with the women's own experiences and level of confidence[12].

My concern with practicalities of group attendance has shaped the design of the group discussion series, but this concern is not separate from the theory or the ethics of research method. The design has been sensitive to the needs of the group and thereby increased the level of trust they had in me as a researcher. This inclusive research design also enfranchised the group in the process which secured their commitment to the research and established a collaborative approach to the research questions. The methodology has sought to limit the exploitative elements of PhD. research.

3.2 Politics, ethics and empowerment

3.2.1 Gender

Why women? My focus on women's narratives is rooted in the assumption that their life experiences are marginalised at different scales of geographical knowledge. Within the academy, Asian Women's histories, voices and knowledge's are usually studied within the context of "Third World" research in anthropology and development studies. Although the women in my research are citizens living within the U.K., they have been figured as racial stereotypes used to construct knowledges about the "other" within the First World by much research on "ethnicity and race" (Gluck and Patai 1991). I am attempting to recover a set of life histories which are situated ethnographically. This situatedness grounds my research in a notion of authentic geographies, and allows me to understand the way Asian women are locked in a dynamic of positioning, as a result of post-colonial migration. This situates them as active creators of their own identification within a set of political, economic and cultural structures that are material, not abstract (Brah 1993). I do not define this as a feminist research methodology, as my assumption is not one where patriarchy is the source of oppression or marginality. I do, however, root their positionality within structures of oppression shaped by colonialism and capitalism. This is an understanding of gender politics within the power structures that constrain women's economic position. The cultural expression of this continuing dynamic in the experience of post-colonial migration is examined as a means of grounding these cultural geographies.

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[12] They, after all had rarely been solicited for opinions, ideas, or their knowledge The centre itself offers an advice service that intends to be empowering but actually results in a dependency from the women on their skills and ability to "solve" problems. This dependency culture within advice centres sets up a dynamic which ensures that the women expect to "receive" advice, information or services rather that operate as an enfranchised women's group which could resource the activities of the centre as opposed to just receiving them

The situation of these women's life stories and material cultural practices ensures a contextual understanding which does not fetishise cultural practice. Geographical positionings are gendered and, thus, an emphasis on women's construction of their socio-cultural practice can reveal a situated and reflexive experience of diaspora[13]. This approach to researching the situatedness of knowledge is described by Hartsock (1983; 1987) and Haraway (1990; 1997). Situating geographical knowledge and values allows the recording of individuals' intense, and intimate, and emotional connections with place and landscape. Within geography, this type of oral testimony has informed the work of May (1996) and Western (1992). Whilst they provide a rich and complex testimony, situated knowledges are limited and figured as specific. Harvey (1992) describes the difficulties of situatedness in creating "separate", and "essential" lives that are not linked dialectically to social systems of knowledge, power and lived experience. This research intends to approach these situated experiences as expressive of a dialectical relationship at various scales of global geography, culture and identity politics. I have been concerned however with conducting this research ethically, not to objectify, patronise or subsume the women's contributions. To some extent, I have chosen the grounding of research as a means of privileging their voices and their own theories of geographical relationships. An active dialogue is inscribed in the thesis, literally depicted in the women's words, and pictures. It has been fundamental in shaping the written thesis.

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[13] This experience can also be understood in relation to Asian men although this is not examined in this thesis. It will be the subject of future work.

3.2.2 Ethics and inequality

Feminists have written about attempts to conduct ethical research where women researching women try to eradicate the power dynamics between researcher and researched (Duelli-Klein 1983). These are criticised by Oakley (1981) as being contradictory, as the researchers relationship with the researched is always one of inequality. Stacey (1990) continues this critique of feminist methodologies, which are assumed to be non-exploitative and collaborative. Feminist attempts at ethnographic projects which privilege the experiential, by contextualising knowledge and inscribing the interpersonal dialogue that exists within the research process, are criticised by Stacey as deepening the level of exploitation rather than situating it in respect and reflexivity. The researcher can never invest in the research relationship with an equal measure of "ethnographic innocence" (Stacey 1990, p117), and to claim to do so implies unequal risk and dishonesty. McDowell (1992) reviews developments which attempt to assert a more egalitarian and less exploitative research design. McDowell concludes that feminist geographers need to continue to be reflexive and to construct partial, situated knowledges made from a critical position which is politicised as being one that exists in an academic power dynamic. Such a position can marginalize the research and the researcher, and thereby compromise sensitive research strategies. Rose (1997) critiques this position in her argument suggesting the limits inherent in attempts to be reflexive.

The inequality of positioning can be further reinforced by material inequalities which dominate research dynamics in research with "Third World women" (Patai 1991). Her argument is that the personal, emotional revelations that occur in ethnographic research deflect from "non-personal, institutional and political contours of the problem of material inequality" (p145). I believe that my project as a whole is politically ethical in that it does not seek to define the women within a bounded sense of 'Asianess' or to exoticise them as examples of the 'other' within the metropolis. Instead, within the research, I have tried to ensure that the sociality of the discussions included discussions of my own experiences and thoughts. The power within the group was strengthened by the fact that I was the 'outsider'. Group members were known to each other and had an established dynamic and unity. This solidarity countered any position of power, control or non-accountability that I posed. The relationship was based on a group contract which had a set of ground rules agreed by the whole group. The contractual nature of the relationship also served as a means by which personal and intimate revelations were voluntary and shared with the group. The majority of the group had a peer group relationship and therefore I deemed the risk of over-revelation as being one that the individual would calculate in context of this pre-existing relationship.

Furthermore, the inequalities within and between the groups were not always those of my elevated economic wealth or social position. Many of the women, in the Sangat group, were for example, businesswomen who have significant property and capital assets. Material inequalities did exist between the women, as they were from different economic positions. The AWRC group was a group dominated by dependency on social welfare, with inequalities based on language skills, education and income.

On considering the literature, I decided to incorporate women's own voices, experiences and oral testimonies. I realised that the research was, by its very nature, intrusive and potentially exploitative. All I could do in this respect was to try to ensure that the design of the research limited personal exploitation and was able to provide social context that would minimise power inequalities. Pile (1991) advocates an approach which defines the research as an alliance between researcher and researched which although it does not remove exploitation, allows for accountability and a joint contract which delineates boundaries and sets rules of engagement. I decided to conduct a set of group interviews which were based on the Burgess (1988a; 1988b) model, but that had elements of individual biography incorporated. I also designed the research methodology so there was space for individual interviews and a process of giving something back to the women, beyond the personal developmental aspect that is intrinsic to the in-depth group process. The group interview format was one where the women could speak but where their contributions were analysed in light of a social context of attitudes and values which would provide insight into the social construction of these self-theorisations.

3.2.3 My positionality and the recruitment of women to the groups

Although much social science research has been done with ethnic minority groups, much of it has been uncritical about the process of asserting 'ethnic' category and ways of defining the racial group. The researcher's identity matters in the context of the way that all individuals are marked as an ethnic group which situates us within structures of social, cultural, and power positioning (Standfield 1994; Ahmed 1996). Although I define myself as Asian and am a woman, I have veered away from making assumptions about any essential relationship that could develop between myself and the participants. I believe that my skills as a competent group co-ordinator and translator are paramount. I do not assume that the women participants have an essential connecting biological or cultural identity. I simply believe that they are positioned in a network of identity that has many facets which do unite them under categories of race, language, cultural practices and values, at different moments. They are, at once, members of a unified Asian community and representatives of a heterogeneous social group. My own identity, however, allows me an entry point into their discussions by being visibly Asian and a first generation migrant to the U.K. I have been able to divulge a parallel biography, enabling me to bridge gaps that exist due my positionality as a researcher.

In terms of culture and language, as discussed above, I decided to recruit mixed groups. (The different language needs of the women resulted in my use of an interpreter recommended by the AWRC.) I believe heterogeneity exists amongst all single language, ethnic or religious groupings, so limiting the group members to self-definitions along these categories, would be both artificial and arbitrary. Additionally, difference and heterogeneity of members would enrich discussion and add to the development of the group as a whole. This is beneficial to both the group participants and the researcher. By not perpetuating 'artificial' ethnic group types, I limited the perpetuation of an essentialising approach and thus an essentialist position from which to analyse and theorise. **Table 3.4** gives a summary of participants in the research and demonstrates their diversity.

Table 3.4 – Details of the participants in the women's groups

Participant[14]	Biographical Profile
Asian Women's Resource Centre	
Sarabjit – Age 41; speaks Urdu and is Muslim. Currently living in Harlesden.	Sarabjit was born in Lahore into a relatively wealthy family. She married a man from her community living in England and moved to London in 1981. She is divorced and lives in a rented flat with her son.
Zubeida – Age 40; speaks Urdu and is Muslim. Currently lives in Willesden.	Zubeida was born in Lahore into a propertied family. She came to London after her marriage and lives happily with her family in a council house.
Kokila – Aged 43; speaks Gujarati and is Hindu.	Kokila was born in Bhuj, Gujarat, she was married and left for Kenya. In 1971 she left East Africa and came to Britain via India.
Chandan – Aged 44; speaks Gujarati and is a Hindu member of the Swaminarayan community.	Chandan was born in Aden, Yemen. Her father went there for work and died when she was 9. She lived there until 1969, her parents left in 1965. Chandan was a civil servant in the British Embassy. She returned to Dhargadra (India) in 1969 after rioting broke out in Aden. Chandan married and came to England in 1973. She lives on the Stonebridge council estate in a flat with a daughter and husband.
Shilpa – Aged 52; speaks Gujarati and is Hindu.	Shilpa was born in Junaghat in Gujarat (India). She married and went to live in Eldoret and Nairobi in Kenya. Her marriage failed and she returned to India. After re-marrying she left to go to Sudan. She lived in Sudan for two years. Her marriage ended and she came to England in 1974 via India. Shilpa lives in a Housing Association flat with her daughter.
Beena – Aged 68; speaks Urdu, and is Muslim.	Beena was born in Hoshaipur, Punjab (India) in 1938. Her father was a GP and her family were wealthy property owners with plantation land both in India and Madaripur in Bangladesh. Beena married in 1952 at 14 years old, her husband died in 1970. She worked as a labourer to support her children, then as her trading business developed she became a wholesaler of sugar. Beena was an M.P. for President Bhuto in 1989 for the district of Faisalbad. She and her family were driven away from Hoshaipur because of her political alliances. She fled to England with nothing. She currently lives in public housing with her daughters and grandchildren.
Kanta – Aged 44; speaks Gujarati; Hindu member of the Sai community.	Kanta was born in India. Her family left for Kenya in the 1960s. They fled Kenya and arrived in London in 1973. Kanta lived in a private house in Kenton with husband and son.
Kajal - Aged 28; speaks Bangladeshi; is Muslim.	Kajal was born in Balishasro in Bangladesh in 1973. She married and came to England in the early 1980s. She lives with her two sons in public housing in Kilburn.
Puja - Aged 50; speaks Gujarati, is Hindu	Puja was born in Bhuj, in Gujarat state, India. She married and came to London in 1973. She currently lives in public housing in Wembley with her three children and her mother-in-law.
Hansa – Aged 42; speaks Gujarati, is Hindu	Hansa was born in Gujarat state, India. She left to go to Kenya with her family and came to London in 1974. She lives in public housing with her family. Hansa considers her family home as being in East Africa and she continues to visit family in Kenya often.

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[14] In the interests of confidentiality, I have used pseudonyms for all the women, throughout the thesis.

Table 3.4 – Details of the participants in the women's groups (continued)

Participant	Biographical Profile
Sangat Centre	
Lalita – Aged 46; speaks Punjabi, is Hindu.	Lalita was born in New Delhi in 1955, She was married in 1976, and left the country for the first time in 1976 with her new husband. She has travelled extensively due to her husbands business, having to re-settle in a new home each year. I have constructed a route map of Lalita's migratory route separately to show the extensiveness of her mobility. Financially very secure, she hopes to remain permanently in the U.K..She lives in Rickmansworth in Hertfordshire with her two children and husband.
Harsha – Aged 43; speaks Gujarati, is Hindu.	Harsha was born in Mumbai in 1958. She left India to come to the U.K. in 1981 after her marriage. She lives in Northwood with her two sons and husband.
Shanta – Aged 59; speaks Gujarati, is Hindu.	Shanta was born in Jinja, Uganda in 1943. She left to live in Nairobi when her family moved. They returned to Uganda in 1966. She was married and moved to Malawi in 1968. She came to London with her husband in 1985. She lives in Pinner with her six children and husband.
Anju – Aged 49; speaks Gujarati, and is Hindu	Anju was born in Nairobi, Kenya in 1952, Her parents had been living there since the 1940s. She studied for her degree at the University of Baroda from 1969- 73. She was married in 1973 and came to London. She lives in a private house in Kenton, Harrow with her two girls and husband.
Shazia – Aged 46; speaks Punjabi and is Hindu.	Shazia was born in Patna, in Bihar state, India in 1956. She married and came to London in 1979. She lives in a private house in Pinner with her husband and three daughters.
Mala – Aged 31; speaks English.	Born in Zambia 1969. She lived in Uganda with her family then came to London in the 1970s.
Manjula – Age 49; Gujarati, and is Hindu. Currently living in Pinner, Middlesex.	Manjula was born in Kampala, Uganda in 1953. Her parents had been living there since the 1950s. She came to England for further education in 1971, just prior to the mass expulsion in Uganda by Idi Amin. Manjula is still very emotionally connected to Uganda. Manjula lives in a private house in Pinner, with her husband and children.
Bhanu – Aged 62; speaks Gujarati, is Muslim.	Bhanu was born in Kenya and moved to London in the early 1986. She is from a community of Gujarati speaking Muslims based in East Africa. Bhanu's parents live in Mombassa, and she has strong connections with East Africa. Bhanu lives with her husband and son in Moor Park.
Sheetal – Aged 44; speaks Gujarati,; is Ismaili.	Sheinul was born in Tanzania and has family there still. She came to London in the 1980s from East Africa. She is part of the very close knit community of East African Ismailis living in North London.
Darshna – Aged 31; speaks Gujarati; brought up as Jain.	Darshna was born in Kenya, she moved at the age of 4 to London as part of the expulsions in Kenya in 1973. Darshna lives in Harrow with her husband.
Neela – Aged 41; speaks Gujarati; is Hindu.	Neela was born in Mombassa, Kenya in 1960. She came to London at the age of 11, in 1971, with her parents. She is currently living in a private house in Sudbury with her family.
Bharti – Aged 46; speaks Gujarati, is Muslim.	Bharti is born in Kampala, Uganda. She lived there until she and her family were expelled in 1972. She remembers arriving and being sent to the refugee camps in Guildford. She currently lives in Northwood with her family.

3.2.4 Recruitment of an artist

As I thought through the focus of each group session, it became clear that I wanted the women to be involved in a creative process. I made contact with artists who were based at community centres in London, to see if they would be interested in undertaking a collaborative session within which the women could comfortably explore their imagined geographies of belonging, appropriation and identity. I was flexible about the medium in which the group worked, considering collage, photography, printmaking, painting and drawing. In this initial research period, I came across an artist who was conducting a project that seemed ideal. Melanie Carvalho had been working on issues of landscape and identity for a number of years. Her BA dissertation was entitled *Reflections of 'home' and 'belonging' through national consciousness and identity.* In it, she reflects on the relationship between national identity, landscape and memory. Intellectually she was dealing with location and belonging, but dealing with it within the politics of national identity. On meeting Melanie Carvalho in 1997, I discovered that her current project was a London Arts Board-funded project, entitled *Landscapes of home.* This was a project where she advertised in newspapers, magazines and distributed requests for people's descriptions of their "ideal landscapes of home". Her contributors were mainly artists and friends in her circle and she wanted to attract ordinary members of local communities. In negotiating a research-based relationship with the artist, I hoped to achieve a mutually beneficial collaboration which would minimise tension and conflicts of interests between my PhD research and Melanie's professional activities. Melanie in her own work had been interested in examining her own identification with the landscape of Goa, which was in contrast to her place of birth – Zimbabwe. I discuss this in later chapters, however, Melanie's own biography has contributed to the thesis research in that landscape, identity, and migration figure importantly in her engagement with landscape painting. This inclusion has made her position within the thesis complex, as her own 'landscapes of home' are imbedded within the body of material analysed.

It has been important to respect the boundaries between our two projects, and deal with Melanie's contribution ethically. This has been achieved by interpreting Carvalhos' paintings of the women's 'Landscapes of Home' through their perspectives rather that a classic art historical analysis of Melanie's painted canvases which would have involved a detailed critique. The approach I have taken privileges the women's materials and ethnographies above the artist and researcher's own. Carvalho's project fitted directly into the series that I had designed for the thesis research. Her project was billed as the second session in a series of three.

3.3 An account of the research process

As table 3.5 shows, I conducted three sessions of group interviews with both the Sang at and AWRC groups. In the first session, the group mapped their migration routes and described/shared their biographical experiences. In the second session, the women brought visual objects felt to be crucial in their sense of belonging and home to the group and talked about them. In the third session the women described and/or drew their ideal landscapes of home. I built on this experience of 'sharing objects' in my interviews with each participant in her home where she gave me a 'tour' of her visual cultures in their home. The research process was completed with an art exhibition at University College London where canvases, made from the women's drawings and descriptions (by Melanie Carvalho) were exhibited.

Table 3.5 – Detailed schedule of sessions held with the AWRC and Sangat Groups.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Asian Women's Resource Centre</th></tr>
<tr><td>Date</td><td>Focus</td><td>Attendance</td></tr>
<tr><td>Tuesday September 14th 1999</td><td>Scoping Session</td><td>14</td></tr>
<tr><td>Tuesday September 21st 1999.</td><td>(i) Biographical routes</td><td>6</td></tr>
<tr><td>Tuesday September 28th 1999</td><td>(ii) Landscapes of home</td><td>10</td></tr>
<tr><td>Tuesday October 5th 1999</td><td>(iii) Visual cultures of home</td><td>8</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">Sangat Advice Centre</th></tr>
<tr><td>Date</td><td>Focus</td><td>Attendance</td></tr>
<tr><td>Wednesday 2nd February 2000</td><td>Scoping Session</td><td>14</td></tr>
<tr><td>Wednesday 1st March 2000</td><td>(i) Biographical routes</td><td>9</td></tr>
<tr><td>Wednesday 8th March 2000</td><td>(ii)Visual cultures of home</td><td>9</td></tr>
<tr><td>Wednesday 15th March 2000</td><td>(iii) Landscapes of home</td><td>7</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">Individual Interviews</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">These were conducted with 14 volunteers from the group sessions in their homes, over this period.</td></tr>
</table>

3.3.1 Combining group and individual interviews

Small groups extend the range and depth of information and depth of analysis possible, in that they allow greater insight into social discursive processes than one-to-one interviews. In terms of group size for in-depth groups where members either know one another or will have the opportunity to do so, a membership of 8-12 is acceptable (Burgess et al. 1988a; 1988b). Rooms at the AWRC and the Sangat centres were ideal for the facilitation of this size group whilst maintaining a level of intimacy. I would have liked the group to have met more than three times but this would have been counter to guidance from previous research papers and the staff of the centres. Instead I extended contact with individuals through **home interviews** and a group visit to the exhibition of Carvalho's work. But, it is worth noting that the combination of interview and group sessions gives space to members who may be marginalized or silenced in the group process (Mitchell 1999). The interviews became part of the overall contact time in a different context, which sustained the values of a group dynamic without over-stretching the women's commitment to attend. The home interviews were conducted on a voluntary basis so as not to pressurise any of the women to agree to them.
Home interviews were conducted to explore the visual cultures in the home that were important to the women. This was in the form of a 'tour' led by the woman herself. As her guest she could show me as much or as little as she wished. The "tour" also ensured that the woman could stop the interview at any point. The length and the subject of our discussion was controlled by her. This interview was tape-recorded as the woman walked around her house describing specific objects that were valuable in their visual appearance in making 'home' and belonging in Britain. With permission, I recorded the interview and I took photographs as I followed the 'tour' of the visual cultures that each individual had planned for me.

The interview format allowed each woman additional space for voicing her feelings without any possible constraints that the group session might have imposed. These intimate stories are positioned politically against notions of "community views" or ethnic voices; life histories contextualise both the cultural materials in the home, and individuals' contributions in the group discussions. The stories attached to objects rendered these objects 'politically charged' through their acute connection to the biography of the woman. The dynamics of the home interview were very different to those of the group sessions but this was a positive difference, since the interviews followed the group. The women trusted me and they had thought through the 'tour' in light of the issues discussed in the group sessions. The interview allowed women to extend their testimonies to areas where they could reflect on actual cultural objects rather than abstract ideas. The different context of the home-based interview allowed for a different level of 'formality' (Green and Hart 1999) which was appropriate for examining personal objects and stories. The participants welcomed my visit into their home, and it was interpreted by many of the women as an acceptance of their hospitality and their thanks for participation in an enjoyable project.

Grounding the research in the oral histories and materials of visual culture in the home set up the research as a productive process of understanding lived and valued environments of the everyday. However, there seemed to be a gap in the research design with regards to the women's own **imagined geographies** of identification. The social-economic grounding in oral history and personal narrative negates the ways in which social fantasy and imaginative figuring inform life choices and cultural practice. This gap led me to include a creative exercise in the research where the women would draw their imagined landscapes of home. This exercise would complete the grounding of the research in multiple processes of identification – lived landscapes of home, history of migration and settlement, and imagined geographies of home. As part of the research design I wanted to also include an analysis of women art practitioners, as they are engaged in expressive cultural production which is important in the dialogues that I am examining. Within the thesis the positionality of Asian art practioners in the U.K., is incorporated through the work of Melanie Carvalho. The work of Asian women artists is contextualised within the politics of representation (Mercer 1990) that operates as a regime of expression for Black British artists. This is considered further in Chapter 6.

3.3.2 Visual Cultures in the home.

I have privileged visual cultures in the thesis as a means to explore how diasporic networks are activated. The materials of culture are treated as prisms through which locations, places, and iconographies of belonging are refracted. Academically, visual culture sits between art history and its 'distancing from the production of living culture' (Pollock 1996), and anthropocentric concerns with the relationship between the visual and processes of subjective / cultural identification and production. The intertextuality of visual culture ensures a need for complex analyses and interpretation from a range/variety of disciplinary perspectives. Additionally, materials of visual culture are not limited within any singular academic frame; film, video, urban design, photography, advertising, are interleaved in our experience of the social world. The materials of visual culture express aesthetic meaning in their presence, and are relational to lived experience. These materials are not separate from the political, economic, and social structures of society but help to constitute material realities. In this thesis, I am figuring visual cultures in the home as a means of *fixing* and *negotiating* residence in Britain, for the South Asian diaspora. There is a politics to the collection and display of these cultures. I examine the role and materials of visual cultures in the home in the context of work that deals with material cultures and identity. At the domestic scale, the definition of visual culture is further problemitised because they are not only flat planes of paint or print to be historicised but cross-over into electronic media, and objects which are considered within theories of consumption and material culture (Miller 1998).

To summarise, my enquiry looks at the effect of post-colonial migration on imagined, material, and cultural landscapes of identification. Visual cultures in the home ensure a positioning of diasporic groups through their metaphorical effect, their metonymical value and the accretion of meaning that these cultures are bound up in. Visual cultures, signifying remembered landscapes, symbolise the whole experience of a nation, and/or reflect textures of a specific place. A colour, texture or icon within a visual form can refract a memory of the whole experience of *being* in a different continent, a *journey* or simply a *moment* in a place. These refracted fragments of places offer co-ordinates from which a diasporic group can position themselves. I shall now turn to a brief overview of how the empirical research developed and the extent to which I was able to achieve the goals I had set.

3.4 Research in Practice

3.4.1 Introductory Scoping session

This was the first meeting to recruit potential participants. I used it to evaluate the coherence of the project, and the premise that individuals would find the ideas of "landscapes of home" and "visual culture" relevant and interesting area of conversation. It was a recruitment session where the women could get information about the project and decide if they wanted to commit: and where I could get a feel for individual participants and their suitability for group work. This session was successful with both groups. I had over 14 signatures and contact details at the end of each scoping meeting. I used the session to show slides, video and OHP to encourage discussion. The setting was important in ensuring a relaxed atmosphere. In both AWRC and Sangat group the room was comfortable with soft seats, where the women had met each other several times before. Both rooms were equipped with all the equipment necessary for presentations, workshops, film showings and educational training. I provided a hot vegetarian lunch, along with tea and coffee throughout the session. I did not tape-record this first session, but I asked the women's permission for recording in future sessions. The women reacted well to the whole package and were responsive to the slides, video and transparencies used.

The images I chose showed the range of visual cultures through which iconographies of England and India are represented. I chose images from John Taylor's (Taylor 1994) visual catalogue of photographs of touristic English landscapes, including Peter Henry Emerson from the late 1880s; Ingrid Pollard from her 'Pastoral Interludes' series; and an image by John Kipin of 'Muslims at Lake Windermere'. These were shown to initiate a discussion about Britishness and the landscape. The women responded by talking about the countryside, racist experiences on holiday and general experiences of exclusion. I then showed a slide still from *Mother India* (Khan 1957) to initiate a discussion on landscapes in general to get women talking about their relationships to them. Finally I played a clip from the film *'Guide'* (Annand 1965), the opening sequence which is a journey across India by the hero of the film Dev Annand. This clip and the women's responses to it are discussed in Chapter 5 and in Tolia-Kelly, 2001.

The women responded enthusiastically to the scooping session. One week later I posted out schedules of the session times and activities to all the women who had signed up. In addition I telephoned each woman personally (each week) and offered transport costs and a lunch to encourage them to come along to the session.

3.4.2 Research Strand A: Session One – Biographical routes (see table 3.3)

In the first session I focused on the women's biographies. Each woman recounted her individual biographical routes from birth to England, to the whole group. These were personal narratives, 'oral histories' in a group forum. This setting was valuable in many ways. It was the session where the women's 'real' landscapes of home were described and recorded; a recovery of a marginalized history of South Asian migration which produced evidence of migratory routes, in relation to individual women's life-histories. Lived landscapes, places of settlement and points of departure were critical. Mapping them showed me and the group a holistic tracing of South Asian migration and experience. The sharing of this knowledge was essential in bonding the group, and strengthening their commitment to the research project. As witnesses of each other's mapping, a level of trust and respect developed, breaking down possible religious and language barriers.

Practically, the process was as follows. In the room, I had four world maps on which I asked each woman to mark out her story, as she told it. The actual marking out exercise gave the group an understanding of each other's geographical referencing, which highlighted the scales of connections that they had with each other. It also socialised the group in each other's reference points and experiences of migration, and settlement. I used the mapping as a point to opening up a discussion on the shapes and textures of their lived landscapes. Individuals' asked each other about the nature of society in different locations including Sudan, Yemen, Lahore, and Bangladesh. These were on the different geographical scales of street, village, town, city, region, nation and continent. These discursive interchanges enriched the individual testimonies. Women who had lived in Kenya exchanged views with women who had family there, or had been on holiday there. Overall, a collage of the group's experiences and perceptions was recorded during the recounting of singular migration stories. I have been careful not to conflate these individual and group contributions within the analysis, but have allowed them to inform me on the women's different ways of connecting to landscapes of home.

3.4.3 Research Strand B: Session Two – Visual Cultures from the home

This was the session designed as the second element of figuring the diasporic experience in people's actual migratory, imagined, and cultural geographies. I designed it to interrogate the way that visual cultures are positioned in the home, and their importance in the process of figuring and identification. I treated these cultures as evidence of the material fixing of diaspora, and as artefacts that were vital in the process of settlement in the U.K. To do this, I asked the women to bring in one or two items from their homes that were important as visual cultures. I asked them to choose the most valued items that made their place of residence their home. I described the types of objects they could bring by telling them of two things that were important to me in my home. I extended the request by saying that visual culture included photographs, videos, embroidered cloth, paintings, drawings, pictures and film posters.

My aim was to encourage the women to think about everything in the home in terms of its visual importance. By bringing them into the group discussion, I wanted the women to describe the meanings of these things to each other. It was important that each person chose her own objects, evaluated their importance and described the logic of their meaning, by relating the story of each object's meaning to its aesthetics, iconic value, or its role in making home. These descriptions would be a way of elaborating previous contributions, as well as a means through which the participants could figure their sense of identity and location. In this session the women had the option of being producers. The objects that they brought were redefined by them, as being relevant to the discussion of visual culture and identity. This was intended as a session which examined the imaginative processes at play in the figuring of visual forms in the everyday, as well as projections of the women's way of valuing of different forms and images.

The objects that the women brought to this session varied in type. They included wedding photos, religious icons, religious images, landscape photographs, African curios, wooden engravings, table lights, and domestic utensils. This drew me into an analysis of visual culture and the definition of visual culture itself. The multisensory nature of the engagement with these visually important objects led me into an engagement with the refractive nature of material cultures as discussed in Chapter 5.

3.4.4 Research Strand C: Session Three – Landscapes of Home

This session was a collaboration with the landscape artist Melanie Carvalho. Our aim in this session was to encourage these women to think about their perceptions, experiences, and fantasy landscapes of home. The difficult step was to move away from a formal contribution or statement which 'fitted' their understanding of what was expected of them. We broke down some of the formalities of the group interaction by setting up a slide show. Melanie spoke about her work and her interest in landscape. She talked about landscape and the way that she used it as a device to record the different layers of connection that people had with places. Melanie used her own biography to explain the way that she had a sense of discordancy with various national citizenships, and her belief that a singular sense of belonging to a land was not a possibility for most people. Melanie describes herself as British, her cultural definition is Goan, but she was born in Zambia. Through this biographical routing, she described the way that landscape painting was a means of inscribing all of her memories, experiences and imagined connections with places onto a single canvas.

Melanie's own imaginative geography of home helped the participants feel more comfortable about the task we set them; to write and/or draw "the landscape that represents your idea of home" on an A4 sheet of paper which had space for a simple drawing or sentence. The women were told that they could draw, and/or write, and that Melanie would use these descriptions as the basis for paintings, which the women could view and discuss at a later point (in January or February 2000). Everyone was promised a print of 'their' painting at this future session.

This session required a greater informality than the others. I designed it using techniques designed by Claire Cooper Marcus[15] in her "Environmental Biographies Workshop(s)". I asked the women to close their eyes, took them through a relaxation exercise, and then asked them to imagine their ideal landscape of home. This was an exercise in visualising the environment with eyes shut, and with minimal stimuli. After a few minutes visualisation the women were asked to draw or write a description without talking to each other. I wanted to allow time and space for individuals to reflect on a more intimate contribution of an imagined geography of "home".

The session was designed to capture representations of each individual's imagined geographies of home. "Home" was used as a way into each individual's ideas of local places of dwelling and lived landscapes, but also extended into understandings of secure territories which might be signified in terminology such as "homeland" and "motherland". Home is a useful analytical tool of research into diasporic connections with land, on these different scales. The descriptions the women gave are a physical tracing of imagined iconographies of home. These are not necessarily formal national iconographies but are significant in the way that they resonate with the whole experience of settlement outside and within the U.K..The depictions were a way of tracing imagined landscapes that were intimately bound up with the women's sense of themselves, as figured in their landscapes of belonging.

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[15] Claire Cooper Marcus was Associate Professor at the College of Environmental Design, University of California at Berkeley. Marcus ran Environmental Biography Workshops in the late 1970s. I have copies of a transcript of a session given to me by Carolyn Harrison, at U.C.L.

3.4.5 Reciprocity: Session Four – Exhibition and feedback session

Melanie Carvalho collected people's written and visual descriptions of their ideal landscape of home, and then painted a small canvas based on each description. She and I discussed the nature of the relationship with the women who attended my groups and provided descriptions for her own project. We decided that we should give each woman a copy of the painting made from her own descriptions. I also requested that the women's paintings be exhibited independently at UCL, so that the women could see their work in a gallery space. The exhibition was held in July 2000[16]. This was a recorded session that acted as a closure to the project where the women received feedback from Melanie about her depictions of their spaces and places of identification. The session was also reflexive in that the participants were able to interrogate the artist. The women used this session to reflect on Melanie Carvalho's work, and her interpretation of their words and pictures of home (see Chapter 6). Most of the women were touched emotionally at the sight of the paintings and a few were moved to tears. Each was able to take home a print of her painting. I wanted the women to be the first to view the paintings, as they would be displayed in a gallery. This allowed them to appreciate their contribution in the public sphere of Fine Art. The exchange also offered a level of reciprocity to the process of interviewing. The art print was a token of their contributions to my thesis research, and to Melanie Carvalho's project. Total reciprocity is impossible. In fact no measurement is possible of the gains and losses experienced by any of the parties involved in the research process. I will now turn to the events in each session, beginning with AWRC and then moving on to the Sangat group.

3.4.6 The AWRC sessions

The women attending the sessions were familiar with the resource centre. They were known to each other and used to working with a facilitator in discussion. I was working with women that had seen me at the centre before, when I had worked there in 1990-91. Most of the women seemed relaxed and keen to help with a research project. The majority of women were dependent on welfare benefits, and living in public and private rented accommodation. Their situation has an influence on the way that they related to the dynamic of group sessions, as well as their contribution to these discussions. A severe lack of confidence was initially evident in the women's response to sharing their ideas and experiences. This was not due to the environment or having a researcher present. Rather, it seemed that the women were not used to being given a voice to talk about their ideas and perceptions. The women were used to being present within a group dealing with health issues or financial worries. Talking about landscape, identity, and migration was initially occluded in favour of discussing difficulties of racism, poverty, and oppression.

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[16] The paintings were exhibited at Plymouth in January 2001, at the Annual conference of the Royal Geographical Society and Institute of British Geographers I convened a session entitled "Visual Culture and Geographies of Identity" where there was a set of 9 papers presented including Melanie Carvalho's own presentation of her work. This added to my research by evaluating the women's reactions to the paintings, but also felt like giving the women something back. Exhibiting their paintings became a goal in making the research project more ethical and less exploitative. The journal *Ecumene* also published an interview between the artist and myself discussing the project see Anderson, P., M. Carvalho, et al. (2000). "Intimate Distance : fantasy islands and English Lakes." Ecumene 8(1): p112-119. These exhibitions have proved effective in disseminating the practices of an ethnographic research project and extending the dialogue beyond the thesis production and exhibition to a forum of theoreticians and researchers.

During the discussions, racism that they had experienced from staff in the N.H.S., education system, or from immigration officials was mentioned constantly. The introductory scoping session and biography session, were dominated by recollections of prejudice and exclusion. This was particularly so when landscape was mentioned. Social relationships were more dominant than cultural values. This has influenced my analytical strategies, as it has drawn me to consider the relationship between their emphasis on racism when considering landscape values. Relationships with landscape are figured through experiences of racism on the street, school, hospital and on arrival into the U.K.. In consequence, the analysis of landscape has been contextualised, and socially and culturally fixed. Feelings of exclusion were expressed at every group discussion and have been associated with every recollection of migration, settlement and cultural belonging to England.

Although the women were socially dependent on welfare systems, they were varied in their educational achievements. Three of them had completed a B.A. or B.Sc. degree. The level of self expression and theorisation were high, the only difficulty was in translating these expressive group discussions. The words used by the women and their meanings were not always exactly translatable. In Britain, the word 'landscape' or 'nation' has varied connotations. This level of subtle understanding is difficult to achieve with Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, or Urdu, if it is not a language used in a non-domestic way. My knowledge of these languages is domestic, I have no experience of extensive or subtle vocabulary of the legal system or poetry. Misinterpretation is always present in any research analysis, including same-language research. The awareness of this has enhanced the sphere of the transcript analysis, and I have tried to open up the interpretation of the text to include subtler explanations.

The environment of the centre was ideal in minimising alienation, and the provision of food was very helpful. It attracted attendees but also galvanised the group from the first joint meal onwards. It became a focal point of discussion, consolidating liminality and sociality of the group's experience. Food provision had to be dealt with sensitively, as there were differences between vegetarians and non-vegetarians, reflecting religious differences between Muslims and Hindus. To bridge this, I provided vegetarian Gujarati food for all the sessions except the last. The non-vegetarians loved the idea of region-specific cuisine, and the vegetarians gained confidence in the purity of the food.

3.4.7 The Sangat Centre

Practically, the environment was less familiar for these group members who were a lunch group used to meeting in restaurants. However, this was a much more confident group who immediately appropriated the Sangat centre space, and shaped it by moving furniture and organising seats.

This group was made up from a wealthier set of women who were familiar to each other. They were, literally, 'ladies-who-lunch'. Only one member worked full-time. All of the women own their own homes in the more middle class suburbs within Harrow and Hertfordshire. These women arrived at varying times to the U.K. including some who came in the mid-1980s. Overall, their wealth has meant greater mobility. Members of the group had the choice to maintain second homes, or regular visits back to India, or East Africa. Their mobility has shaped the difference in their contributions and engagement with the themes of the research material. The Sangat Group was confident and sophisticated. The women articulated complex ideas theorised politically about landscape, identity and racism.

Resonating with the AWRC group, when landscape was discussed, the Sangat Group also centred around experiences of racism at school, health service and other social security officials. Racism was an ingrained part of their experience of landscape in the U.K, at local, and national scales. Social and cultural factors directed of the discussion of migratory experience to the role of Empire and the extension of racial prejudice to their experiences in the U.K. As a more confident group, the discussions flowed easily. There was a level of respect and responsibility established in the beginning when setting up ground rules, as well as through their mutual commitment to the research project which was strengthened by hearing each other's biographies. There was mutual respect maintained through an appreciation of mutual experiences of financial, emotional, and physical struggles.

The women in the group all spoke English fluently, although they often use of Gujarati and Hindi. This minimised miscommunication and misunderstandings, and allowed for a better flow of group discussion. They were also able to engage better with the terms such as landscape and memory, articulating subtle ideas in English which left less room for potential mistakes in interpretation.

3.5 Interpretive Strategies

In this final section, I will turn to the interpretive strategies I developed to deal with the variety of data. The diversity is recorded in Table 3.6. The materials for analysis generated through the research design were varied. The group discussions generated written transcripts; biographical migratory route maps; sheets of descriptions of landscapes of home; paintings of these descriptions; visual cultures; transcripts and photographs from the tour of visual cultures of the home; and debriefing notes.

Table 3.6 – Empirical Material produced from the Research

Data Type	**Quantity**
Transcriptions of taped group interviews	15 hours (6x2.5 hrs)
Transcriptions of individual interviews	32 hours. (14x2hrs) + (2x2hrs)
Drawn and written descriptions of 'ideal landscapes of home'	24 sheets of A4 (some women did 2 or 3 descriptions)
Paintings made from descriptions of 'ideal landscapes of home'	17 canvases made from 23 descriptions.
Pictures of visual cultures/objects	60 photographs (apx)

Full transcriptions of the group interviews and individual interviews were made. Within qualitative research, the data are inscribed in the full version of the text including pauses, laughter, tears and over-talking. A full analysis is only possible with a thorough transcription (Frankland and Bloor 1999). I transcribed the interview tapes, each in a single session over a continuous period of time during summer 2000. Accurate transcriptions took a long time, due to over-talking between participants and the complexity of the language translation. On average, I took 10-12 hours per hour of tape. I used line numbers for quick reference and left margins for comments which I made whilst transcribing. These comments were useful together with debriefing notes and field notes made during and after the group sessions.

It is important to note that the analysis process itself is a powerful way of oppressing, controlling and imposing order and meaning on participants' voices. This is a political act of shaping subjectivities. In this process, it is important that this 'act of violence' as described by John May (1996), is recognised and the analysis is driven by an awareness of this. As a result of these concerns, in writing up the thesis, I have grounded the theory in the women's own testimonies and inscribing the thesis with quotes from the discussions. The quotes make some degree of transparency and accountability possible. The triangulation of the methodology also allowed the testing and re-testing of the importance I placed on certain codes, and axioms of meaning when interpreting the group transcripts. The two other types of materials- canvases made from descriptions, and visual cultures, helped to reground and create a collage of codes produced through different media and different forms of dialogue. Cultural geographies were narrated verbally, present in material and visual cultures and created by the women in drawn or written form. All of these forms are present in the thesis as a means of providing the possibility of a reflexive interpretation for readers, including the participants.

The analysis of the transcripts was completed by using a "mapping" technique recommended by Burgess (1996) and Strauss (1987). I reviewed each transcript individually and familiarised myself with it. Over time, I mapped code words which indicated potential themes, as a system of open coding. The codes arose within each session, and were mapped separately on an A2 sheet of paper. I used a mind-mapping technique to connect the themes that came out of the discussion. I coded each section of the transcript which in turn fitted into certain areas on the A2 map. I worked through each transcript several times, building on the themes and codes. Codes connected with other codes that operated across sessions and across groups. These are axial codes, as described by Strauss (1987). On the A2 map, I marked the line numbers of the occurrences. This marking gave me an idea of how important any one theme was by the number of line numbers marked (Crang 1992). These emerged as core codes. Such discursive maps (Burgess 1996) help thematise all the transcripts. The core codes also emerge from the data, thus grounding the data rather than being shaped by my own preconceptions. These core codes, axial codes and their mapping have defined my thesis structure, and the structure within each chapter. The process of coding and re-coding was complex and time consuming, but was effective in grounding the research based on the words in the transcripts. Differences and similarities between the Sangat and AWRC groups became another trope of investigation through looking at the codes. Codes reflected the structural analysis that I assumed would come up, such as religion and marriage. These were reflected in the open, axial and selective coding that emerged (Strauss 1987).

The mapping technique is a way of reflecting all the transcript material in a visual and symbolic way. The codes could be visualised beyond the linear temporal text of transcript and became a way of storing sections of the transcript text in relation to each other on a visual map. Over time, layering and over-layering of mind-mapped codes emerge providing a theoretical thread that exists beyond the two-dimensional textual recording of the words said in a group session. The analysis becomes one of actually analysing the dialogic nature of the themes in the discussions rather than an analysis of a 'flattened' text format of the discussion. Mind-mapping brings the discussion to life in a multidimensional way more relevant to the way that communication systems and frames of reference operate in society. The linear textual representation of the transcript is disrupted by this collage of themes, and codes that are 'organically' linked. Whilst not suited to every researcher, I found the visualisation process extremely helpful in the analysis and coding process.

3.5.1 Women's descriptions and Carvalho's paintings.

The interpretation of images made by the women and Melanie Carvalho was done through a coding process much like the transcript process. I looked for relationships between the imagined landscape and actual biography of each woman. The coding of these led me to analyse visual descriptions in relation to the individual's memorialising the local ecologies of depicted places. I looked at the sites and modalities, as summarised in recent publications on visual methodologies (Leeuwen and Jewitt 2001; Rose 2001). In analysis of the descriptions made for Carvalho, I focused on expressing their 'compositional interpretation' as advocated by Rose (2001). In describing them, I created a secondary text based on writing through their characteristics in terms of colour, composition, and the symbolic nature of the compositions.

This compositional interpretation became a means of coding the visual images. These codes were contextualised in relation to their production (in a group interview process) and the biography of the producer.

Melanie's paintings were also analysed using this method. I reviewed them in relation to Carvalho's own biography. I had interviews with all the women including Melanie Carvalho where they talked of certain places, and landscapes which also came up in their descriptions. Melanie's biography had heavily influenced her production especially in her choice of landscape painting as a form. I paid particular attention to colour – hues, saturation and values. Iconography has been a key concept in my interpretation. The landscapes drawn and described were representative of a whole lived or imagined experience.

These landscapes were analysed by contextualising my interpretation within the appropriate disciplinary codes of analysis. For example, I chose to approach the theorising of materiality of the visual cultures by recognising their multisensory nature. The material cultures were simultaneously visual and material. Thus, the site of production, consumption and an embodied relationship with these cultures has been considered. The key interpretive orientation has been recording the symbolic meanings that the women ascribe to various aspects of the visual cultures and objects they discussed. Colour, texture and composition have been considered, but only in reference to the description and dialogue given in the interview(s). The landscapes that are refracted through these objects are central to the interpretative strategy. The objects are also expressive of multisensory relationships rather than simple ocular relationships. These have been grouped through codes that emerged through the transcripts of the home interviews. My research design has been interdisciplinary. It is informed by analysis within art history, anthropology and cultural studies, as the subsequent chapters will show.

3.6 Some Reflections on the process...

Through the research I learnt a lot about the participants' lives, their struggles and joys. The groups were definitely successful in achieving a reflexive, open and honest exchange between participants. The characteristics of liminality, sociality and reflexivity were achieved through the right environment, the provision of food and good facilitation of the discussions. My own identity and positionality were a constant consideration in the research design in that

I had decided from the beginning that I would be open, reflexive, and honest about my own biography, and contribute to the discussion. However, this was not a smooth path of an Asian woman researching others of the same cultural identity. The identity that I assumed, and the identity that the group imposed on me, was made up of different factors that contributed to the effectiveness of my breaking down barriers, and inequalities between researcher and researched. My identity was not always accepted as being seamlessly compatible with the whole group. This was made most obvious at lunch with the AWRC group. I am not a vegetarian but, as I had identified myself as being Gujarati and Kenyan, the Gujarati women in the group were uncomfortable about the morality of my non-vegetarian diet. Eating the flesh of a dead animal made me inhumane and unprincipled. In the Sangat group, this was not an issue. However, for them, the fact that I had not married a Hindu or Gujarati, made me 'different', an outsider. After my revelation of my spouse's identity they were simultaneously polite and distant; both fascinated by this anomaly and repulsed by his 'foreignness'.

At different times in the AWRC group, the interpreter assumed that my need for an interpretation of certain words was greater than it was. She continually 'over-translated' in the sense that when I asked about specific words or possible double meanings of words, she would insist on repeating the whole ten minutes of discussion. These misinterpretations and misdiagnosis of my positionality within the Asian community caused some strain between the interpreter and myself, but also confirmed the way that identity is constantly constructed as relational. The group spent much time in the discussion revealing diverse and heterogeneous biological, religious, cultural and national 'roots'. They identified with a sense of Asianess that I was tested against. At other moments my skin colour, biography and values were deemed compatible. The inclusionary sub-text included body language, humour and verbal gestures.

The triangulation of methodology ensured that the three sessions wove the theoretical material into a coherent and fertile body of research materials. The women themselves engaged with the three sessions as a smooth transfer between different but related workshops. They consciously interrelated sessions and referred to other sessions in their discussions. The 'doing' of oral testimony, drawing landscapes and choosing visual objects all operated as mechanisms for re-enacting a positionality through the act of group discussions. This re-enactment was enriched and made more complex through the women's responses to each others frames of reference and dialogues. The triangulation served as a means of increasing the spatial dimensions of research through the tasks – the mental geographies, material geographies and lived migration routes were recalled and inscribed into an active exchange. This extended the possibilities of grounded theorising to these other dimensions of identity-making. I believe the holistic mapping through cultural prisms and oral testimonies enables a truer representation to be achieved of the positioning of the women participants. Ethically, triangulation tapped into different kinds of expressive identities and geographies. This methodology has also extended the research questions into a theorisation of visual culture as they are vital and operative on the domestic scale of identity-making. Visual culture is further theorised and defined in the contexts of consumption and material cultures in the domestic sphere, as the subsequent chapters will show.

CHAPTER 4 – Intimate Distance: Biographies of Displacement and Re-Connection

4.1 Introduction

This chapter maps out the lives of the twenty-two women who attended the Biographies workshops. From their testimonies I shall show the complicated relationships that exist, and that these relationships are complexly material, fantastical and conflated by the process of oral history and memory. The chapter is in four sections. In section **4.1** I introduce the way that the writing process links to the ethnographic materials. Section **4.2** is a set of maps representing the biographical migration routes of the women. These are formal maps of the women's connections, created through the biographical accounts made in the group discussions and individual interviews. Section **4.3** is an examination of these experiences of migration. The biographies are contextualised through family histories, and social and cultural structures in East Africa and India. The routes are characteristic of South Asian migration in a specific period of modern history, and they are representative of colonial relationships in the post war period. This was a time of the contraction of the British Empire and also of the possibility for migration into the heart of the British Empire – London. All the participants are women, and their gender has shaped many of the decisions made in terms of migration and settlement. Their biographical maps are explored in relation to personal testimonies of family history, economics, gender and race which have figured and shaped the women's biographies. The last section, **4.4,** examines the way that these migration routes figure in their lives today, through memories of past landscapes of home.

> *Beena – "The British have scattered our people across the whole globe. Isn't that right?"*[17](AWRC)

The biographies are very much formed as a result of colonial history in India and East Africa. Migration between continents and countries, and the socio-political structures in colonial territories have shaped these women's lives. Within the chapter I refer to colonialism particularly in relation to issues of citizenship, and structures of race in British East Africa. Colonialism was the formal governance in these territories which defined rights and responsibilities for British subjects in the colonies. Colonialism defined mobility and migration between territories and within nation states, in relation to socio-economic objectives. Structures of colonial governance have defined citizenship by defining boundaries of nation states in the Indian sub-continent and British East Africa. These are significant in denoting state boundaries, responsibilities and policy toward residents. Within the colonies British rule also defined racial hierarchies enforced through state policies. The legacy of these race politics is present in modern day post-colonial, independent nation states and within Britain itself. Citizenship for the women discussed in this chapter is treated as their formal 'belonging' as subjects of the crown in the colonial territory. Throughout their lives, as British subjects, all the women held British nationality. However, race politics in all the territories has complicated the women's formal notions of citizenship and belonging to a national identity. There is a 'doubleness' to their senses of belonging to this British citizenship. I have therefore termed their feelings of belonging on a subjective level as being different to formal definitions of citizenship.

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[17] HINDI "British log ko sare duniya ma hum pasere hue hum abhi. Nai?" (l- 1092 :G1A ;B). Quotations from transcripts are referenced as above: Language; translation as appropriate; (line number; Group number; and initials of participant).

Memories of past places of residence have been inscribed in the women's testimonies. These memories are fixers of their positioning and identity in contemporary Britain. The women's memories and nostalgia are crucial in the process of identifying and feeling a belonging to a nation, landscape or place. I have treated these memorials to past lives, landscapes and histories as building blocks in forming an understanding the women's relationships with past places of residence, and their influence on their current figuring and positioning in the U.K..These memories activate connections between past and present, spatially and temporally, and in this respect they hold together identity through remembered landscapes of home.

There are both commonalities and differences between the groups, which both complicate and enrich the record of the South Asian presence in Britain. Differences between individuals and the groups were expressed through their material lives, their expectations when arriving in the U.K. and their senses of mobility, as shaped by their income and quality of life. All the women in the study have a relationship with India, whether they were born there or not. None of the women was born in the U.K..However, they all have gained citizenship through their rights as colonial subjects in British territories, pre-Independence. All the women are in their

30s, 40s and 50s and have memories of their parent's migration routes. The biographies of the women contextualise their positionality in the U.K., but they also show a non-stereotypical picture of Asian women's character, lives and contributions to creating and sustaining pre- and post-Independence colonies. The chapter shows the complexity of British Asian migration and citizenship through their routes to England.

The women have mainly undergone forced migration, although not always due to expulsion from East Africa. Their gender has meant that they have their routes mapped out through circumstance of marriage or through their father's mobility. Only one of the women in the study actively chose the U.K. for her place of residence and point of economic migration. This does not mean that the study represents what has become a stereotype of Asian women – submissive and suppressed by their triple oppression of race, gender and Asian community culture. Despite their oppression within and without their communities, these women's life histories include quite empowered examples of individual courage, political struggle, and personal struggles, as well as a constant sense of sacrifices made to consolidate family needs. Migration, for them, has mostly been a matter for the men in their lives. Their own choices have been negated and are at best marginal, prior to coming to England. However, at the end of this process they have settled in the heart of the Empire, the metropolis of colonial rule and decision-making.

The exploration of personal biographies also offers insight into the materials of citizenship, in the form of landscape, soil, ecology, social and cultural networks. The countries in which the women have lived are important in shaping their personal figuring within different understandings of citizenry and the different dynamics of race, in each nation state. Being Asian in London is very different to being Asian in Kenya and different, again, to being a Gujarati in India. Multiple layers of placing are being negotiated at different moments. Indians have been positioned as a racialised minority subject in fractured African colonies. In India, identity positioning is made complex in a caste-based, communalist community. This positioning is complicated further when faced with citizenship in England as a brown body in a white space, without the complex structures of identification of an Asian society. Political identification is reduced to a crude set of race boundaries. In India, a brown body has many possible identities, defined by language, state, caste, religion, familial and class. In England, these distinctions are reduced to "Asian", without consideration of the complexities of identity possible just in a single state such as Maharastra, let alone the whole of the South

Asian sub-continent. Within the chapter, some of these complexities and, particularly, the partiality of national identity are exposed in relation to the lives and experiences of the immigrants. The research also reveals the different cultures of belonging and citizenship present within a social group which identify with each other as Asians in Britain, but who have multiple experiences, and locate themselves in a number of countries across three continents. As I will argue, the experiences are similar in their complicated migratory routes and there is a similar experience in Britain as "foreigners", yet the similarity of the group's identification as "Indian" cannot be explained simply.

4.2 Writing through the talking

The materials that form this chapter are transcripts of group interviews entitled 'Biography session'. This was the second group sessions held with the AWRC and the Sangat groups. Transcripts from 14 individual interviews were also analysed in relation to biographical facts and migration histories of the women and their families. This session was an empowering session for the women in that they had a chance to narrate their life biographies to each other. The women in the group knew each other but many women had never known about each others biographical histories and experiences. The sharing of these bonded the group and enriched the connections that they had already made. Through the talking they learned about commonalities that they had not expected and about differences which were also a surprise. The process of the group discussion was not purely a fact-finding session for obtaining linear histories, but served to interweave individual biographies and social understandings of Asian migration and culture in a contextualising process. This created a forum which enhanced individual knowledges and experiences through the group discussion.

I have tried to express women's stories and impart the depth of these impressions and recollections in this chapter. However the richness of the group discussion is broken up because of the system of quotation. To give a context to this quotation style I have included one section from the biographies transcript that shows a group discussion as it was in reality, including the breadth of ideas and the depth of theorisation that the transcripts incorporate (see table **4.1**). To some degree the personalities of the women are lost and a recovery through thematic analysis is impossible. In truth, the women's humour, trust and commitment to the group process were the factors that ensured the richness of material which has been analysed and written through here. The group operated as a powerful mechanism to draw out personal biographies and experiences. The process levelled out any internal social prejudices as bonds between members strengthened.

In the session I used two A2 sized world maps, which I tacked onto the wall. These were the focus for the discussion as I got the women to talk through their individual routes of migration. The advantages of doing this were that the women were initially jointly focused on something separate to the group. This levelled out any social dynamics that may have been disruptive, as well as giving all the women a voice in the process. As the first session in the series (see table **3.2**), this method was productive in integrating the group and in forming a new dynamic based on the aims of the research. As the contributions were made the map of a cumulative migration routes was being formed, at the end of which the women could see a migration map of their group. This was enlightening for the whole group as it revealed their personal biographies in a formal map. The session worked as a recovery process of their oral biographies, but also in a sharing of personal experiences and struggles. These experiences were discussed in relation to cultural politics including gender and race. The process has revealed the level of self-theorisation that is in operation in these women's daily lives, informed by their experiences. When the women considered each others contributions they engaged in reflection of these on an individual scale, a group scale, and a global scale of an 'Asian' experience. Just how this is in operation is demonstrated below (see table **4.1**).

Table 4.1 – Group Transcript (Sangat): Biography Session One, March 2000.

Anju *– There was a freedom. Yeah, I Don't know Shazia, when I still go there, although the political situation is not stable there, You still find..well I still find that I am freer there than here. (freedom/ constraints)*
Darshna *– Right.*
Anju *– We've always communicated with the Africans, over there we had servants, but I think we treated them as part of our family sort of. I remember when I was young that servant is still there in my house. He's old but is still there. (race paternalism)*
Darshna *– So you've got a house still in Uganda?*
Anju *- My mums. No in Nairobi. My mum, my sister, my brother they're still there. And the people who worked 20 years for us, they're still there.*
Darshna *– What is the relationship like there now, amongst Asians?*

Neela – *But you know what it is, there is a much smaller community. Now it's like there are no divisions between Lohana, Vaniyas, Sikhs, Punjabis. They're all one in Kenya because there is so few of them. They're forced to be. But here our numbers have increased. Basically it's not possible to be one big community. Even within individual groupings you can't be one.* *(communalism/ race structure in East Africa)*

Shazia – *Plus another thing is the country where you have grown up..you always have good memories of the past of your childhood.* *(memories/ childhood idyll)*

Darshna – *What memories do you have of the past of Bombay..sorry Delhi?*

Shazia – *Very good memories, that time I couldn't wait to grow up and you know do what I had to do. But now when I look back it feels like the best years of my life. Being with my parents. Getting up at ten in the morning, doing nothing the whole day. Taking the car and going wherever I wanted, line of boyfriends outside. Parents getting mad about that. It seems like really good days, being the youngest in the family.* *(freedom/ no responsibilities)*

Anju – *Different generation as well. I think there is generation gap as well. Our children wouldn't be thinking like what we are thinking. They are born here, so their thinking is going to be completely different. If I told Sapna and Rakhi to go and live in Nairobi, This is their home.* *(future connections)*

Shazia – *Yes this is their childhood memories*

Anju – *Absolutely.*

Shazia – *But when I go back home, I become what I used to be.* *(back home/ transformative return journey)*

Anju – *Shazia, why do you feel like that? Because you feel comfortable there that's why you become like that isn't it?*

Shazia – *I am there with my brothers, sisters, if I had them here it would be different. (emotional) But because I'm denied of that here, so I become that over there. They tolerate my tantrums, they tolerate "I don't want to eat this! What is this rubbish?"(laughter) "Get food from outside", they tolerate everything and maybe because I go for a little while. Right? If I was living there they would say..take a ticket from here..(laughter)*

Anju – *U turn!*

Darshna – *What else is there apart from your family? It can't just be family. You get off the plane..What is it?*

Shazia – *It's the air.*

Darshna – *The air.*

***Shazia** - It's the smell. I mean that..For me..that's a maybe you all go there and think it's all so dirty, it's so foggy. I get asthma, I get this, I get that....but for me you know the heat, the smell, when I get off the plane I feel Ahhh..* *(sensory memories)*

***Heena** – Garam havva (Eng: warm air) (smiling)* *(environment)*

***Manjula** – Ha, I feel like that when I go to Bombay*

***Shazia** – When I come back, I tell Lalit (husband) "There's no noise on the road, there's no people on the road... it's just like a dead place you can ride for miles and not see another human being where as there, you step out of the house and there are millions of people all around you.* *(social ecology)*

***Manjula** – Saying Hello to you as well.* *(inclusion/belonging)*

***Anju** – It's her birthplace, this is where, although we are not living in Kenya, but we were born there and I think that's..*

***Bharti** – ..attachment to it.* *(connection/identity)*

***Darshna** – So do you think it's because you were born there?*

***Shazia** - I was born there, I have grown up over there, and my home is there. Maybe if I didn't have my home, when my mother is not there, I might not go that much, obviously because right now I just tell mum "I'm coming". I don't have to ask her whether it suits her, whether it's O.K., whether kids have exams, I don't have to ask her anything. I just pack my bag and I go. But maybe when she's not there it won't be the same.*

***Anju** - It will be different, yeah I feel the same.* *(future 'asian' connections)*

***Darshna** – What happens when you go?*

***Anju** – I've got my mums house there in Nairobi....my eldest brother and my sister. So I just say I'm coming and I go there. There are no preparations to be done, nothing to be done, everything's done for you. Everything is ready, no questions, nothing.*

***Darshna** – What does it feel like when you're on that aeroplane?*

***Anju** – Same..I feel like I'm coming home....although I haven't lived there for over thirty years.* *(home/ reality vs memory)*

In this section of transcript, the women are talking through their relationship with the place of residence before migrating to England. At a glance, as the right-hand codes show, a series of subjects that are being engaged with simultaneously. The women's journeys of return are constantly part of the narrative – the women's presence 'back home' is relational to their life here in England. The way that the memories of, for example, getting off the plane in Bombay, trigger other women's memories of the same, so that Anju talks of her Kenyan experience immediately after Shazia. The scent of warm air, the sight of the non-white majority population and the feelings of non-alienation are common to members of the group and can be traced through their contributions; Anju, Shazia, Harsha, and Manjula all connect with each other through these memories, although they are not referring to the same places. They also express an empathy with each other's sense of connection to these places. The memories of these places are however much stronger than recent experiences. This is expressed by Anju at the end where she states despite having been away for thirty years that Kenya still remains her home. The life in the U.K. is being compared to knowledge of an East Africa of the 1970s rather than a real engagement with life in Kenya now. The women say themselves that much of the importance that they give their memories is about childhood, and a romanticised notion of a childhood idyll played out in the past and in a past home. This distance of time and place smoothes over the difficulties and the pain, to capture a colourful and secure past framed as a memory of home. The future for the community is also discussed in the context of migration. The women's children do not have these same networks and this is considered as a sad thing, both for individuals and the community.

4.3 Biographical Route Maps

The maps represent both the women's biographies, and a specific set of colonial relationships between colonial subjects and the spectrum of countries that have been controlled by the British state as colonies. The countries include Yemen, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Malawi, Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Sudan, and Zambia. Economic, social, and cultural relationships have emerged from these migration routes and are considered in several contexts. Firstly, this is a mapping of economic flows of labour governed by policies of the colonial administrators. These, in turn, have manifested themselves on the ground in the way in which people were encouraged to travel between the continents of Africa, Asia and Europe. The routes taken by the women signify the needs of the British state for South Asian labourers and entrepreneurs at different moments in the history of the Empire, in the post war period.

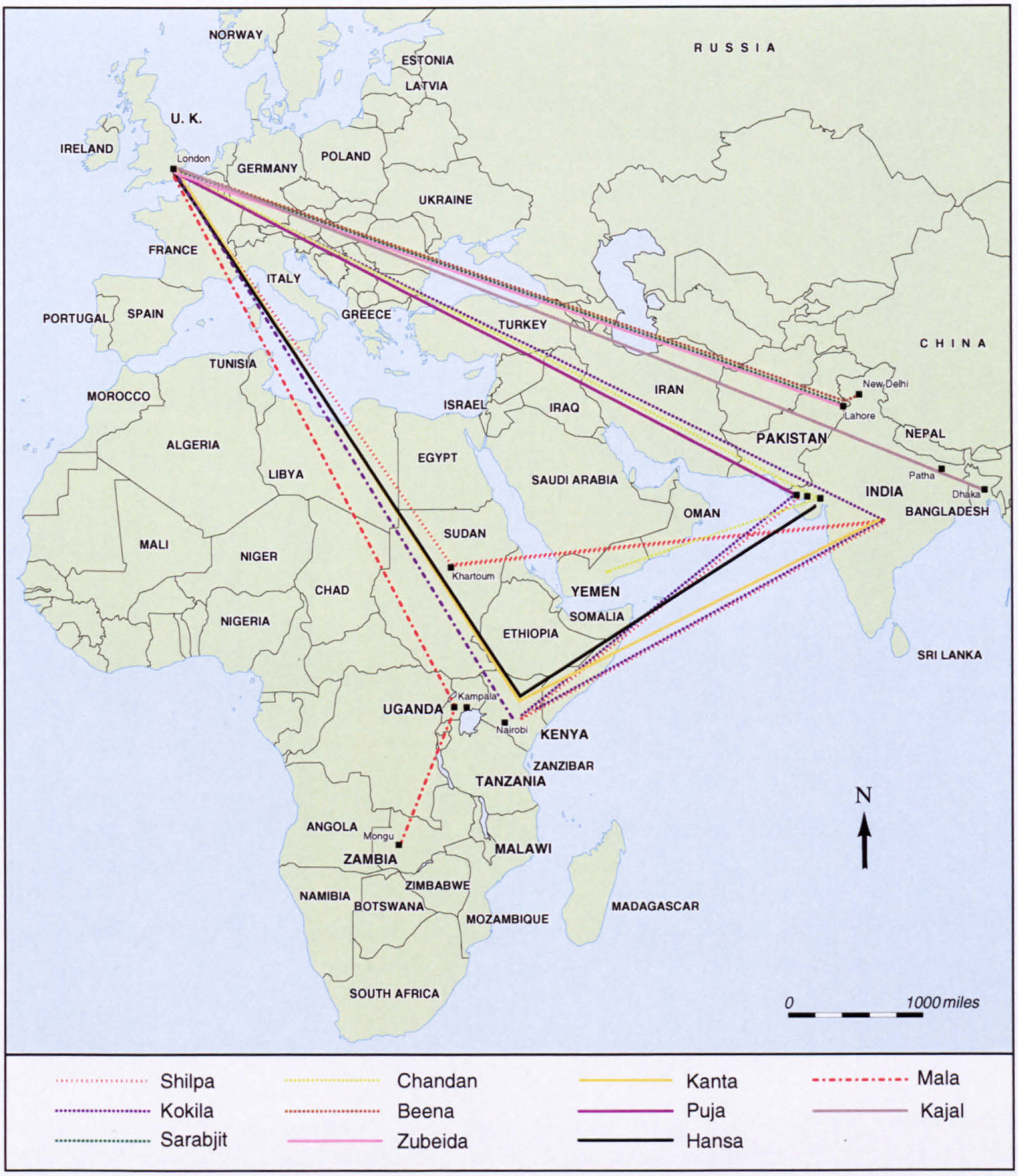
Secondly, the maps provide a set of active associations for the women in the workshops, particularly associate with different landscapes they have lived and worked in. Places where their parents have been resident are also included, since there is a direct familial connection.

But these are also places which have come up in their descriptions of their biographies. Thirdly, the mappings constitute a pattern of social and cultural flows. These are important in shaping the Asian community in Britain, and its influence on British society, as well as defining a relationship with the Indian sub-continent as a point of belonging, from which there has been dispersal. Such social and cultural moorings, which have shifted in time, are manifested in the day-to-day lives of the South Asian diaspora, not necessarily as smoothly defining practices but as a set of practices from which to define or resist. Connections remain as a set of coordinates from which to navigate, negotiate, and "arrive". These route maps schematically represent migration flows of the women participants, in a specific time frame. These biographical routes are examined in the women's own words later in the chapter, extending the representation of places and routes to a richer biographical record.

Out of the twenty-two women who were interviewed, ten were born in East Africa four in Kenya; four in Uganda, one in Zambia, and one in Tanzania. Six of these women moved to London in 1972 and 1973, the remainder came in the mid 1980s. The fact that they were born in East Africa means that their parents settled there in the 1930s and 1940s, or those whose grandparents made settlement there made the journey in the 1920s and 1930s. The women who did not leave East Africa in the 1972 expulsions, were resident in Malawi and Kenya, and were members of a wealthy elite in these countries.

Of those women who were not born in East Africa, nine of the women were born in India, two in Pakistan, and one in Bangladesh. Out of these women six arrived in the 1980s after marriage, to join husbands who had settled in London in the 1970s. The remaining three women although born in India, were living in East Africa during the East African expulsion 1972, but came to London via India. The maps below show their routes of migration and places of settlement prior to arriving in the U.K. to live permanently.

Map 4.1 – Biographical Migration Map of the AWRC Group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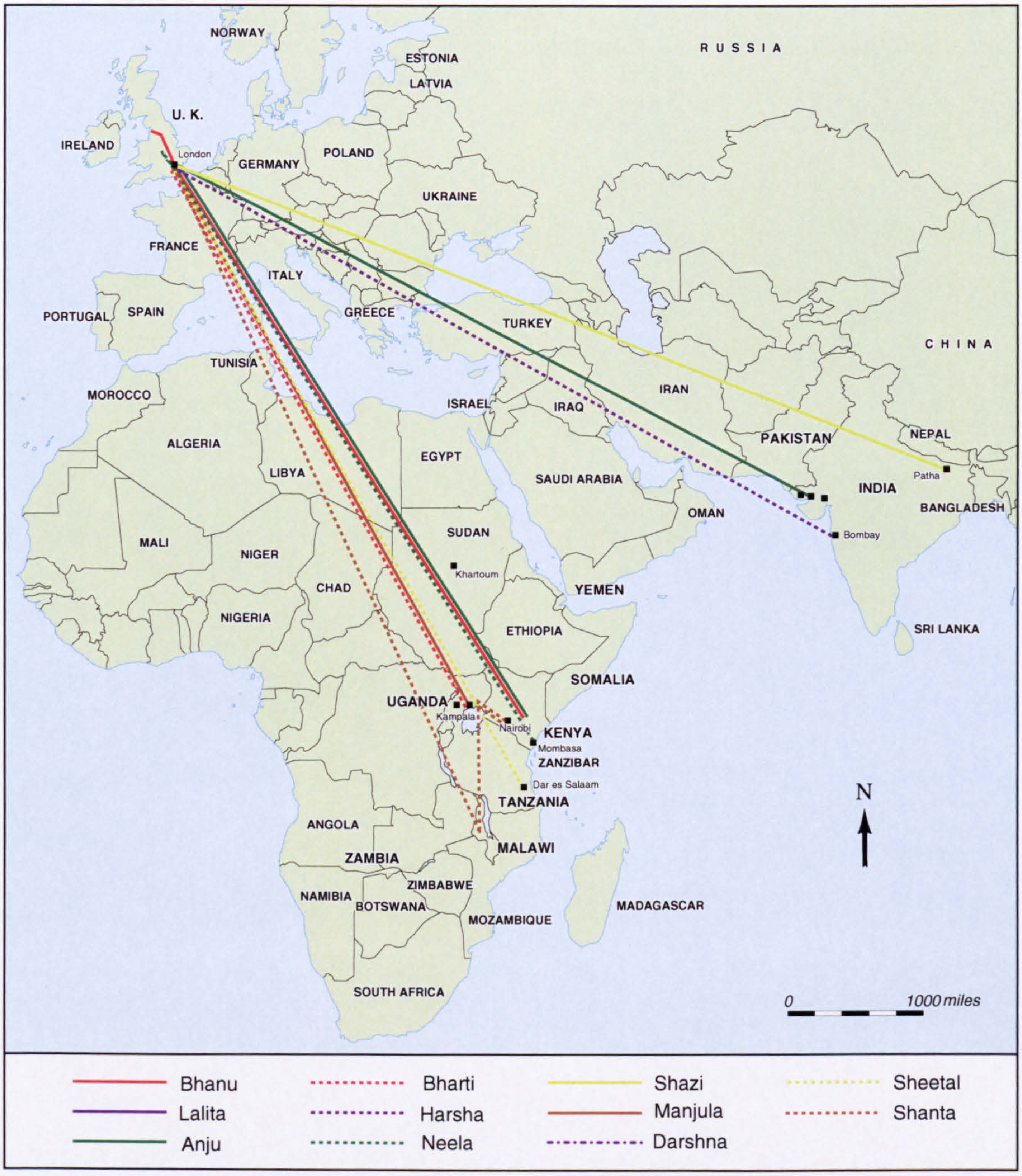
This map (Map 4.1) shows the biographies of the women who attended the session at the Asian Women's Resource Centre, mapped out as migration routes to England. A triangular pattern is shown: India to East Africa to the U.K. The map shows women have migrated directly to the U.K. from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India. The women from Pakistan are from families who had an agricultural base and were relatively wealthy. The majority of women who have come via East Africa, are Gujaratis from Kutch and Gujarat. They travelled to Kenya, and Uganda to meet husbands, fathers or brothers who went ahead to settle. Only one member of this group was born outside the Indian sub-continent.

Map 4.2 – Biographical Migration Map of the Sangat Group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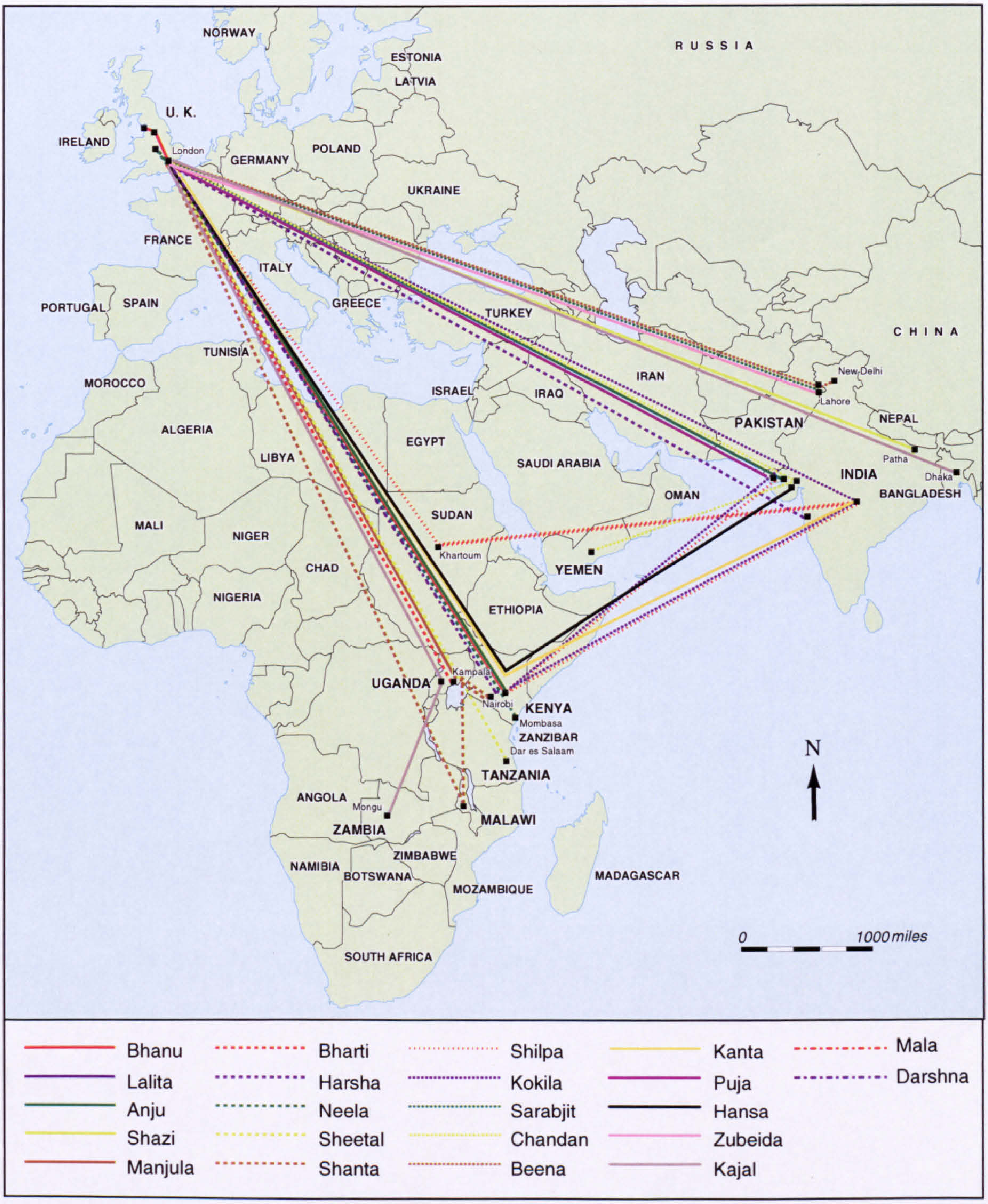
Shanta
Anju
Neela
Darshna

The pattern of migration in the Sangat group (Map 4.2) is not based on a triangulation between the three continents of Africa, Europe and Asia. Instead, all of the women in this group have travelled directly from their country of birth to the U.K. because of marriage. It is quite clear from the map that the women were from second, third or fourth generation families settled in East Africa. Many of the women from East Africa came as 'Africans' to Europe. This is very different to those women from the AWRC who include 'double' migrants. The Sangat women's economic and social status in Britain is much stronger, due to their families wealth accumulation in British East Africa, where opportunities were available to a greater degree than in India at the time of parental migration. The Indian women represented through the map are predominantly women from wealthier business families rather than agricultural land-owners or labourers.

Map 4.3 shows the women's migration as a united set of biographies. The pattern of triangulation has been compounded. The map also highlights the commonality of routes and places from which the women travelled. The women from India do not come from all over India but are limited to two or three states. Within Africa, also, although Asians have lived all over East Africa, the routes are limited to Uganda, Kenya, and Malawi. (Tanzania was also a common place of residence, but not represented in this particular sample of individuals).

Socio-economic differences have greatly influenced the flows of migration represented here. The AWRC group are mainly of a different economic group to the Sangat group. In the U.K. they have had responsibility for increasing the household income. This has increased pressure to learn other life skills including learning English, and taking up jobs discordant to their moral or religious values such as working in frozen meat factories, working in off-licences, doing cleaning or care assistants jobs. Overall, there is distinct feeling of resignation to a life which offers them a lower status than their role in India and or East Africa. For example, as Gujarati Indians, very few would be allowed to take up domestic cleaning jobs or personal care jobs. Many of the women are vegetarian, and do not take alcohol (Muslim and Hindu). It seems that the social status achieved due to migration varies in both groups. The Sangat group see migration as opportunistic, as a means of expanding businesses and as opening up scope for betterment, be it economic, educational or social. The AWRC group's reasons for moving are dominated by moving due to poverty in village life in India, which spurred fathers or grandfathers to take the first step. They, in turn, have moved to the U.K., living predominantly in public housing, and for some part of their stay being dependent on social welfare. In both groups however, life in India was at some stage difficult and with the exception of two women, the initial move made many decades ago was due to poverty. Migration in itself is not a new thing in this society; in fact India before partition is described as an easier place within which to migrate due to greater religious tolerance and the acknowledgement of a mixed society.[18]

Map 4.3 – Combined Biographical Migration Map of the AWRC and Sangat Groups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Mala
Darshna

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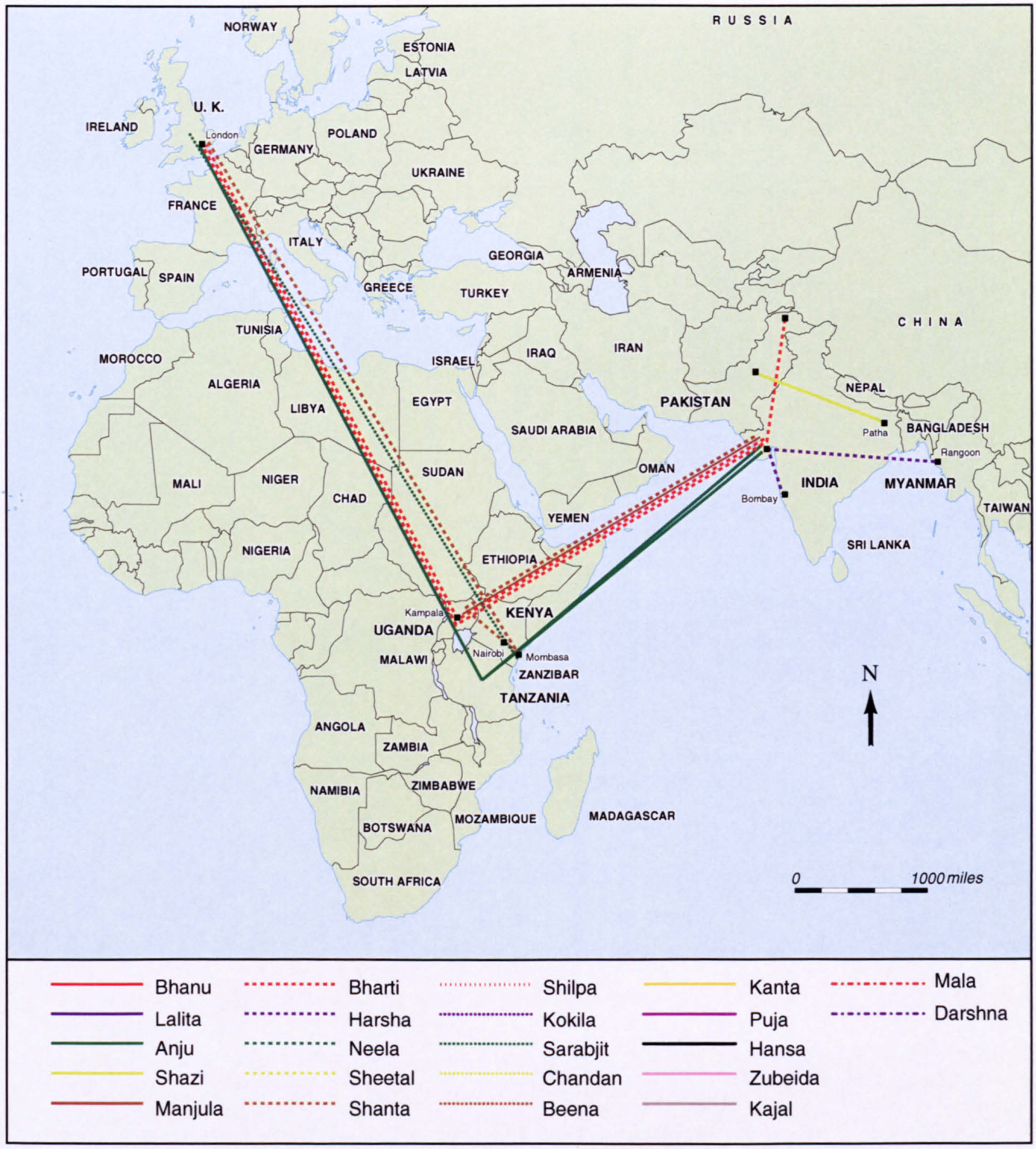
[18] (1- 1068:G1A;MP)

Members of the Sangat group are much more affluent. The Sangat women have lifestyle choices available to them, which create extended leisure time. These involve buying in household services via caterers, gardeners, builders, and cleaners. Very few have direct responsibilities for earning the household income. Those who do, contribute financially through pursuing their personal interests. One woman has started a gold and diamond jewellery business. She uses her trips abroad to develop an import and export trade. She can also access capital through the family business. Economically, the Sangat group is much more stable financially and in an upper middle class income bracket. This is also reflected in their children's education. All of the women's children attend private schools around Harrow and parents have extensive social networks. This group, however, had similar disadvantages to the AWRC group, due to their gender when they arrived in England. Most of the women had only known their husband a few days prior to their migration to England.

Finally, Map 4.4 records the women's parents' migration patterns. It is clear that those who migrated intended to go to British East Africa. Burma and Pakistan are also key points of trade and migration. There was no direct transit to the U.K. prior to the 1970s. Many parents had known a life in each of three continents and would have been part of the initial entrepreneurial business and agricultural communities established in British East Africa. The representation of fathers' migration routes shows varied settlement patterns and denotes the start of East African settlement. The women in the groups worked from memory giving approximate dates of settlement. Most of the women born in East Africa had parents who moved there in the 1930s to the 1950s. Two families have records of grandfathers' settlement in the early 1900s. These stories of male settlement and entrepreneurial explorations are revealed in section 4.4.

Map 4.4 – Migration Map of the Parents of the Participants of the AWRC and Sangat Groups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Shilpa
Kokila
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The case studies below demonstrate the depth of biographical information given in the group discussions and interviews. They are examples of two women, one from each group, who have different migration routes and a different basis for their arrival to the U.K..

Table 4.2 – Case Study One: AWRC

BEENA – Born India 1933, arrived U.K. 1990.

Beena is a woman from the AWRC group. Her biography is an example of direct migration from India to the U.K. Beena's migration route is simple, but the reasons for her migration are rooted in the race politics of partition and the resulting communalism in the Punjab. Beena's own identity is embedded in her recollections of particular landscapes of India and Bangladesh. Beena was born in 1933, in Hoshaipur, on the North West borders of the states of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. Her father was a doctor, and their family owned a lot of land. She remembers her small town of Charshankar very fondly. She describes vividly the mango groves everywhere and the banana plantations. She lived in the seven-story building that her father owned. Her father also owned a lot of land in Bangladesh in Madaripur and she made many journeys with him when he visited to oversee it. Beena got married at aged 14, but her husband died at an early age, leaving her and her children destitute. She worked for a while breaking rocks and labouring. Then she set up a business selling sugar and dry goods. As a woman she had not inherited land from her father, and her husband had been a professional with no capital. To help her in her difficulties, her cousin gave her some land to farm while she brought her children up. This was returned to him when her children came of age. In 1989, Beena became an M.P. for Faisalbad, serving under President Benizeer Bhuto.

When things went badly for Bhuto, Beena had to flee Pakistan. Her whole family had to leave the region. She came to the U.K. 10 years ago, with her children eventually following her. Beena has no means of return because there is risk of political persecution. Whilst in England she has a limited life, without employment, or social networks, apart from the visits to the Women's Centre.

Table 4.3 – Case Study Two: Sangat

SHANTA – born in Jinja (Uganda) in 1938, went to Nairobi (Kenya) to Malawi to London.

Shanta describes her closeness with Uganda as a feeling of 'being at peace'. She has memories of walking in the green hilly landscapes, surrounded by trees and eating foods such as mogo (cassava). The streets are described as quiet with few cars. As young girls they had to walk to school, come back for lunch, go back for afternoon session, and after playing games come home. This is remembered as very much an childhood idyll. After marriage, she left Jinja (Uganda) to go to Nairobi (Kenya). Shanta flew for the first time in her life, to Malawi in 1972, straight after her marriage. The Asian community in Malawi was very orthodox, with women being very much constrained by domestic life and responsibilities. Shanta describes it as a very scary experience, as she felt quite powerless as a new bride entering Malawi society. Her morality was being judged on a daily basis, in the clothes that she wore, her make-up, the way she ran her household etc. The family lived in Blantyrre, opposite the President's home, in the residential district. Most of the commercial business was in Limbe. Shanta describes life in Malawi as quite simple, but had the luxuries of middle class living. They had no financial difficulties there and were able to live well in the suburbs. When she first went there Malawi had only one main shopping street. In Malawi she remembers quite distinctly that leisure time was really enjoyable, because of their regular trips to Lake Malawi, where the whole family would go together and have picnics and swim. She describes it as a beautiful place where there are waterfalls, the Thika falls. This is the place that she describes as her ideal place in her painting. The gramophone is on and the children are playing in the water and food is plentiful. Shanta moved to England in the 1985.

All of her moves were as a result of her marriage.[19] *On coming to England Shanta looked after her mother-in-law, for almost 6 years. Shanta could not leave the house. Prior to marriage Shanta was an educated, independent woman with all the benefits of a wealthy middle-class family. Shanta returned to Malawi recently and found things very different. The Lake was infected with bilharzia, and the beaches were littered and ruined, Shanta also found the heat stifling and the two-hour journey to the Lake quite arduous because of the intense heat and humidity.*

4.4 Migration Experiences

4.4.1 Family **his***tories: Colonialism and the East African experience*

The oral histories recovered in this session reveal family histories as much as they do individual experiences. In this section I wish to focus on the East African experience as it has influenced the migration patterns of the majority of the women in the groups (thirteen out of twenty-two). Out of the remaining nine, seven migrated directly from India after marriage; one arrived in London as a political refugee; and one left India as a result of divorce. The experience of the women from Pakistan and Bangladesh is similar to many women from these countries in that they arrive to join men already settled here, but who had returned to the sub-continent to bring back a marriage partner. Muhammad Anwar (1979) makes a detailed report on the migration patterns of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. He traces a pattern of migration linked to the Partition of India in 1947, (resulting in displacement of thousands of Muslims), and the employment of Sikhs, and Muslims in the British army and navy (Anwar, 1979; 1985).

Migration from India to East Africa has been significant amongst both the Sangat and AWRC members. Most of those who had been born in East Africa regarded themselves as African rather than Indian, tracing their families back to the 1880s. The families of these women chose to go to East Africa, as part of the economic and structural development of this region of the Empire. As usual within colonial discourse about India, the Indians were considered a primary element in the development of trade and, more importantly, in their entrepreneurial adeptness in creating trade networks in the East African interior. This contribution by Indian migration to East Africa is recorded in L.W. Hollingworth's (1960) historical account.

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[19] (I- 1068:G1A;MP)

Hollingsworth traces the first arrivals to East Africa and narrates their presence and history in shaping the commercial life of this region. Their dominance in the trade sectors is elemental in the landscaping of East Africa, both physically and metaphorically. Hollingsworth describes Nairobi as an "Indian city" (p.2), and remarks that being in the towns of Zanzibar and Mombassa is like experiencing the labyrinthine bazaars of Bombay or Karachi. [20]

The issue on which I wish to focus, is the effect of colonial rule in India on reshaping the East African Protectorate. Indians in East Africa were protected as British subjects, as India was a British territory. It was only after East Africa came under European administration in 1890, that Indian settlement in East Africa developed from being primarily a coastal trading community. An Anglo-German agreement established the boundaries of the British territories, and proposed to build a railway into the East African interior. Indian labourers were recruited in great numbers by permission of the Government of India; and 32,000 were employed from 1896, compared with only 2,600 Africans. Employment was on a three-year contract whereby a return passage was available to all. It is a myth however that these labourers were the source of the East African Indian population (Anonymous 1972). Much of the influx of Indians was as entrepreneurial traders and merchants, and the trade networks extended along the railway network.

> "The Government (British) was favourably disposed towards this rapid increase in Indian migration in both Protectorates, for it was realised that the Indian trader was, at this early stage, an indispensable factor in opening up East Africa to trade and commerce." (Hollingsworth 1960, p.52)

Indian soldiers were crucial in the subjugation of Africans and conquest over lands in the interior. Indian peasants were also encouraged to settle in British East Africa which

> " would not only prove a relief to the poorer and more congested agricultural districts of India, but would also be of immense advantage to the Africans by teaching them

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[20] Hollingsworth (1960) traces back the Indian presence in East Africa to at least A.D.60 when a Greek travel guide reports Indian trade in wheat, rice, clarified butter, sesame oil, cotton cloth, girdles and honey (p11). This movement however is not in one direction but includes the trade in African slaves into India, one group of which lead an insurrection in Bengal which resulted in African rule of the throne of Bengal between 1476-1493. The trade in African slaves and the possession of slaves, although was not conducted Indians, was assisted by Indian financiers in East Africa. (p31)

> in practical fashion the advantages of steady, peaceful, cultivation and labour." (Mr W. W. A. Fitzgerald, agricultural reporter to the Imperial British East Africa Company quoted in Hollingsworth 1960, p.54)

In 1895, Indian peasants, especially families from Punjab, were encouraged to cultivate land. Incentives of money, land plots and livestock were offered to the putative settlers to stimulate emigration from India. Soldiers and labourers already in British East Africa were also approached to extend their stay (as agricultural cultivators) by remaining as free subjects rather than indentured labour. The Indians, however, were offered land "not suitable for European settlement" (Hollingsworth 1960), a process that raised tensions between the white settler communities and the Indian communities in the early twentieth century. A growing white European community increasingly objected to shared territories with non-white settlers. The political position of Indians in East Africa became of growing concern. This is described as a result of the racialised hierarchical "sandwich" (Anonymous 1972; Brah 1996). British colonial policies ensured that Indians entered East Africa in a superior racial, economic, and social position to that of Black Africans, but were not equal in status to other British subjects who were white. The unequal positioning of the Indians, was contested by them (with support from the Indian Government), the black Africans, and the white settlers. This was the acid-test of Empire. Why were all subjects of the Crown not allowed equal rights and status in all of the territories? The Devonshire Paper (1923), attempted to restore a balance to this question of prejudicial policy. By claiming that, "the interests of African natives must be paramount", but also claiming that African self-rule was an impossibility, the paper supported racial segregation. It allowed an option to restrict immigration of Indians to British East Africa, but allowed them greater representation on the Legislative Council. This position was a compromise, opposed by all sides, including the Indian National Congress. Years later, the Africans also protested against the economically and socially advantageous position of the Indians, with boycotts and opposition to Indian shops and businesses in 1959.

Protests were made along racial lines, and were a logical development in the race hierarchy implemented by the British in East Africa. The administration in East Africa treated Asians, Whites and Blacks as single "ethnic" or "racial" communities. The complexity of caste, religious and sectarian affiliations was little understood or recognised (Anonymous 1972). Scholars who have examined this racial 'sandwich' have found the hierarchical racial structure within British East Africa to be more complex (Gregory 1993). It was further compounded by British political and social policy making, which defines Asians as a separate singular community, rather than economically and socially mobile and heterogeneous. Therefore, the post-colonial, African self-rule, leading to President Amin's expulsion of Asians in 1964 was a logical conclusion to established racial segregation and privilege that could not be politically sustained. The decision to expel all Asians bearing citizenship of the U.K. and colonies was one based on race, creating a new race dynamic in Uganda. The expulsion was also a means of testing the basis of citizenship within the colonial context. Although admission to the U.K. was a legal right, it was not possible without the issue of a labour voucher (Plender 1972), used as a means of exclusion in this period [21].

The British government were in a dilemma; East African Asians had a legal right to enter the U.K. despite a publicised and common perception that they did not properly belong to the U.K. (Ward 1972). Living in Britain had political implications, for these complexities discussed above have influenced the way in which different layers within the East African community define themselves and engage with the politics of belonging and citizenship. The heterogeneity of the group and the specifics of things such as caste groupings have been translated into British society (Banton 1972; Michaelson 1979). Social groupings are also translated into important defining characteristics such as housing patterns (Bristow 1976; Adams 1977; Michaelson 1979), and thus settlement and integration patterns. Settlement patterns in the 1970s of the incoming South Asians were defined by legislation but government attempts to prescribe integration and dispersal were not supported by adequate housing provision or social support (Bristow 1976). In consequence, Ugandan Asians resettled with help from their own social groupings based on caste, religion, and family networks.

Within popular and academic literature, the black populations of the U.K. are regarded as part of the urban landscape. The inner city, the industrial centres of the midlands and the North West are stereotypically the place of belonging for the non-white population. However, South Asians define the landscape of suburbia as much as they are a presence in the inner-city London boroughs of Brent, Lambeth, Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Camden. The members of the Sangat group for example, live in suburbia. Their environment and social status is defined and shaped by their business activities. Despite their wealth and their appropriation of the suburban lifestyle, the women are consolidated as a group through their Asianness and not a group defined by business interest, wealth, or education. These are coincidental compared to their alliances as South Asians who have migrated here. In their writings on suburban Asian communities, Nowikowski and Ward (1978) conclude that professional South Asians have a greater tendency toward assimilation in the community at large, but, as a reaction to discrimination, they connect on an ethnic basis. This pattern is reinforced in business families where there is

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[21] Space precludes a detailed discussion of the history of British immigration policy that has served to shape rights of entry and settlement patterns in the U.K..These arguments are dealt with by Ward (1972; 1973). see also Anwar (1979), Gilroy (1987) and Nagar (1997).

> "tendency towards identification with, and participation in the institutions of the ethnic community, the business family is more distinctly located in an ethnic environment. The informal and formal organisation of daily life, including work, friendships, cultural and leisure activity and voluntary association membership centre on the ethnic community" (Nowikowsi and Ward 1978, p.8)

Some writers have argued that this position has shifted over time, resulting in the contemporary economic success in the South Asian community. The result is a less ethnically defined citizenship for South Asians, but a community whose culture or ethnic identity is at risk because intercultural barriers have been eliminated through economic sovereignty (Mattasuch 1998). However much the community has adapted and operated along economic alliances, it is still the case that the community faces some degree of social discrimination and prejudice on the grounds of race. As long as barriers exist on these grounds, these communities will continue to nurture their internal social, economic, cultural and religious allegiances to ensure a level of protection, social coherence and power.

4.4.2 Family histories: gendered migration.

In all the women's accounts, the father's attitudes and courage has shaped much of their migratory history and individual adaptability to migration. Mobility itself is treated differently when it was a reality for parents and grandparents rather than a traumatic experience for which the family was unprepared. It is not necessarily a case of being unfixed, or de-centred in the way that we might imagine is common in citizens born and brought up in their country of birth. In examining this group of women's biographies, it is clear that their experience of migration is very different from more common notions of having a stable relationship with citizenship. A flow of labour from British India to British Guyana, Mauritius, Indonesia, Uganda, South Africa, Burma, Kenya, Tanzania and Malawi, was a common phenomenon from the 1800s through to the 1900s. Maps **4.5** and **4.6** show migration flows in both the 19th and 20th centuries. Transcontinental labour was a valued part of the British Empire and distinctions between nation states, as there is now, were not necessarily a barrier to migration. Even more importantly, the land and territories of the British Empire contributed to the imaginative geographies of migrants from British India and thus contributed to a sense of attainable mobility. To some extent, journeys were possible because of the broadening of social maps of Empire. The other aspect that supported mobility was the standard of living within India. How could a twelve-year-old boy leave a village in Gujarat, on a ship on which he travelled for several weeks with some villagers he only vaguely knew? He made a leap of faith because he knew that there was a possibility of getting out of poverty, and no longer living hand-to-mouth. Most of these young men had already been promised to marry into families in their own districts in India. They were already burdened with the responsibility not only of their own parents but also of their wives-to-be and the expectations of her family.

Map 4.5 – Migration Flows from British India

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Image removed due to third party copyright

Source: Chailiand, G. and Rageeau, J. (1995) *The Penguin Atlas of Diasporas*, London, Penguin

Map 4.6 – Migration Flows from the Indian Sub-Continent in the 19th and 20th Centuries

Image removed due to third party copyright

Source: Chailiand, G. and Rageeau, J. (1995) *The Penguin Atlas of Diasporas*, London, Penguin.

Two of the women in the study had a father living in Rangoon when they were born. One had left the home village in Gujarat to try his luck in business. It seems that just prior to the second world war, Indians were encouraged by the British government in India to travel to Burma to set up trade. Shilpa talks about her father leaving his village in India. He trailed someone in the village to Burma when he was 13 or 14 years old.

> *Shilpa – "He went to try his luck in business rather than live out a life being in someone's employ. His fate worked in his favour and he was successful in Burma."* **(AWRC)**

He went as an entrepreneur and his skills came through for him. In Burma, Shilpa's father had property, ran trucks and transported goods. His business was in cloth manufacturing and export, and he also did some trade in dry food goods.

> *Shilpa – "Whilst working, his fate carried him, and he came to conduct many types of businesses."*[22] *(AWRC)*

Shilpa's father made his fortune, his Kismet was in his favour, and he was so successful that he settled there for some time. After a while, he sent for his brothers and then his sons. His business was successful; he had a lot of capital. But in the end he was forced out of Burma. In the advance of the Second World War, he abandoned everything and came away in the exodus. He left with just the clothes on his back, and all his accumulated wealth was lost. On his return to India, he started a business in the cloth trade, and set up a shop in Junaghat, Gujarat. He sold cloth that was manufactured and embroidered locally. Shilpa's brother has inherited this business.

Some families were separated from the head of the household for years on end. After leaving for East Africa, Kokila's father never lived in India permanently again. He visited each summer for two months

> *Kokila – "To tour India, to visit my mother... he came in that respect.....my father never lived permanently (in India).....just each summer he would come for around two months."*[23] **(AWRC)**

Kokila's father left India at the age of eleven. He did some studying and some work there. He did not talk about East Africa much to his family afterward. He left East Africa in 1972, and he and his family came to the U.K. via Mumbai (Bombay).

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[22] GUJARATI "Nokri karta a enu Kismet chaligyo ne bathu business karwa gaya tha."(1- 119;G1A;SK)

[23] GUJARATI "India farwa mate mari mother ne malwa ne evitna away (1- 599;G1A;KP)

A number of the women remember their fathers leaving them in India to try their luck in East Africa. The women quite often talked about Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania as the same place, so it is very difficult to be certain which specific country the father had travelled to. I believe that as all the East African countries were territories of the British Empire, it made little difference to the migrants unless they had family already in a particular country. The fathers' lives, to some extent, are a testimony to the spirit of migration that existed under Empire within British India. The very young men and adolescent boys took risks in leaving their home-town to seek their futures in Africa. They were minors, facing long journeys on ships where the facilities were negligible and the mortality rates were high. When they arrived in East Africa some of them had the task of literally clearing land, creating markets and struggling through many difficulties to survive. They forged a new geography of East Africa in their entrepreneurial efforts and their presence literally changed the lay of the land, as well as the social geographies of these countries.

> *Manjula – "I mean there were a few Asians there in those days, but when they went they had to start afresh. Clearing land, and they built tea estates from there."* [24]**(Sangat)**

Uganda is described as a paradise on earth. It is a lush green, fertile land. The women mentioned the film *Mississippi Masala*[25] as being a wonderful description of the country. Manjula's family went to Uganda to start a tea estate. They were successful, and continue to have business interests there. Manjula's father, and his sons left by ship to go to Uganda to start the tea estates.

> *Manjula – "All four brothers went together and their wives followed them after a few months."*[26] *(They left India.) "because in India there wasn't much scope because they were living in villages. So my grandfather encouraged them to go*

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[24] ENGLISH (1- 1068:G1A; MP)

[25] *Mississippi Masala* (1991), (dir) Mira Nair, U.S. This film is a romantic love story between an Asian-American (Mina Choudhry) and African-American (Denzil Washington), dealing with race politics in post-migration South Asian community in the U.S. The film is renowned for its other love story between Mina's father and his country of birth – Uganda. The film has scenic shots of Ugandan landscape, represented as a lush, idyllic paradise.

[26] ENGLISH (1-1014;G2A;MP)

> *away.* [27]*...we used to go to Wireless Hill for a drive there and they had sugar cane juice there....Uganda is on seven hills; you get the whole view of the whole town."*[28]**(Sangat)**

Shanta described the economy of Uganda when her grandfather first arrived in the 1900s. Indians began as workers, and then slowly built up business in the sugar cane, coffee and tea markets. Following decades of instability, these tea estates now are dilapidated and decayed. Some new investments a few years ago were encouraged by the Ugandan government but these failed due to continued instability in the Ugandan economy and society. The presence of Indians in countries such as Uganda shifted the balance of power against Africans. As I have already noted, Avtar Brah (1996) describes this as a "sandwich of race", where the Whites were at the top, the Indians in between and the Blacks at the bottom. British Indians had some sense of superiority inscribed in their arrival at the ports of British East Africa, as they were recruited and employed as a skilled labour force, an educated labour force with a lighter skin colour. These racial differences contributed to the evolution of a sense of racial and cultural determinism that provided confidence and material wealth to the Asian community. But it created a legacy of inter-racial tension that ultimately led to expulsion in the 1970s of thousands of Indian-Africans from Uganda and East Africa as a whole.

4.4.3 Diaspora, distancing and connection.

> The language of Diaspora is increasingly invoked by displaced peoples who feel (maintain, revive, invent) a connection with a prior home. This strength of connection must be strong enough to resist erasure through the normalising processes of forgetting, assimilating, and distancing. (Clifford 1997, p.255).

The actual material routes taken, forged and struggled through by the women, show the diversity of experience and strength of the community as a whole. The interrogation of their biographies ensures a historical record of their journeys. The main issue for all of the women is that the journey and the memory of the journey remain fresh in their minds. The journey is a point of crucial distancing from the past, and is the start for them of creating their new positionality and, thus, their new identities. They self-consciously refer to the journey as being part of their development as individuals and as a point of commonality. The journey holds them together in their description of themselves as "Asians". The groups that I recruited attracted a variety of women. As the biographies show, their sense of connectedness was not necessarily language, religion or social class but predominantly their experience of migration from a place (which is not the same country) but a place which is positioned against being in England. There are at least 14 different countries mentioned in the interviews, named as places of origin/home/birth but these places are referenced, in a group situation, as common experiences. These are remembered territories and national structures, They are not necessarily remembered holistically. Instead their combined expressions constitute a collage of memories which forms as a 'territory of culture', which the women share. The experience of migration solidifies, to some degree, their creation of this vast place from which they came. This place through memory, through refractions in countless forms in visual media, sound and sensual experiences, becomes a place of emotional and psychological importance. The importance of it becomes relational to the distance, in time and space, from the journey made.

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[27] ENGLISH (l-1028;G2A;MP)

[28] ENGLISH (l-1089:G2A;BM)

The maps created from the women's biographies normally represent several bodies moving in space but also, most interestingly, bodies moving into different time-space moments. The new settlements in Europe are set up as Modernity, the civilised centre of Empire, the advanced society. The image of England as a democratic, civil ordered society, has been part of the education system of the colonies for many decades. Cultural and racial inferiority was inscribed in the teaching of history, geography, art and science in Indian sub-continent (Ramdin 1999). This occidentalism is compared and validated in relation to the 'other' nations of the women's residence including Zanzibar, Malawi, Zaire, United Arab Emirates, Sudan, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. As a result of this cultural logic, contradictions are faced in the moment of arrival. The women are made aware of their black bodies in a white space, as their clothes, skin and culture are sharply juxtaposed with the textures of London, Montreal, Prestwick and Newbury. Places left behind were shaped by the British Empire and all of its manifestations in politics, culture, economics and moral order. The women talk about the Englishness tied up in the socio-political structures of Nairobi, Mumbai, Delhi, Eldoret, Mwanza, and Lahore. Yet these are hybrid colonial versions which are completely different to the Englishness of England. Exams completed with the Cambridge Examining Board; handwriting practiced with the use of Western methods; clothes, visual culture are all experienced in the Raj colonies. The spoken English language and linguistics learned in the colonies, when expressed in England, to the English ear sound damaged and reconstituted. It is fractured and changed, representing a grating English of the Indian not of England. Bhabha (1990) deals with the construction of nation through these ambivalent structures of language whose texture and dynamic reflect the construction of nation. These ambivalences in the spoken language are evidence of the doubleness of post colonial consciousness and experience as expressed in the women's narratives. This is also evidence of the foundations of Britishness or Englishness that has its influences beyond the territory of the U.K..

4.4.4 Telling Tales: women's experiences

For the majority of the women in the two groups, as I have shown, migration experience was not decided by themselves. Most often, moves across continents, countries and regions were decided upon by fathers, grandfathers or husbands. The lack of direct control in such a significant life choice, has been accepted by the women to a great degree, but it has also effected their experiences of the transitions, and their position within the new community, whether it be in the U.K., Africa, or India. The biographies show that individual women lose a lot when it comes to social networks, work skills, and identity. Instantly they lose the frame within which they defined themselves. They quite often find themselves in a country with little freedom, no friends or family and little scope for using their education to enter into social structures of the new society. To some extent their fathers and husbands have the ability to take control of their position within their new environment. The men have responsibilities and a focus whereas their wives are left in an alienating environment with few tools to break into a new life.

To take an example from the groups, Chandan, in the AWRC group, was born in Aden (Yemen). She moved to India and then to the U.K. Chandan experiences the time-logic of places in different points of global exchange and which have different economic and political power in the world. The society in India that her family has left behind is literally of a different age to the way of life in Aden. In Aden she has a metropolitan life. She has a fridge, water supply, sanitation, a white collar job and a view on global trade and global networks through the positioning of Yemen and the Freeport of Aden as part of the trade networks of Empire. A lot of goods were imported and traded which meant that this port town had a huge range of cheap wholesalers and traders. Gujarati business was successful. The society was mixed, and different castes and religions lived side by side. In the early 1960s it was a prosperous and stable society. Chandan worked for an Indian company as a telephone operator and dispatcher, trading in Diamond tape machines, slide projectors and other Swiss made machinery. Chandan then went on to work for the British Embassy in the accounts section. Her contract was due to be renewed but was not because the British pulled out of Yemen during the crisis of the 1960s. Her return to India was traumatic. She had to wash in the river, and get drinking water from the river or water pump. There was little scope for work, let alone white collar, skilled work. She found herself marrying a man and moving to England where she has never again found an opportunity to use her advanced skills in accountancy, English and administration. Her husband is very orthodox. He dictates their daily life routines – mealtimes and daily house decisions. He is unemployed and Chandan survives on state benefits. The end of Empire for Chandan was, to some degree, the end of life chances which would have enabled her to develop as a person, and her identification as an empowered worker in public service. Her world contracted, as Empire did. Her confidence has been stripped away and she has resigned herself to living on a run-down inner-city housing estate in Brent for the rest of her days.

Shilpa (AWRC) also describes a personal decline because of her life in England. In her adult life she has had to struggle on her own and has demonstrated independence and strength, but has experienced the debilitating effect of getting married and leaving her family home. As a daughter, her only option for independence from family was marriage. Ironically this move also left her dependent on her husband's decisions. These include his decision to migrate, to settle and to divorce. Shilpa's story is dealt with in Chapter 5 in more detail, but her description of her treatment as a woman is that she feels let down, and has not been able to fulfil her potential as an individual. Shilpa has a degree in Chemistry from the University of Baroda, which she has never used in any of her countries of residence around the world. In some of these situations, the death of a mother or the leaving behind of your parents after marriage influences quite considerably the confidence of the women and in turn their economic and social success in the U.K. These important gender issues are raised through the biographies.

Some of the AWRC women are educated and skilled, quite often with their father's agreement.

> *Kanta – "My father felt that girls should also be educated."*[29]
>
> *Shilpa – "Yes I was studying at college, I passed everything, completely."*[30] **(AWRC)**

But for a father to believe this of their daughters was considered rare and fortunate by members of the group. It was not a common experience. In the AWRC group many of the women on arrival to the U.K. were put to work. The families had little money and so daughters were sent to factories. For many, educational achievements were wasted whilst others had to lie about their age to get paid work. In England, girls had eventually to be married off and therefore education was not valued above getting an income by parents.

> *Kokila – "When I started work I was four months short of being 15 years old."*[31]
>
> *Krishna – "Our education was disrupted wasn't it?"*[32]
>
> *Shilpa – "Our folk were just concerned with money...we came empty handed."*[33]
>
> *Kokila – "They said to me 'what is the point of education for a girl, why should girls study?"*[34] *(AWRC)*

For many of the wealthier women from the Sangat group, arriving in the U.K. was also quite shocking. Their husbands wished them to stay at home, which meant they had no opportunity to make new friends through the workplace. Their social status declined. In India, there were domestic servants to do the housework; vacuuming, cooking, washing clothes, cleaning the bathroom and toilet had always been servant's responsibilities. Coming to the U.K. however has meant identity is no longer relational, in terms of social class. As Asians, the women are Asian immigrants in British society. They lose their class, caste and regional distinctions. This puts a lot of strain on their expectations of life in the West. It also tests their flexibility and adaptation skills. These problems and disappointments are manifest in different ways – for example through their relationship with religion, food, and culture. This predicament also leads to a new ways of identifying themselves.

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[29] GUJARATI "Mara papa ne em hatu ke chokaryu ne bhalawi joi." (l-402:G1A;KL)

[30] GUJARATI "Ha college ma bahl ti thi, me puru pass karilithu." (l-199;G1A;SK)

[31] GUJARATI "Aya 15 waras thi tholik 4 mayna noani hati." (l-405:G1A;KP)

[32] GUJARATI "Apdu bahltar bagalwar nu bow thay gu ne?" (l-406: G1A; KL)

[33] GUJARATI "Apda loka ne pasa nij pali hati...Kali hate away tha." (l-393:G1A;SK).

The Sangat group reflect on their own adoption of a modern evolving Western influenced culture, as cultural norms shift to meet demands of new location. The women have more work responsibilities due to the lack of domestic help, they have a greater burden of socialising the family into religious and moral living, as well as maintaining personal fitness and broader social expectations, but most importantly feelings of loss lead to a romanticising of the past as 'a golden age'. The importance of religion and food, increases along with the focus on cultural products such as clothes, foods, films, and music. These might be described as souvenirs of an Asian aesthetic. Initially these are 'discovered treasures' when found in England – the smell of a mango, the site of an Indian film, the smell of sandalwood, such objects become cultural icons, and they are privileged above others. This privileging, in turn, shifts their value from being part of the everyday fabric of India, to being sacred in England. From copper and stainless steel kitchenware, to fabrics, to spices, to fruits and vegetables; and the valorisation extends to other objects in the home like furniture, pictures, religious icons, and cooking ovens. I discuss the significance of material culture further in chapter 5.

4.4.5 Race structures in the U.K.

The Sangat group are positioned very differently in British society to the AWRC women. They are all English speakers and had capital or developed wealth in order to buy homes; they live a very wealthy lifestyle compared to the Harlesden group. Leisure travel is much more available to them, which means that the geographies that they talk about are different. The Sangat group have a broader, confident vision about relationships between places. The group is made up of businessmen and professionals. They have multinational business interests as well. The Harlesden group are much more intimidated by their position in the U.K..They feel more vulnerable and exposed to the harshness of life here. However, by using the AWRC as a site of recruitment for the research resulted in a group with a disproportionate number of women who have separated from their partners or divorced, which has left them feeling more lonely, isolated and a little more vulnerable. But, if this is the case, the women represent more pronounced examples of shared experiences. Differences in confidence, mobility, and socio-economic positioning have effected their experiences of arrival and settlement in the U.K..

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[34] GUJARATI "Mane kye su bahlawanu hoi e kye chokaryu ne su bahlawanu nai?" (l- 396:G1A;KP)

On arrival in the U.K. one of the first issues that the women had to deal with was race, and racial discrimination. The underlying themes discussed are feelings of social exclusion and discordancy experienced in the U.K..The women express these understandings in relation to their social position in India and East Africa.

> *Manjula – "We don't feel welcome in certain places."* [35]
> *Shanta – "These English people's rules have always been (to) divide and rule, that's how they took over India. They've caused problems amongst the Indians and they took over the country. That's in their blood!"* [36] **(Sangat)**

This is quite a vehement remark, which held much resonance for the women in both the groups. In the AWRC group the point was reached at through a discussion on communalism in India, and its continuation in British Asian society. The diasporic scattering of communities has served to compound divisions and disunity common in Indian society under the Raj. Dividing lines drawn between Hindus and Muslims, and between castes and classes are maintained along the lines of British rule in India. Prejudice exists alongside prejudice amongst Asians. These divisions manifest themselves in the individual's experience with public sector services. The examples given were in the local D.S.S. office where a few women had experiences of Asian officials at the desk treating Asian clients indifferently, compared to non-Asian applicants. Shanta talked about her friend Mangla who was recently left widowed and destitute. After being seen by a representative at the DSS offices, Mangla was in tears. She had been abused by the member of staff, in her own language. The member of staff had told her that foreigners were not entitled to benefits immediately and that she would have to spend her small amount of savings before she would be entitled to any claims. This was misinformation, given with prejudice. This example is confirmed through other similar stories told by the women in the group. Similarly, Shazia talked about Asian shopkeepers who were rude and unfriendly.

> *Shazia – "Like I sent one of my daughters to the Indian shop...she came back and said 'I'm never going in there again, they were so rude!'*[37] **(Sangat)**

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[35] ENGLISH (l-47:G2A; MP)

[36] ENGLISH (l-340:G2A; SK)

[37] ENGLISH (l- 268;G2A;SM)

Shazia described this as damaging for her children's socialisation in that it alienated them from other Asians and the Asian commercial sector. Areas such as Ealing Road in Wembley, and Southall become areas where shopping is seen as 'difficult'. Children may stick to European vendors and supermarkets. This is seen as a cultural loss. Anju gives a similar example of visiting an Indian restaurant, an experience with resonance amongst all the group members.

> *Anju – "We were sitting there and how we were welcomed there, and there were a couple, an English couple who walked in, and how* ***they*** *(non-Asian) were welcomed...I mean your own people doing that to you... They're literally crawling to them."*[38] **(Sangat)**

Racial hierarchies are discussed by the women, as they exist both within, and outside the community. It is argued that the legacy of communalism is a British one, leaving a fractured and prejudice-ridden Indian society, based on religious and racial difference. Bound up within this is a deference to English superiority, which treats whiteness as being something to aspire to. This 'inferiority' complex is manifest in prejudices about skin tones amongst the Asian community; the lighter the tone the more marketable you are as a woman when it comes to marriage. Within most post colonial groups, including the Afro-Caribbean community, there is a feeling that these continued divisions are exploited by structures of race in England. Not necessarily in a crude racial prejudice of skin tone but as a sophisticated understanding of cultural differences and moralities of living. These debates are set up in terms of cultural and racial absolutism (Gilroy 1987), where there is little room for non-bounded understandings of racialised practice and cultural difference. In the group discussions this is expressed in the understandings of practices as defining biological traits. Blood, soil, and skin become the indicators to behaviour in this particular expression of racialised practices – African, Asian and European.

This understanding of race as experienced as bounded through place and biology is constant, yet contradictory. The women continually refer to themselves as 'Asians', even when referring to themselves in Africa, despite being born there. In terms of their more formal citizenship, they are attached to notions of Kenyan, Ugandan, and Tanzanian much more than they are to 'English' or 'British'. These biologically and culturally bounded definitions of 'Asianess' are translated to connections with the environment and climate of places within the 'triangular' migration pattern represented in the maps in section **4.2.** Revealed in the interviews are the extents to which environmental textures are important in defining identity. The physical experience of moving from a village in Gujarat to a city like Mombassa has its effects, physically and psychologically. The heat of the sun, the smell of the air and the nature of organic life has influenced the ways in which the women root themselves and their identities. The biographies record the actual landscapes, environments, sensory textures of places that they have absorbed and, in turn, inscribed their lives. These are brought to the surface when they recall experiences of displacement, isolation, racism, and first impressions of England. Physical displacement is defined in many ways including the sense of loss of an environment that feels, smells, sounds and tastes like home – a place of belonging. These textures of connection and belonging are not limited to the organic. The women's sensitivities are heightened when they experience the physical fact of being in a minority. When you get off the plane in Bombay there is a sea of people, all of whom are the same skin colour as oneself. Imbued in this experience is a sense of "at-oneness" with the environment, and as a social fact of being the same. This is not necessarily biological oneness, but a social construct of being the same "race".

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[38] ENGLISH (I-313-321:G2A;AS)

4.4.6 Leaving and Arriving

Having suddenly to leave their home in East Africa was traumatic for the women in the Sangat group. They describe the way in which they responded to a deadline by which to have packed and gone from their homes.

> *Neela – "it's just nice to have something from the past....mostly, we left things as they were. Because all you could bring were suitcases. I remember the house keys and the shop keys we gave it at the police station and the car keys we gave it to the driver. So it was like you were passing it on...We gave a few things away because we knew we couldn't bring much."*[39]
>
> *Bhanu – "My dad lost everything, what he'd earned for 40 years. Because it was all stock you know like draper's shops, haberdashers shops and all the money wasted*

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[39] ENGLISH (1-1875-1883:G2A;NS)

> *upon, and all the bank accounts were seized. So they took all the money, it went..."*[40] ***(Sangat)***

The country where families had built their lives and businesses, from clearing land to developing new markets and building economies, was ejecting them. For some of the families, the shock was too much to bear. Individuals dealt with this in different ways. Blocking out by 'forgetting' the life experiences of living in East Africa was one way. This has been the case for three of the women's fathers. Uganda became something that the household did not talk about. For others the strategy was to believe themselves to be moving to the U.K. only temporarily.

> *Bhanu – "I didn't think I was coming here permanently. I thought this was just a thing and we'd all go back. Then it gradually dawned on me, that yes, it is a permanent move."* [41]**(Sangat)**

> *Neela – "Still in my mind I believed it was temporary because I couldn't see another life for my parents starting anew....I thought, so there would always be a home but it never happened....You know what it was so traumatic, I've really tried to block that out. I remember snatches but I really blocked it out of my mind....We didn't have anything."*[42] **(Sangat)**

Most of the East Africans went into the camps set up in Britain as reception centres for the displaced East African Britons. The camps were rudimentary. Neela describes camp life at Newbury R.A.F.

> *Neela – "Yeah we had like a couple of rooms, mum and dad, but it was just barracks made into rooms. They had a refectory where they tried to make Indian food...Then you met all the other people who were in the same position as you."* [43]**(Sangat)**

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[40] ENGLISH (l-1138; G2A; BM).

[41] ENGLISH (l- 1148:G2A; BM)

[42] ENGLISH (l-1166- G2A;NS)

[43] ENGLISH (l-1174:G2A; NS)

Whilst there for a few months, some of the children were encouraged to continue studying for the exams, they were taken to local schools for these. Others could not complete.

> *Bharti – "There were about half a dozen of us who were going to miss exams. Not that we had studies for the last few months anyway, but they arranged for books to be sent so we could at least have textbooks...And they had a little mini-van to take us to a college in Newbury to give exams."* [44]**(Sangat)**

The young women were completing exams set by the same examining boards as in East Africa. This illustrates commonalities that existed between territories but also shows that these were not enough to bridge the experiences of racism, exclusion and alienation that the women experienced on arrival. But positive experiences are also recollected. Bharti describes being in the camps when an old neighbour, a doctor from East Africa took them to a supermarket for the first time and she saw the range of fruits and chocolates. She could not believe her eyes. The supermarket offered everything you could only imagine in any of the towns like Jinja, Limbe, Blantyrre, Gujarat, and even Nairobi and Mumbai. The cold winter of 1972 was the most severe for 40 years. Wearing winter coats and shoes was alien to the women.

> *Harsha – "You know the winter coats, Oh I hated them, I hated them. I hated all those boots and everything, because I had the habit of going out barefoot. I loved that."* [45] **(AWRC)**

So, changing country meant changing the way you looked and what you felt. Shanta talks about how she was encouraged to wear English clothes, but she refused. The coldness and the wetness was alien. The roads and streets were, however, very attractive to the women. Modern lines, planning, and civil order are the descriptions the women use.

> *Harsha – "We were in Wembley and the first time we landed at the airport it was so nice because it was a smooth drive, these roads and everything. India ma tho you*

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[44] ENGLISH (l-1185:G2A; NS)

[45] ENGLISH l-1250 :g"A ;HS

> *have these bumpy roads...Like in Wembley you had all these terraced houses in a row. All of them are the same. It was very difficult, I felt, to remember them, unless you know the street name. Otherwise everything looks the same."* [46]**(Sangat)**

The first few moments and days of arriving in the U.K. are recorded in the women's accounts. The climate and the environment both contributed to feelings of alienation and being home-sick.

> *Kokila – "The cold was ice cold, but things were alright. We couldn't wear the usual footwear – champals, they had to get used to walking in long boots." (She couldn't walk, or get her balance in the snow on the way to work) "...these high the boots, we came from India and we couldn't walk in the snow...I just kept sobbing."*[47] **(AWRC)**

At the thought of these first struggles Kokila has tears in her eyes. Kokila was 19 years old. These days were very hard and the memories are painful. The change from Kenya was very difficult. Some women came in the summer and remember it being very clean, and very peaceful, and not 'overpopulated'. Sarbjit describes London as being very claustrophobic.

> *Sarbjit "Here, your breathing can get congested. There, in Pakistan, our home had an openness."*[48] **(AWRC)**

As Sarbjit describes her suffocation when comparing her life in Pakistan, the whole group empathise with her description of space and freedom. Not only is it difficult to adjust to living in a single rented room, but it was also a very sheltered life. Without language, Sarbjit is scared to go out. Sarbjit used to get lost and felt disorientated. The urban scene was busy and foreign to her way of living, which left her quite depressed and isolated. Her husband used to leave each morning to go to work, and she was left alone, missing him, her family and her friends. Most importantly she had been uprooted without the means to resettle and build up new networks. The facilities in the rented accommodation were basic. In the kitchen there was a bucket to bathe in, no shower and a shared toilet. The landlord used to come in drunk most nights. She found this unhomely and was quite frightened. The time when she felt most desperate was when she was ill whilst pregnant. She missed her mother and father. She had no support to get through this pregnancy. After the birth of her son, she fled to her mother's home in Lahore, vowing not to return. She could not bear it. She came back only after her husband persuaded her that life would be different with a child.

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[46] ENGLISH (l-1238-1243;G2A; HS)

[47] GUJARATI"Am alright hatu paln thandi bow hathi, ice cold hatu....Thaya tho champal na periy, thyare na bootya peri ne kame javanu." (1-326: G1A; KP) "Atla, atla peri snow ma, apde India thi awi ne...chali na sakaisnow ma...Hu tho roya rakhu." (1- 336:G2A;KP)

[48] HINDI "ider tho swas bande hojata tha, uder Pakistan me humara ghar both koola tha." (1-660:G1A;S)

The difference in social status that the East African settlers had in East Africa to the U.K. is illustrated by Manjula's experiences of travelling and arriving.

> *Manjula – "It was exciting, and when we got into the plane in Kampala... We were late and the plane was waiting for us three..my father was known there and the plane was halted because of us."* [49]**(Sangat)**

Manjula describes the service and the attitude that she received from the staff as racist. She and her two cousins were the only non-whites on the flight. They were sworn at and treated poorly. The flight was redirected to Prestwick Airport as there was bad weather in London. The three girls did not hear the announcement because they had had their ears blocked. At Prestwick it was some hours before they found out that their plane was not in London but in Scotland. The three teenagers were distraught, stranded without money, food, or warm clothes. They were depressed and felt abandoned. Eventually they were helped by someone at the airport and helped to catch the connecting flight. For the first two months after her arrival Manjula was depressed, crying and sobbing, wanting to return 'back home'. Manjula describes the weather as being the first thing that affected her. The new environment was completely different to Uganda. This was exacerbated by the loss of contact with her parents.

> *Manjula- "I was missing our servants. Everything I had to do here, wash everything, cleaning, iron your things."* [50]
> *Neela – "There you have a driver to take you round."* [51]**(Sangat)**

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[49] ENGLISH (1204-1214;G2A;MP)

[50] ENGLISH I- 1319:G2A;MP

Settlement for Manjula was difficult because domestic arrangements were different. Carrying their own money was a new thing for women in the Sangat group. They had never had to carry purses and handbags. This was because they all shopped with accounts at local shops. From living in a world of privilege, to travelling on buses and tubes, waiting in bus queues and living in rented accommodation were pressures and strains that this group were not used to. For the women in the AWRC, there was still a difference in status but they did not have the capital to set up in business or own homes. Life was very tough for women in the AWRC group, living on the breadline as wages were low and rents were high. Many of the women have had to get help through social security benefits and housing through the Local Authority. Living in temporary bed sits and homelessness hostels have been part of their life in London.

4.5 Memories of home

4.5.1 Past lives in Present times

In this section I deal with the way that remembering and reconnecting with biographical migration routes are an active part of daily living in the U.K., often triggered by material objects and visual cultures in people's homes. The way that home is created through daily cultures of living is illustrated and shaped by the process of settlement in the U.K.. By studying the visual cultures of living, the networks of migration already illustrated are revitalised and made a crucial part of establishing a settlement and meaningful identity politics in the U.K.. Both sets of women did feel very alienated from the English way of doing things, and felt very aware that they did not know what is expected of them. Buying clothes, food and travelling all became torture. Over the years these social cultures of food, religion, clothes, and others have become ways for the women to make life vital here in Britain. These cultures inform their recreating a culture of living and being for themselves and their families. It is through these inscriptions of cultural practice in daily life that they have struggled through and resettled.

Recollecting their first experiences of 'being' here, the women talked of feeling conspicuous, vulnerable and mocked. For example, Manjula talks about avoiding clothes shopping in the first year of being here.

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[51] ENGLISH (I- 1323; G2A;NS)

Manjula – "So for a while I was scared of going to buy clothes, I'll be honest.....I thought they would start abusing me or getting angry." [52](Sangat)

Some women recall strangers staring, laughing and joking about their clothes, their skin colour, and their smell. This brings floods of tears. Being excluded and mocked is a common theme in the discussions. In the face of a hostile public world, the home became even more important in giving individuals some security and tangible links with past homes. Feeling a sense of locatedness is important in creating a safe place of security. The home is a site of recording past homes and lands, as well as inscribing a meaningful identification through the materials of culture. The look of things, the aesthetics of materials are active in refracting different experiences and places. The refractive nature of these visual cultures in the home is significant in making place but, also, in figuring identity through places. This important sense of locatedness is shot through with real experiences, fantasy and memories. The idea of location itself is constantly plural in the way that the groups talk about their place of "home" and their identification. Places are not always specific and bounded: they often become conflated through remembering – Uganda and Kenya become the same as Bombay and Goa.

The women's descriptions of past places are referenced through many materials. Their relationships are realised through domestic materials such as kitchen utensils, clothes, food, and fabrics. Feelings of discordancy are mediated through the presence of these objects and materials of identification, to ensure that daily life here is shot through with the "other" places of residency. Through these means of reconnecting, individuals make a collage of safety, security, familiarity and, above all, an affirmation of identity. Transience, multiplicity, and routes are inscribed into the location of home, by making the routes part of the fabric of daily environments. By transferring memories and feelings of belonging into a particular cultural aesthetic, belonging becomes transportable, accessible and mutable. The physical space at home becomes a place made up of other places, and the refraction of these other places of home become representative of a fragmented relationship with other territories and nation states. Exclusion is mediated through the creation of somewhere else which locates the body in a space of belonging. Every home can be considered to be an affirmation of identity. This is not necessarily specific to the South Asian Diaspora, but what may be specific is the kind of textures of identification that are placed in the home. Residency is consolidated, enabled, by the textures in the home.

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[52] ENGLISH (I- 1394;G2A;MP)

Shrinking, shifting and reconfiguring home-places of the past is done in many ways amongst the groups members, but an important way that I observed, was that the women kept their journeys alive. Biographical routes were activated, maintained and strengthened through various strategies including visual cultures such as Bollywood films and satellite TV. These are no longer purely entertainment but act as forms of information, and identity networks, used in the socialisation of children, as well as a store of memories that are activated through the images – photos, paintings, and the practices of viewing films and videos – as well as listening to Asian radio broadcasting. These cultures are crucial in maintaining the family. Shanta explains;

> *Shanta – "Sunrise Radio...And it's always on, and also I don't switch off. Sometimes my children say 'mum, we are fed up with these songs!' and they switch it off. Because they also don't understand..so I just watch Indian programmes and I try to make them learn and understand them also, to see our culture."* [53]**(Sangat)**

4.5.2 Religious iconography

Religion is another means by which the women from both groups connect to past places of home. Religion is a transportable cultural signifier, and it operates in the women's lives at several geographic scales. At the day-to-day level, religious rituals and icons in the home connect to past homes. Religious landscapes are also emphasised by the women when talking through their biographies. Shilpa, in her testimony talks about a town called Junaghat in Gujarat. It is recalled in its religious signification. It is the town of Rastmehta, named after a local guru or prophet who was a devotee of Lord Krishna. Shilpa talks through the legend of how he faced many trials and tests, was made homeless but, despite everything, remained compassionate and generous. The fact that this town is described in relation to the story of the prophet is not uncommon amongst the women. They are quite happy to debate whether it was Rastimehta's town or Gandhiji's town. The religious stories of Rastimehta blend with the economic descriptions of the town without any sense of separation. The town and the place of the story become one place, and the town is lifted from its ordinary day-to-day landscapes into legend and fantasy.

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[53] ENGLISH (1- 703-715 ;G2A;SK)

Every home I visited had a temple in the home, with icons in each room, and pictures of Gods in many forms throughout the homes. Religious beliefs were expressed in many ways. Religion has, through distance, accumulated functions and power within the process of resettling after migration. Women who lived in India missed the closeness they had to the different places of worship and the many possibilities for pilgrimages and daily worship. For example, Shilpa misses the labyrinthine street network in India where there is a shrine in every alleyway. These shrines and minor temples became part of her daily routine. She could continue her daily tasks and household chores at the same time as being part of a religious community. Although she spent more time in shrines and temples, it was part of an everyday aesthetic landscape. There was a place for religion in Indian society that made it both more conspicuous and more part of the vernacular. Religious icons appear on domestic products, packaging, road signs, rickshaws, buildings etc. Her distance from these easy access points of prayer has ensured that her relationship with religion is emphasised much more in her life in England. She also gives it more prominence. This is explained through the fact that journeys to visit local temples are complicated and sometimes long distances away. Each journey from her home in Harlesden magnifies the 'presencing' of religion, because of the level of organisation it takes and the cost of transport.

Religious festivals in India were also like street–parties. There was a celebratory feel among a small group community, as Shanta says

> *Shanta – "You miss the congregations of India."* [54]*(Shanta)*
> *Kokila – "(In India) We can just go across (to attend temple). Here it gets dark and cold early."*[55] **(AWRC)**

In England, non-Christian religion is specifically located and does not pervade daily life in the same way. But also safety concerns affect the regularity with which the women visit temples in England. A visit to the temple is described as hazardous rather than a safe traversing to a religious haven. Religious shrines will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

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[54] GUJARATI "India ma prasange miss karye" (1-306 :G1A;SK)

[55] GUJARATI "Apde same jaysakai, aya undharu thay jai." (1-311 ;G1A; KP)"

4.5.3 Landscape iconography and East Africa.

The spectacular landscapes of the African Rift Valley, Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika are all recollected through souvenir guide books and curios. These landmarks are remembered as representative of whole countries, and the biographical experiences of the country. Sheetal describes the Lakeside place in Mwanza, situated on the shores of Lake Victoria, where she used to go to as a child and then later as a teenager. There at this point on the shore were a set of rocks called Bismark rocks, later renamed Mwanza Rocks, these rocks

> *Sheetal – "are perched so delicately on each other...This was a place of leisure where the whole family would travel there to have a picnic and watch the sunset. This has been our focal point....all my family and almost everybody from Mwanza has this place as a memoir."*[56] **(Sangat)**

Most of the women who have lived in Malawi, Uganda, or Tanzania all have relatives or strong family connections with Kenya. Kenya has very strong iconographic resonance for many of the women. They often conflate Kenya with the continent of Africa; the huge national parks, the port of Mombassa, the capital Nairobi, and its backdrop of Mount Kenya. The women who lived there remember Lake Nevasha, the animals of the National Parks and the beaches of Mombassa fondly. The women's experiences do not always match their mind's eye images of these countries. For example, Shilpa's husband first went to Eldoret to work in a grocers shop. Like many of the "outsiders" who came into this town, from India as well as other parts of Africa, he worked long hours. Because of his trade he dealt with daily threats of violent attack and theft. They were targeted as they had essential goods that not all the Africans could afford. Most of the job contracts in local companies were given to South Asians too. These were all private African and British companies. Despite these difficulties, Shilpa remembers a romanticised Eldoret as a lush, green beautiful place with wonderful climate.

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[56] MIXED GUJARATI (I-136; G2B; Sheetal).

The women who were expelled from Uganda remember it with great affection, and still feel sorrowful at the loss. Manjula, in particular, mentions Uganda with a lot of love and sadness. She had lived there from her birth in Kampala in 1953 to leaving in 1971, just prior to the expulsions in 1972. She has lived most of her life in the U.K, but still regards her connection with Uganda as the most important in terms of her identity, belonging and home place.

> *Manjula – "I love it, it's so beautiful, I still remember it. I remember every evening we used to go for a drive on Kampala Road.* [57]*... Actually I haven't kept anything to remind me of Uganda. Because I do remember it practically every day and it's all in my mind. What I used to do there because still I can't get this place out of my mind."*[58] **(Sangat)**

4.5.4 Food Cultures

The food and drink of India are synonymous with the culture of India. This becomes very important in the relationships that are made active between the place of birth and the place of residence here in England.

> *Sarabjit – "I remember the homeland very much...it's food and drink."*[59] **(AWRC)**

The way that food is prepared also becomes part of a creative and "authentic" reconnection being made. Making *saag* (Punjabi spinach dish) in a terracotta pot described in Hindi as *mati ka handi*, or using a layered barbecue or *saghli*, or using a *matke or* terracotta water jug to purify water. All are romanticised in the discussions. The food and drink made using these utensils is described as 'tasting better' and becomes a practice which reconnects the women to Kenya, Uganda, India, Pakistan. This reconnection is through taste, smell and the art of cooking the dishes as is the family tradition. The East Africans, in particular, eulogise the food sold by street vendors in Mombassa and the coast, remembering baked corn-on-the-cob, fresh roasted cassava, fresh papaya, sweet potatoes, fresh guava, and mangoes. These memories are lucid, and tangible. They seem even more so than actual return journeys made to these places now.

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[57] ENGLISH (l- 1081:G2A;MP)

[58] ENGLISH (l-1899:G2A;MP)

[59] HINDI "Desh both yaad ata hai. Uder ki.kahna pina..." (l-634 ;G1A ;Sarbjit)

4.5.5 Return journeys

Revisiting previous home-places is different for different individuals. For some women, particularly for the AWRC group, visiting India after living in East Africa fills them with the feeling that it a backward step.

> *Chandan – "It (India) seems like a little hamlet."*[60]*(AWRC)*

Yemen and East Africa are experienced (and remembered) as advanced countries with lifestyles far superior to the life in the villages of India or Pakistan. For others, going back is more like visiting somewhere that is fading away, as family members age and die. The places left behind are different to how they were 20 years ago. For other women, going back is like going home.

> *Shazia – "There was freedom there. Yeah, I don't know...when I still go there, although the political situation is not stable there, you still find..well I still find that I'm freer there. "..when I go back home, I become what I used to be."*[61] **(Sangat)**

For Shazia, returning to India is a process of becoming without boundaries, being like a teenager again, without responsibilities. Shazia and Anju are sentimental about a period in their lives without responsibility but most of all, without any constraints. The environment too, ensures a feeling of belonging and of being in the right place. Harsha describes this as *garaam havva,* like 'hot breath'.

> *Shazia – "It's the smell. I mean that..for me..that's maybe you all go there and think it's so dirty, it's so foggy. 'I get asthma..I get this, I get that'...but for me you know the heat, the smell, when I get off the plane I feel Ahhhh* [62]*.. at the airport you see the same type of people who look like you!...you blend in."* [63]**(Sangat)**

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[60] GUJARATI "gamla jevu laage." (1-993:G1A;CG)"

[61] ENGLISH (1- 536 :G2A ;SM).

[62] HINDI / ENGLISH (L-553 : G2A ;SM)

[63] ENGLISH (1- 594 :G2A ; SM)

There are few feelings of discordancy when in the "home" country. Shazia describes this as being and living *"neither here or there"*. Shazia describes life in England after returning from India after a visit as painful, it takes a month to recover from leaving home.

> *Shazia – "I just hate it then....I just like to crawl into a little hole."* [64]**(Sangat)**

The return is still traumatic for Shazia, despite having lived here in Britain for 30 years. She feels wrenched from where she should be. Part of the intimacy is due to the fact that her family are in India. They treat her like the youngest still, and the home in India is an extension of her own here in England. The environment in England is different

> *Shazia – "When I come back, I tell Lalit 'There's no noise on the road, there's no people on the road,...It's just like a dead place'."* [65]**(Sangat)**

England becomes a dead place, not vital or vibrant. It is aesthetically dull, and sedentary. The density of population, the intensity of climate and colour in India, makes the difference that allows Shazia to feel discordant, and unhappy. This experience resonates with all the women who have family in India.

> *Anju – "I feel the same..So I just say 'I'm coming!' and I go there...There is no preparation to be done, nothing to be done, everything is done for you. Everything is ready, no questions, nothing."*[66] **(Sangat)**

This is a route of return free of constraints. It allows the individual women to be as they were when they were children. They are optimistic and feel totally comfortable in being themselves. This is a safe, secure and protective place. Work, stress and pressure is non-existent as this place becomes a welcoming and inclusionary place for always; home as it is meant to be. No self conscious negotiations are needed, just a journey back to be made. It is simple and free of obstacles – or at least this is how they narrate it.

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[64] ENGLISH (I-606-621 ;G2A ;SM)

[65] GUJARATI I-559:G2A;SM

[66] GUJARATI I- 578 :G2A ; AS

As parents in India, East Africa and Pakistan die, the home and relationship with it shifts. Sarbjit describes her family home since her mother's death as a completely different place. There is a lifelessness as described below:

> *Sarabjit – "No-one comes to our house. It is no longer on the visitors route."*[67] **(AWRC)**

The death of Sarbjit's mother has created a distance from many of the social networks Sarbjit was familiar with as a child. The house is still there with her brother and his family and other relatives, but she feels distanced from it. The house is a faded relic to her vibrant memory. It no longer reactivates her identity as it was before she married and migrated out of India. These relationships are different for the children of the women, however. Children who are born here have a different relationship to India or East Africa. Anju's children have visited Kenya several times but they have built a different relationship to it. They treat it as a story, as a text which is a pleasurable holiday. Anju describes it as a relationship which is not a connection but one that is about seeing it and observing it rather than feeling part of the experience of being there. So Kenya becomes recalled as a set of tourist photos in their relationship with it.

4.6 Conclusions

The experiences on arrival in England recounted in these biographical journeys point to a sense of being lost and disorientated. There are no landmarks from which to configure a route home, no familiarity of environment. It seems that these women's lives from the moment that they arrive, are constantly forging ways of making home, sometimes being shaped and shaping the environment, and social geographies around them. The women, in simple terms, are displaced and they have succeeded in creating a home. In more complex ways they have refigured themselves in relation to India, East Africa and England. They have reshaped their environment and have forged new routes between India and East Africa and the U.K.. These, on a global scale, become a public sphere which is evolving and expanding. This is a public sphere based on a post-colonial migration network. The women's biographies are not simply intimate recollections of a domestic past, but a recording of political and social migration networks through which dynamic identity-politics are active. These mappings represent the breadth and scope of the diaspora, in geographical scale. However, the network operates as a source for cultural signification and inscription. The process of the group discussions brings to life the meanings of these migration routes and their significance in the everyday politics of being, and belonging. Through the group's talking, the set of memories produced a collage of identifications with these places and moments.

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[67] HINDI "Amar ghar ma koi nai ata" (1721:G1A;S)

In the group sessions the social memory of the women's diaspora evolved and developed, relational identities were illustrated and maps of meaning were redrawn for the whole group. The process of group recollection was a successful method for gathering oral testimonies. They became enriched and embroidered by being recalled in this dynamic social setting. These oral histories are significant memories, that are

> "so far from being merely a passive receptacle or storage system, an image bank of the past, is rather an active, shaping force...that is dialectically related to historical thought, rather than being some negative other to it" (Samuel 1994, p.x)

Recording the oral histories of these women is particularly significant for the analysis of identity politics of gender migration within an historical context. Identities with and without the colonies are dialectically linked. The women's testimonies in post-colonial times refer to their identification as relational, where the differences between England, and the colony are reinforced through the cultural and political dimensions of national identity and race. The process incorporates a dialogue between a cultural geography of Britishness and the memories and experiences of these 'other' locations and cultures. This dialectical relationship shapes much of what we know as 'Britishness' and 'Indianess', locked into a dynamic, shaped by colonial history. Operating through these connective biographical networks is a material and imagined set of relationships. Networks and relationships are materialised through multisensory connections consolidated in the substance of living in England. These material nodes of connection are points of crystallisation, and precipitates of the emotional, physical and imaginative connections with landscapes of the past. Their temporal and spatial context is consolidated, concentrated and solidified in the materials of culture. The materials become the prism through which biographical figuring and a "presencing" of the places of the past manifest themselves. **Chapter 5** will examine "presencing" as an important aspect of living in the present, in this place of settlement in the U.K..

CHAPTER 5 – Visual Metonymics and Diasporic Cultures at Home

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the qualities of visual and material cultures drawing on the grounded ethnographic materials of my research. To illustrate the ways that formal art theory and the new visual culture contribute to the formation and negotiation of cultural geographies of the South Asian diaspora, I have initially taken an example of an art exhibition to introduce my analysis of the ethnographic material. These materials are from the second of three group sessions, where I asked the women to bring to the group examples of visual cultures in the home that were important to them. I also include extracts from the one-to-one home interviews. As the group session developed it became clear that 'visual culture' was defined by the women as something more than visual media such as photographs, paintings, film, and video. The women included objects that were visually valuable, but were also materially important in everyday life. In this context, visual and material cultures are meaningful in many aspects of their aesthetics, materiality, and properties of signification.

The aim of this chapter is to investigate and illustrate the way in which objects figure in everyday processes of identification, and the way that objects that are in the home are central to women's defining of their home territory. Home has been privileged within the thesis as it is deemed a site of safety, security, and where the women have considerable control, and connection. Women within this community have been defined as having primary responsibility in home making, and the socialising of the family into a sense of cultural and/or religious identity. Their role within the diaspora, therefore, can offer much in the process of recording the materiality of migration and understanding the way in which processes of identification are manifest, in the everyday environment of home. The examination of the meanings of objects illustrates the effects of the diasporic journey, which have an impact on the new configurations that the group make in relation to 'home', 'identity', and 'national identity'. These configurations are critically structured and defined in relation to memories of 'landscapes of home'.

Section **5.2** is an introduction to the way that visual culture becomes the site of memory, and activates new cultural geographies and identity. In **5.3** I consider the nature of memory and its effect in relation to the visual and material cultures of the diaspora. In section **5.4** I examine the particular objects in the home, which operate as triggers of identification, and symbolise places, pasts and social values. In section **5.5** I examine the relationship that women have with nature, including the activation of ecological memories through contact with, and representations of nature and ecologies. The reactivation of memories through these organic cultures involves sensory triggers which are not only limited to the meanings within a past life, but are key to the structuring of a present identity. In **5.6** I demonstrate how visual cultures operate as iconographic representations and images, which operate both in the public and private sphere, as refractive cultures of identification. Visual cultures of film and photography are investigated in their role as signifiers of other times and places, and connective cultures of geographical identification.

5.2 Visual Culture and identity.

In his most recent exhibition in Delhi (2000), *Figures, Facts and Feelings: A direct Diasporic Dialogue*, Indian artist Parthiv Shah documents the Indian diasporic experience in Britain. He presents a photographic dialogue about the diasporic communities' positioning in relation to India – a montage of photographs of people's homes and their self-created montage of textual icons of identification with India. The reiteration of 'Indianness' through these materials is central to Shah's recording of socio-anthropological domestic cultures, which reflect the continuing dialogue between Indians in Britain and their sense of belonging to a national territory of India. As an Indian artist observing these points of connection and creating new points for his Indian audience, Shah views the diaspora from within the 'Motherland'. His photographs return the post-colonial gaze through which the diaspora in Britain is defined, recorded and signified, challenging the usual flow of visual cultures from India to Britain. Shah captures this 'returned-flow', engaging with questions about the way in which 'Indianness' is constructed by the diaspora through visual cultures and objects which are authenticated as Indian, but are also often part of more complicated commodity routes. In the image entitled *Surinder Sharma* (see Plate **5.1**) Surinder sits surrounded by curios, photographs, religious icons amongst his everyday furnished home. These objects are treated as objects that signify geographies of identity through their aesthetic character, their own biography, and their link to the owner's migration to a new home. Shah observes the domestic scene as a montage of visual aesthetics, but also treats the images of the scene as cultural artefacts signifying the politics of identity and the formation of a British Asian diaspora culture.

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Plate 5.1 – *Surinder Sharma*, Parthiv Shah Figures, Facts and Feelings, 2000.

(Reproduced courtesy of Parthiv Shah and CMAC)

Shah is an Indian artist who engages with issues of diaspora identity from outside European art history. He works with a set of structures different from those of Black British artists who, engaging with theories of identity, also question the political structures and prejudicial practices of art history itself (Gilroy 1990; Mercer 1990; Araeen 1991; 1992; Kumar 1997-8; Kempadoo and Paloumi 1997; Bhusan 1998). Studies of visual culture are situated between art history with its 'distancing from the production of living culture', and anthropological concerns with the relationship between the visual and cultural processes of identification (Pollock 1996). This intertextuality requires complex analyses and interpretation from a range of disciplines (Holt and Barlow 2000). Film, video, urban design, photography and advertising are interwoven in our everyday experience of the social world and, as such,these cultures are both visual and material matter in their aesthetic and expressive nature.

In this chapter, I examine the positioning of visual cultures in the home as a means of *fixing* and *negotiating* residence in Britain for the South Asian diaspora. It is my intention to consider them not simply as visual media cultures but as ethnographic artefacts. There is a politics to collection and display allowing what Daniel Miller (Miller 1998) terms a 'highly individualised presencing' through their existence. Presencing is about translocating another time, space or imagined place into the immediate environment. An object or image communicates a connection with other geographies, memories and signifies a structure of feeling to use Williams' term (Williams 1958). These structures of feeling are dynamic and shift in different contexts and moments. By looking at visual cultures in this way, diasporic memory becomes the archive, and everyday relationships with objects become the materials of heritage. They are memorials to the past and are active in the formation of cultures of the present through their ability to emit meaning (Appadurai 1986; Lowenthal 1985; 1988).

In this research I have interrogated the nature of visual cultures, and how to define them. I believe that interdisciplinary influences within and outside art history have meant that a more expansive and inclusionary definition of 'visual culture' is appropriate in the context of contemporary social life Mirzeoff (Mirzeoff 1998) makes this argument clearly and succinctly. Other writers within art history have accepted:

> "[the] active role of the visual in both shaping and subversion of group identities, individual subjectivities and wider cultures (ways of being, systems of belief and value) is commonly accepted." (Holt and Barlow 2000)

The visual cultures within the research, are the materials that are visually significant and that through their sighting activate structures of identification for both individual and group identity. I therefore agree with Jay (1996) that:

> "Visual culture studies concern themselves, democratically, with anything that can imprint itself on the retina." (Jay 1996 p.42)

This research has been an investigation into the role of visual culture and its embodiment within materials in the domestic scene. This theorisation has arisen from the grounded research whereby the sighting of objects in the home, was considered as a dynamically active culture of the visual by the diasporic women studied.

Visual and material cultures have been considered by anthropologists as representing the practice of consumption, that is, about creativity. This expression of creativity can be considered as an antithesis to modernity, in its power of expressing individual and group identity and counterculture. It requires there to be a multiplicity of meaning to mass-produced goods and objects, which may very in different contexts and moments. Visual and material cultures present a force of potential rupture to a modern ideology, by allowing multiple identification points. These are present and activated in expressing cultural identities, counter-identities, and affirming values and politics. The theorisation of identity and culture is, therefore, entwined in the body of work within anthropology on cultures of consumption. For example, Mehta and Belk (1991) focus on artefacts and their importance in transition for Indians in the USA. As in this thesis research, Mehta and Belk have had to consider a broad range of artefacts that their respondents are engaged with:

> "possessions are seen as part of the individual or family identity, they may allow immigrants to 'transport' part of their former identities to a new place" (Mehta and Belk 1991 p.399)

Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) theorise identification through domestic cultures. This is described as a part of the processes of 'differentiation' (symbolising self), and 'integration' (symbolising others). According to Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton there are patterns of gender, in that individual signification through differentiation is most common amongst males. Women are more likely to hold possessions that signify integration.

He argues that this is primarily due to their social responsibility of sustaining a moral and materially significant environment for child-rearing and socialisation. The estrangement from objects has also been studied. It is argued, for example, that a loss of objects and materials that define household, or community identity can result in "transplantation shock", especially through the experience of migration (Seamon 1979; Godkin 1980).

5.3 The nature of memory

The objects that the women value are varied in nature and the meanings that these visual objects have for the women in their social context are multiple. They act as biographical landmarks. They operate as prisms through which experiences and geographies are refracted. All operate as sources of memory, memories which supply an ongoing interpretation of events, thoughts, and sensations of the past. In this chapter, memory becomes a point of conceptualising the women's relationships with visual cultures. Memory is manifest in everyday connections with environments and materials of culture. I have tried to examine memorialisations and the "location" of memory in these reconnections. The way in which memory has been expressed by the women can be described as being operative in three forms. The first type of memorialisation that is recalled in the interviews is **body-memory.** This is memory which is fixed in a sensory experience in a particular space-time. These are the recall of physical memories and experiences. Edgerton (1995) describes body-memories as operating beyond formal testimonies and written documentations of history. The concept of body-memory is particularly useful when dealing with the sensory dimensions to the recollections of the women interviewed. In section **5.6.3** I shall focus on cinema to explore a particularly rich example of body-memory.

The second type of memorialisation expressed in the group and home interviews is a self-conscious process of **testimony** to the past. This is where the women use the discussions and the processes employed in the sessions as a means of bearing witness to a past lived experience which is a defined as a past history. The women employ the group session as a means of securing a record of the past which is sometimes expressed through visual and sensory recollections, but which is designed much more as cultural commonality. These operate in their verbal contributions, their written and drawn descriptions of home. Sometimes testimonies are a means of fixing recollections and inscribing them with cultural resonance or even a fixing of identity politics. The testimonies are inscribed vignettes of

'Asianess' or 'Indianess' that are a witness to a cultural identity. The women are intentionally securing these memories as a means of preventing their loss and erosion.

The third and final concept of memory is that of Toni Morrison's **rememory.** This is memorialising the past but through a collage of experiences, memories, and memories of other's memories. This is a memory that some writers assign as a biological recall and reconnection (see Gilroy 1993b). In this thesis I do not believe it is a biological reconnection but rather a social and cultural connection to a collage of oral storytelling: visualisations of the past and the sensory-aesthetic connections they bind together. Space-time in this process of re-memorialising is fluid: actual moments recalled are transient, and their siting also serves as an iconographic backdrop rather than being fixed in a particular location. The origins of the memories are not fixed but the context of recall is critical. The meanings of these memories are important for the place where they are recalled. Re-memory becomes a realised experience in the present rather than one reliant on a past. Re-memory forms a connection to the present environment as part of identity politics. As objects and visual cultures refract connections with memorialised places and environments of the past, these in turn can be analysed within this framework.

These three versions of memory have been conceptualised and analysed in the context of the experience of diaspora and interpretations made within this chapter emphasise the workings of memory in relation to the distanciation, loss, and separation from a place of birth, belonging, or settlement.

5.4 The metonymics of domestic cultures of the visual

This section interrogates the value of visual cultures in the homes of the women in the study group and develops an understanding of the anthropological value of these materials in determining the cultures of living that the women in the study group engage in and with. It became clear that the objects varied in their immediate functional values and their symbolic values. The objects were recalled in their visual presence, it was their sighting rather than their siting in the home which ensured the triggering of a collective memory, a recalling of past places and moments. These "cultures of identification" are pivotal to the project of unveiling relationships that diasporic groups have with landscapes, nature and environment. To draw out these relationships between cultures of living and cultures of identification with territory, I held a group session whereby the women were requested to bring in 'visual cultures' that were important in their home. To introduce the concept to the women, in the introductory session to both groups I showed a film clip from the Bollywood film *Guide* (see Chapter 3) (Annand 1965). I used the film as a stimulus for a discussion of visual cultures and their importance in the home. As the women talked, it became clear that the film text was secondary to their physical, sensory recollections of watching the film in a social setting. This activation of a public sense of a common relationship to the film encouraged me to re-think my own perceptions of the way that visual cultures trigger environmental relationships. Sensory memories were very different to the biographical testimonies, discussed in chapter four. The film, however was considered important as an object also. Many of the women talked about owning of video copies of important films and programmes. This material presence was valued as a link to body-memories of public cinema (see below). Further to the introductory session, I held two group discussions specifically on 'visual cultures in the home'. These were held at the AWRC in September 1999, and at the Sangat centre in March 2000. For this session, I asked women to bring two or three items from home which, through their sighting, made them important in the creation of their home. To encourage a range of media, I listed possible items including videos, photographs, prints, paintings, fabrics, and religious icons. As discussed in Chapter 3, after this session I interviewed the women at home, where they led me on a room-by-room tour of their home, highlighting objects and visual media, and talking through their meaning and significance.

Whilst the group discussions were valuable in giving a social context and an insight into social meanings that resonate amongst the women in relation to material and visual cultures, the home interviews ensured a grounded sense of the women's relationships with different places and environments. Some of these constitute symbolic iconographical landscapes of belonging whilst others are more immediate memories of home. This can be understood as a way in which processes of triangulation are operating for the women. The essential quality that these objects have is their metonymical value. These metonymical triggers are multisensory in nature. They not only trigger places framed in the women's memory, but they trigger all the other smells, textures and sounds of that place and moment. These visual and material cultures operate as pervasive, active mnemonic devices in the process of identity reconstruction. They act as 'memory maps' and operate in constructing a formalised politics of national heritage and history (Slymovics 1998). These cultures are therefore integral and not peripheral to an 'indigenous' British national culture.

The objects have their own biographies, which reveal much about their meaning in the context of the home. As Kopytoff (1986) argues:

> "Biographies of things can make salient what might otherwise remain obscure. For example in situations of culture contact, they can show what anthropologists have so often stressed: that what is significant about the adoption of alien objects – as of alien ideas – is not the fact that they are adopted, but the way that they are culturally redefined and put to use." (Kopytoff 1986 p.67)

Kopytoff's research focuses on the cultural signification and recontextualisation of Western objects situated in Africa. Here, I am dealing with the reverse process, materials that have come from India and East Africa to Britain. They have their significance centred on 'other' cultural landscapes, and have travelled to the centre of Empire. As materials they carry a lot of cultural capital, they signify the greater cultural body of meaning far beyond their value and use. They act as metonymic devices in that they refer to the whole country, culture or biography. But they are just a splice of that memory, experience or culture and are lodged into others in the U.K.. Their reconnecting is done from the present. Material objects hold meanings dynamically figured in the present. Ordinary objects have the power to signify, refract and translate complex geographical relationships. In the example below, I have summarised a home interview, based on the interview transcript and research notes made after the interview.

5.4.1 Case Study One: Home Interview with Shilpa (AWRC)

On the 28th October 1999, I interviewed Shilpa from the Asian Women's Resource Centre group, in her home. Shilpa was born in India, and is currently living in Harlesden. At the beginning of the interview I asked her to talk about her route to England, and used this as a way to explore her landscapes of home, transition and experiences of settlement, basically a map of formal identification. Shilpa was bon in India. The day that she was born her father was in Rangoon, located there during the war. She lived in India until she was married and as a result she moved to her husband's residence in Kenya. This marriage failed and Shilpa moved back to India.

Shilpa remarried and was then taken to her second husband's residence in Sudan where they lived happily for four years. After the birth of their daughter Shilpa was given the opportunity by her husband to see her parents in India. He bought plane tickets for Shilpa and she left without her daughter for a trip "back home". Whilst in India, Shilpa had a visit from her brother-in-law who informed her that the marriage was over and he handed her a suitcase with her belongings. Shilpa was consoled by her family, who advised her to make a life in India. Shilpa soon made a return trip Sudan to "abduct" her daughter. She was a woman twenty seven years old. This type of mission was unheard of for an Indian woman, let alone one of her status and experience. Shilpa regained care of her daughter and fled to England where she rented a small room. From this, she was able to apply for Housing Association Property. She has lived here for 15 years without having been back to India, Sudan, or Kenya.

The second part of the interview was a tour of her home, I emphasised that I wanted her to highlight visual objects that were important to her and her sense of home. The first thing Shilpa showed me was a cupboard, a locked cupboard in her "religious" room. In this cupboard was kept everything dear to her. She went through photographs of Kenya, some of her wedding, her husband and mostly of her daughter and their life in London. Next Shilpa drew out a large yellow suitcase, it looked like it was made of cardboard and bamboo, quite fragile. It was a bamboo yellow with aluminium fittings. At the sight of this I was really moved. It was from another age and certainly another society. I didn't recognise it as "Indian". Shilpa explained that her treasured things are kept in this suitcase; she has kept them here for her daughter and herself as a store. Shilpa reverently laid out the suitcase's contents in the living room. There were pieces of jewellery and toys attached to which there was a story of her younger sister's visit to Harlesden from India about 11 years ago. Shilpa described in detail described markets in her home town where her sister had purchased these items. She described temples, shops, her father's clothing business, her father's sales routes through the local farms, his journeys through Kenya, and Uganda. She described fruits and flowers, kitchens and bathrooms. Her sister had, in fact, given her a model of an Indian gas stove, which was an open fire design that they used in her family home in the back yard. Shilpa looked at this and explained how she had used this same stove design in both Kenya and Sudan. She described the heat in Sudan, the cold nights and the humidity. This suitcase was a vast store of memories, experiences, emotions, and the smells, colours and textures.

In the bathroom, Shilpa pointed out a metal bucket. She got very animated about this. She said that she had bought it three years ago in Harlesden. She was so pleased with this find that she bought two. She kept one in the loft, just in case this one cracked. Shilpa explained that she had used a bucket like this in her family home in India, and her marital home in Sudan. It represented the morning ritual of getting up before dawn, filling the bucket with water for bathing, and setting it on a fire to heat for the whole family. Shilpa explained that she remembered her family, her life in India through this morning ritual. She explained that since the day that she had bought the bucket, she had been using it for her and her daughter to wash with in the mornings.

Shilpa's bucket became a prism, through which her intimate places – those domestic spaces of bathing, cooking, cleaning were evoked. Her descriptions were a record of these places and textures. Her descriptions were of things that evoked home, and places to which she was attached. In some ways, there were a set of aesthetics that could be traced in her talking. A picture of the environments of her biography. She had used the bucket to make Harlesden connect with India, Kenya and Sudan. She had also made reconnections with these places for her daughter. A string of memories linked to a set of objects which trigger notions of heritage, identity and, in broader senses, a citizenship not of a modern nation. A set of co-ordinates which allowed her daughter to map the biography of her mother and, in turn, her family and her cultures of identification with those people and places. This is what Kitaj terms "a polygot matrix" (cited in Mirzeoff 1998, p.36). This fractal metaphor offers connection, infinite configurations, but within a community of collected logic, fixed by the materials of culture in the home. This is importantly, though, a process of fixing the present in relation to the past. The textures of these cultures in the home are testimonies to geographical connections, which signify cultural identification points. They not only bear witness to a past migratory route, but a common sense of identity that is significant and relevant to a social grouping living in England. Material and visual cultures are multifaceted in their signification of the past, and they offer a set of co-ordinates within which to map personal biographical experiences and to as understand the structures of social identity within which Shilpa lives.

There is significance in the place and distance from which people look back and configure their identification with objects as 'Indian' or 'African'. Hansa describes her husband's relationship with visual objects as a humorous example of the way that taste shifts in relation to the distance experienced with India. Hansa's husband is attached to Indian craft such as Peshwari paintings (silk pieces with paintings of religious icons or elephants and gardens).

Hansa below describes the difference in his relationship to Indian-made goods compared with her own, in discussion with others in the group.

> *Hansa – "My husbands taste. He really likes these paintings on silk. He has a real regard for these Indian-made paintings. I like any type of painting, but he loves these."*[68]
> *Darshna – "Why does he love them?"*
> *Hansa – "I think because he has never lived in India. . ."*
> *Darshna – "Has he a greater affection for these?"* [69]
> *Hansa – "Yeah. My mum used to think he's crazy spending so much on all these paintings....wheras in India even if I go to India I wouldn't buy exactly something which you know you can see . . .Oh yes this is Indian-made."*[70]
> **(Sangat)**

Whilst touring the house there was a sense that her husband's tastes were very different to those of Hansa herself. He liked dark woods, peshwari paintings (see plate **5.2** below), wood carvings and traditional crafts from India. These are seen as 'tacky' and an example of poor taste by Hansa because they are mass-produced and not artful. Hansa says that they are not individual pieces but picked because they are seen to be crudely "Indian" in their form and aesthetics. The dark woods of the house are described by her as typical "Indian" taste, but derided for their lack of suitability to the darkness of the house. The presence of dark woods and other stereotyped icons are self-consciously positioned as markers of 'Indianess'. This is the way texture and aesthetics are testimonials to a fixed sense of identitification with India. For Hansa herself, the move to England could be considered as a move towards a more modern way of living, where she has sought to develop her taste which is deliberately "not Indian". For her, light woods and porcelain pieces are her favourites. She likes pastels and pictures, which are not obvious icons within the "Indian" sensibility – that prefers trees, elephants, gardens, flowers, and women playing sitars, religious icons. Religious icons are especially connective as they directly reflect a spiritual text or myth which is central to an

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[68] GUJARATI and ENGLISH "My husband no shock che. Ena a kapla karela nu paintings bowaj game. Ane Indian paintings nu bowaj shock che. I like any type of painting, but he loves these." (l- 554; G2ind; HS)

[69] GUJARATI "Ene shock wadare hoi?" (l-556; G2ind; DT)

[70] GUJARATI "Ke Oh ah Indian che." (558;G2ind; DT)

Indian national iconography. By looking at objects in the home it became clear that religious icons were a source of refraction of memories places and events significant to positioning in the women's lives in England. In this next section, I focus on religious objects and their significance as visual cultures in the home.

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 5.2 – Peshwari Paintings of decorated elephants.

Source: Interview with Hansa (Sangat)

5.4.2 Enshrining heritage: Mandirs, Medinas and religious iconography

This section is about the way in which in all the interviews a significant place in the home was the *mandir*. The *mandir* is the sacred home temple that each of the Hindu women has. The Muslim women also pride themselves in having images of Medina, but Islam does not tolerate iconic images of Mohammad or any other religious figures and prophets. The religious objects in the Muslim households will be dealt with in the latter part of this section. Both groups (Hindu and Muslim) feel that religious artefacts should be prominent in the home. The meanings of these shrines/artefacts operate as reminders of moral values, symbolise stories in the *Quran*[71], *Bhagavad Gita*[72], *Ramayana*[73], and a collection of religious icons which reflect different life values – wealth, prosperity, health, righteousness, etc. Their presence in the home and their sighting is important. There are several places where pictures and emblems and small shrines are placed.

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[71] These are the Muslim Scriptures in Arabic, believed to be faithful to be the true word of God as spoken by Mohammed.

[72] This is the sacred Hindu text which is part of the Mahabharata.

[73] The Ramayana is the Sanskrit epic of *Rama*, an incarnation of Vishnu.

My investigation focuses on the values of these objects in relation to the women's feelings of home, belonging and identity, as well as whether these operate as triggers of identification. It is quite clear from the tone and feeling with which the women describe the religious icons and objects, how much their lives are intertwined with the existence of the shrine itself and the variety of pieces held within.

> *Hansa -"Previously in my old house I just had a cabinet which I made, I didn't have a mandir or anything. Recently in the last 3-4 years, in Bombay I managed to get a little mandir, 4' by 4'. It's just a wooden mandir, nanaklu. That's because there problems of bringing it down here. I had made my mandir out of a small cabinet, furniture, not exactly a mandir shape or anything. We had this before. Murtis are in there too. Slowly slowly I've collected them. . ."*[74] **(Sangat)**

Individual shrines are dynamic sites whose content, size and aesthetics shift over time. They usually start as a small place in the house, a corner that will not be defiled if the woman is menstruating, and so they are often in cabinets, cupboards or whole rooms that can be locked away. The shrines hold religious relics such as *gangajaal* – water from the Ganges, *virbhutti* – the sacred dust from incence burning from pilgrim sites in India or from other temples, and *chunis* – small pieces of embroidered cloth used on *murtis* - statues/icons from temples. These are blessed during *aartis* – special daily prayer. *Murtis* themselves have been purchased at sites of pilgrimage. The shrine is a collection, a growing collection of pieces that are sacred and blessed, but are not limited to religious sacred objects. They are situated as a family hearth, at the centre of the soul of the house or the soul of family relations. Sometimes they are literally sites where the family genealogy can be traced. The shrines become places where, due to their sacredness, important family objects are placed. The shrines incorporate family photos of those who have passed away – grandfathers, great aunts, grandmothers, and great uncles. The biography of the family can also be clearly ascertained.

The Hindu religion has many icons, representing the many incarnations of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The belief, or reverence of the different icons of Krishna, Swaminarayan, Jalarambapa, Luxmi, Ganpatti, Sai Baba, Shankeshwar Mahavir are revealing of the caste,

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class, and regional identity of the family. Superimposed onto this identification are the refractions of intimate moments and sacred life moments, preserved and treasured through material objects. A prayer rosary given by a father, a piece of gold received on a wedding day, sea-shells, or shiv-ling that were in the family home prior to marriage: all are composed and united in the laying out of the shrine. This becomes an accretion of the sacred which is emotionally valued by the family, and which is usually maintained, physically at least, by the mother and/or wife.

The accretion of objects is a process by which the shrine accumulates layers of meaning reflecting each family event, or biographical event. The loss of a parent or sibling is recorded alongside the birthday of a religious icon. The shrine is believed to emanate protective vibrations; it is a spiritual place first before it is a purely religious site. Its significance grows with time along with its representativeness of family biography. These private, personal moments are inscribed physically, and their significance embedded in these objects. These meanings are shifting in context, since the shrine is moved when the family moves and so it too traces migration at every scale. The objects form a significant collage of embedded moments, and an aesthetic of the family biography. The shrine is important for the objects it contains and the look of the objects, the scent of incense and oils, as well as the feelings that the material and aesthetic composition evokes.

Private life and public life merge in the composition of the shrines. Imbued within these icons are formal religious values and relationships with public temples, prayers and moral behaviour. Informal personal and intimate objects are placed here, protected and hidden away. Personal feelings can be locked into the broader composition, for example the grief of loss, the joy of birth, the emotional ties toward parents and hope for future events. Sometimes families place letters at the shrine – job applications, offers, letters of achievement and even travel tickets, so that all these possible journeys can be blessed. By the *murtis* presence, the women believe preventative measures have been taken – preventing obstacles, mishaps and general misfortune.

The *mandir* is also predominantly the responsibility of the woman of the household, as a responsibility for moral teaching and retaining protection from God through ritual, and prayer. Below Hansa describes her relationship with the *mandir* in relation to her mother and her mother-in-law, who have different religious beliefs and commitment (see Plate 5.4).

Darshna - "Can you explain what the mandir means to you."

Hansa - "In India it was opposite our home, always wherever you go, it's so much on your way that you can quickly pray and leave. For my mum it was very important despite being partially sighted. She never used to go out too much. But she used to make her way up to the Derasar (Jain temple). . .It's not in open area, but residential area. It's nice, Derasar is always nice, cool places. . . India is very hot but somehow these places are very cool. Like (shanty thay) brings a sense of inner peace."

Darshna- "So the mandir in your home. Since India you've needed that, what does it mean in the house?"

Hansa– "It's basically what I do and say and apologise for what I've done. . . I would still be able to focus, but my boys would not have seen it, and they are not used to us seeing it. I can still close my eyes even if I don't have a mandir, I can visualise. Because I have see day in and day out that Derasar there. But J and the boys they have not seen it."

Darshna - "(so) visually it is important."

Hansa - "If I say Shankeswar Pashwar it wouldn't come if I hadn't had that mandir. It makes that connection stronger. If I hadn't had the mandir, it wouldn't come to them. What is Shankeshwar pashwar . . . Yeah. . . If I'm very unhappy, or angry or something, Yes, I do pick my Navkarmantra[75]*, but not necessarily in sitting in front in the mandir. It calms me down, but I don't have to really sit in front of the mandir to do that. . . There is no Jain temple here (Aya to Derasar nathi), it's in Leicester, so it's very far to go. If something happened. . .accident or something. . .lucky to be alive sort of thing. We go to Hare Rama Hare Krishna mandir. It's not something that we have to go to the derasar. . . I am like that that I have influenced my husband and children in Jainism. And I believe in doing what you do and you get forgiveness (awkar). I don't believe in any other miracle. If I do bad things then I suffer the consequences here on earth. (Ayaj bhogwu karu pale.)"*[76] **(Sangat)**

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[75] This is an equivalent to the *Lord's Prayer* within the Christian religion, it is recited often, especially at auspicious occasions such as the beginnings of journeys, weddings, new jobs, and homes.

[76] Hansa individual interview

Here Hansa uses the shrine as a means of visualising shrines in India, Leicester and in her parent's home. The mandirs are collages of social and spiritual life. Their presence is a signification of cultural, social and moral discourses and practices. Therefore, the shrines are reflective – reflecting back into the home many moments, spaces and connections. They both absorb daily activity and are central to it. Temporally operating on many scales of time, their reflectivity is enhancing and productive. Inscribing objects in the shrine is a formative moment. The first breath of a baby, the first job, the wedding, in fact all the rites of passage and major life stages. Intensely personal prayers are recited here- celebrating, requesting and proffering. These are a set of intense moments and small things; miniature icons representing larger things, moments, and connections. The relationship that Lalita describes below illustrates the interpolation of public and private religious practices into a critical cultural expression (see Plate **5.3)**.

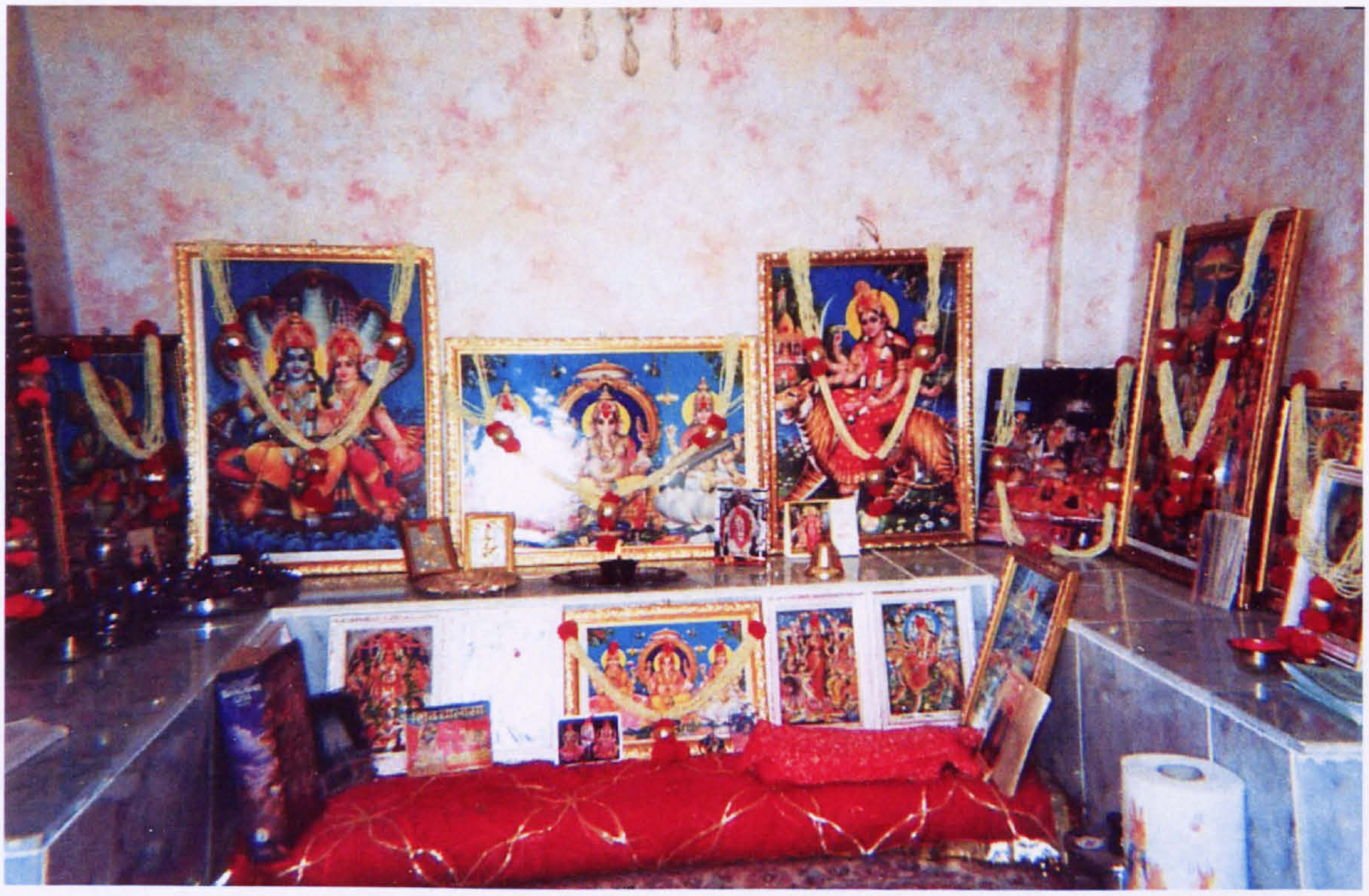

Plate 5.3 – Lalita's mandir.

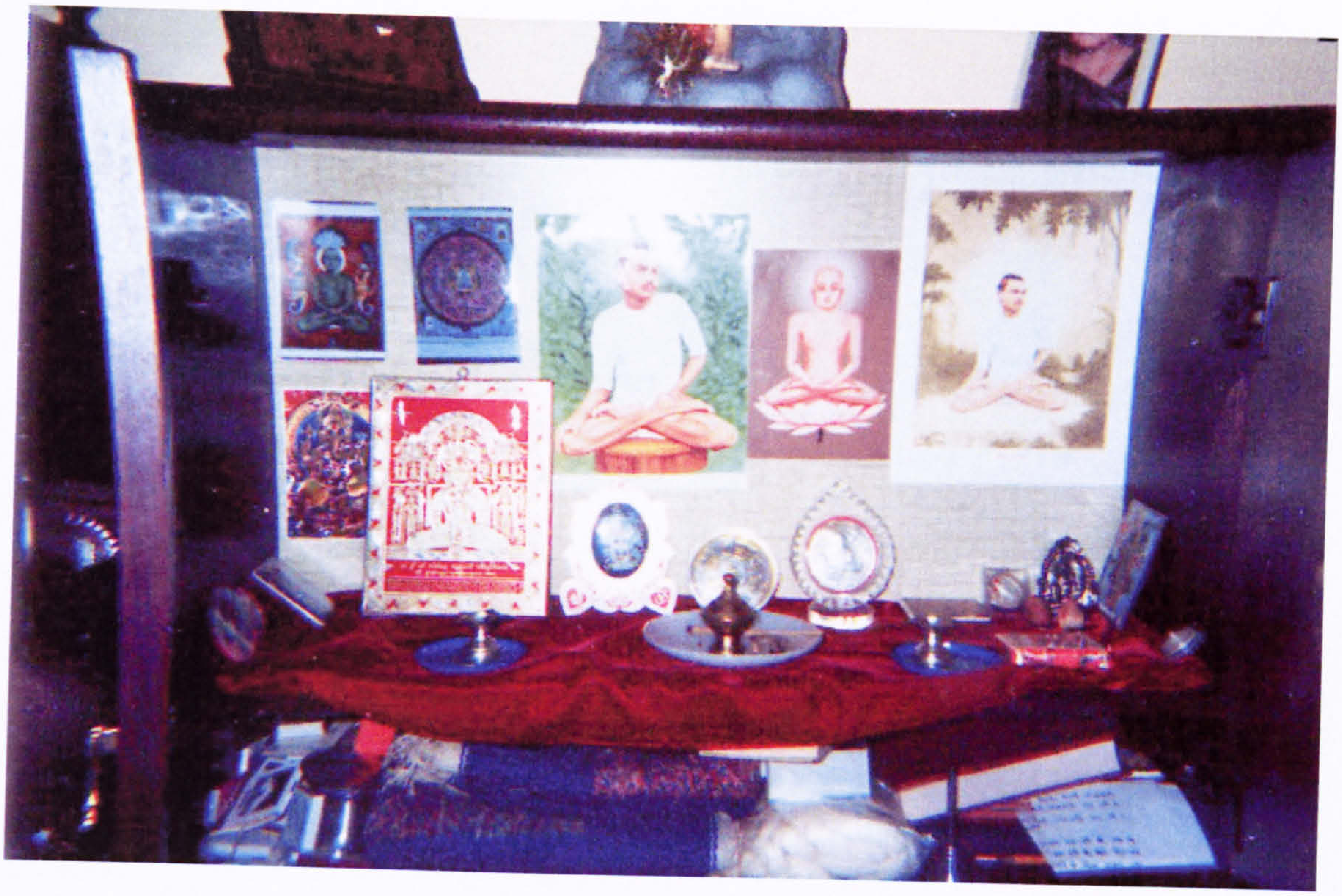

Plate 5.4 – Hansa's mandir.

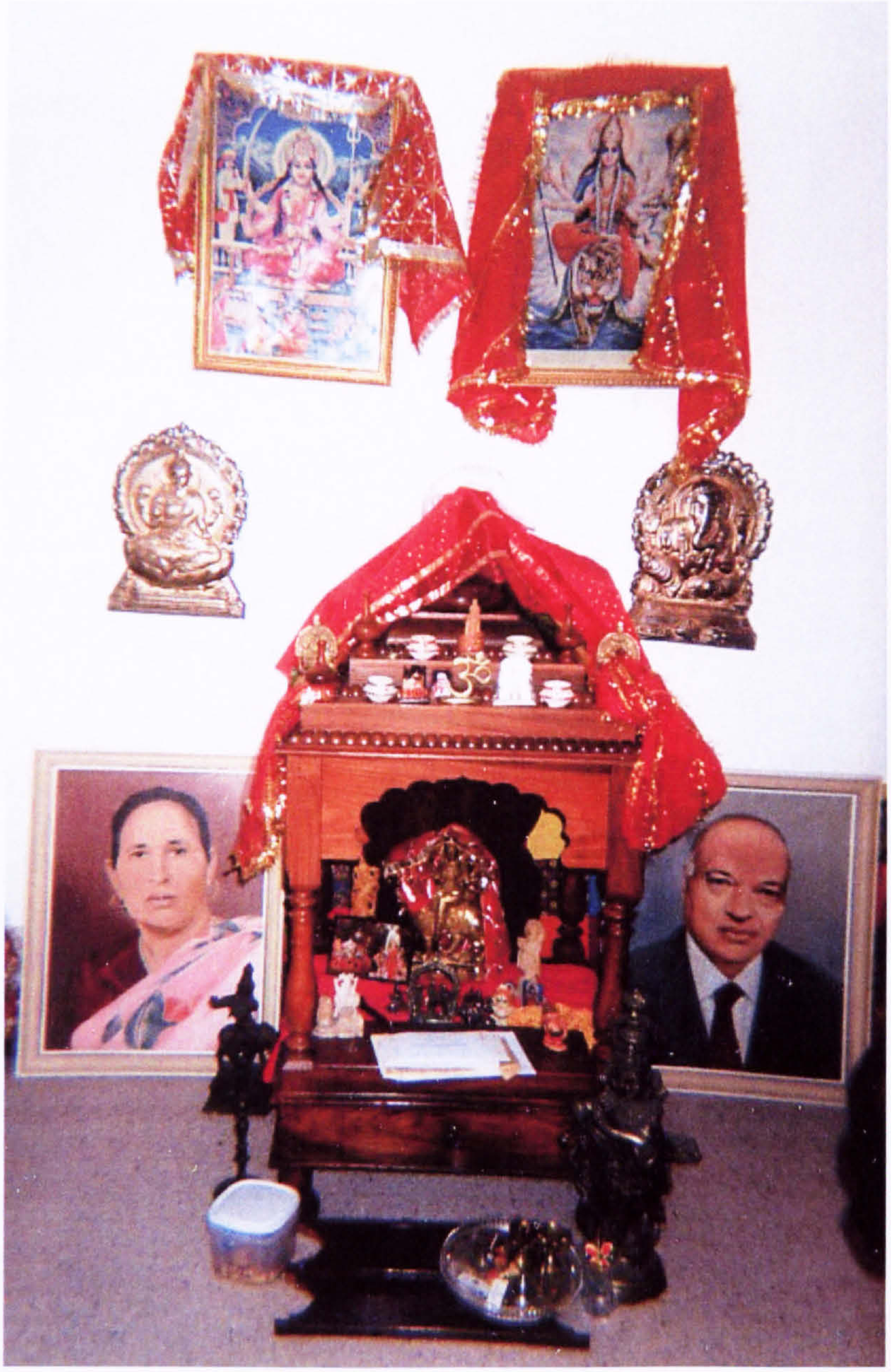

Plate 5.5 – Shazia's mandir.

Lalita –" I think religion is part of my culture if you've noticed Darshna. Especially being brought up in Delhi, for me it was not two different things. I just couldn't say this is my culture. O.K. it's Kathak, and classical music, and touching elders feet, respecting them as my culture. And this is my religion. No, it was a fusion of both, it was blended together. So it was like . . .all festivals were not only religion, not only culture but fun also. So it was like a blend of everything. And we enjoy it. Like going to Vaishnudevi also. Like sometimes we were 40 of us going together. My father had

> *eight brothers, and sisters, their spouses, their children, and cousins. Everybody going, booked like four coupes of the train, and rent a bus at Jamnu."*[77] **(Sangat)**

Lalita describes the difficulty of defining her culture without religion. But the religious excursions she describes are social events. They have codes, rites and rituals of their own. Religion is not bounded within strict definitions of personal relationship with God, or limited to certain religious rituals. The religious learning is part of socialisation in the home. Each daily task has a religious moral code inscribed. For example 'eating' has rules/codes such as – wash hands, no meat/beef/ dairy, and always eat with right hand, with the issue of cleanliness woven throughout. With regards to interactions between generations, these are clearly marked with etiquette and good practice. Addressing elders, respecting elders and the language of communicating is restricted through socialising events. Defining the moral order of family socialising and the social hierarchy were the function of religious excursions. Teachings of religious texts are woven through daily practices and rites. To an extent the shrines operate in the same sphere. Their presence socialises family members into religious teachings and their influence on daily life. The shrine itself, and/or objects and icons within, are incorporated into the events of different life stages. The shrine activates a connection biographically and spiritually (see Plate 5.5).

> *Shazia -"This is my mandir, it's the first room in the house. It's got our papers, the piano. . . . This room has always been a mixture, everything has got some meaning. You know like any important letters we have . .Everything has over the years been picked up. Like this is from my mum's place. This one I got from her mandir. . . the mandir has photos of Lalits parents, and my parents. "*[78] **(Sangat)**

The shrine operates as a visual trigger for attaining spiritual focus. But for her children its presence, its sighting, instils a religious iconography which is synonymous with cultural education and integrity. For Shazia, the children, without this reference point, are 'lost'. They are required to situate themselves in relation to the religious meanings and teachings that the shrine represents. The shrine is also symbolic of a cultural identity and its textures are central to this recalling process. The smell, touch, sight and sound of prayer, prayer bell, scent of camphor, incense, sandalwood, the feel of virbhutti, cloth, ghee and cotton wool, the sight of icons, of vermilion are all part of situating and socialising children. Importantly, the shrines enable/assert the practices of being Asian as opposed to being European. European values and practices are set off against Asian/Indian ones. This can be described as an iconography of cultural integrity, but its flexibility and dynamism allow for greater relevance to everyday life. This means greater associations and ultimately spiritual alliances are cultivated, subliminally and overtly.

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[77] English (l-461-473: G2ind; LH)

[78] ENGLISH (l-317; G2ind; SM)

The Muslim women who took part in the study also treated the iconography of Islam as a means of creating the same associations, as materials signify a presencing of God, and of moral geographies. Describing an image of Medina (see Plate **5.6**) Zubeida explains:

> *Zubeida -"This is Allahs presence in our home. It sustains fecundity, it sustains peace."* [79]**(AWRC)**

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Plate 5.6 – Zubeida's icon of Medina *(AWRC)*.

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[79] HINDI "yeah Allah ki chise hai humara ghar me. Barkat rehe, tafag rehete hai" (l- 212; G1B; YS)

The object referred to by Zubeida, is a porcelain image of Medina, and the stone of Mecca. This is the place of pilgrimage (*haaj*) in Saudi Arabia where each Muslim is compelled to go at least once in a lifetime. This piece is available at little cost in the markets of West London. Zubeida purchased it in Willesden market. The home would not be a home without this icon. It provides the core of the home. It is a piece of Allah in the home as its presence reminds the dwellers of a moral way of life and of the higher aims of a Muslim. The word *Barkat* is difficult to translate, but it describes the process of regeneration, not just of individual reproduction but also the reproductiveness of good familial harmony, of prosperity, and goodwill. It represents the centre of family values, a unity and harmony, which is dynamic. Therefore, the icon's role is to ensure the right route toward a self-regulatory household facilitating empowering regeneration and a fertile location for good relations and wealth. The icon is imbued with some spiritual power in energising the home with positive vibrations. It emanates spiritual connections and is a catalyst for a relationship with God, activated by the image of Medina. The object is imbued with many wishes, emotions and is seen to allow household members to realign themselves and refigure themselves, in whatever path, toward Islamic teachings. The connection that the Medina icon allows is a productive one, for the icon has properties which are believed to be health giving and spiritually healing.

In the group discussions, on mention of Medina, there was an eruption of reverential explanations and recitation of the story behind the *haaj* site at Mecca. *Haaj* was said to heal the sick. It was a sacrifice that could be made to allow for blessings to be proffered, including the healing of critical illness. Kajal wants to go to complete *haaj*, to help heal her son's hole in his kidney. The presence of the Medina image in the home is a source of strength also. It is a constant throughout all the difficulties and struggles that the women face. The haaj is inspiring in that it is a reminder of a bigger commitment to Islam. This particular piece inspired the women to talk about their wanting to go to complete haaj.

> *Zubeida - "If you have full haaj that means you can't lie, you can't think about anyone, you can come back again, you forgot about everyone, don't think you need more money, just thinking about a simple life about God .... (In this place) your memory, you . . .there you don't remember life, you don't remember home/house, not memory of mother settles, nor memory of father.*

> *Absolutely everything is waiting, everybody is like one, become one."* [80]**(AWRC)**

When the women are setting up home, they choose the icon of Medina as an essential 'cornerstone' of home building. Whilst describing the essence and meanings of *haaj*, the women spoke with great sentiment about the ability of this experience to transport one to a way of being that was beyond materiality, and beyond familial relationships. The moral message of Islam, that there is an individual relationship with God beyond material and emotional ties, represents a means to get through the experience of migration, where all of these familial and material relationships are broken. The centreing of the icon of Medina is a reminder of strength and values beyond the territory of now. Islam and the belief in God has for most of the women both Hindu and Muslim, been a means to consolidate, and a source of emotional strength which has been a necessary feature in their lives. The icon inscribes in the home a representation of faith, and formal networks of Islam, which culminate in a uniting pilgrimage, but also inscribes meanings about identity which are about everyday resourcefulness and strength. They symbolise the larger spiritual struggle which minimalises the day-to-day obstacles.

Public temples and religious life is also important to the women in settling in Britain. For some a lack of cohesive religious networks contributes to feelings of isolation and alienation. Shilpa, in the AWRC group describes the intimacy she feels with the religious landscapes of India: public temples are in many nooks and crannies within the city, each alleyway off main streets has places of worship. These are public shrines of worship. The way that Shilpa describes these places, spread out throughout her daily routes through her neighbourhood, made her feel more secure. These wayside shrines are points of congregation for various members of the community, they contribute to a landscape of righteous, wholesome moral living, which extend to Shilpa's feelings of belonging to a dynamic and connected community. The alleyways through which she walks have shrines, which are open day and night. They are lit and visited, and it is almost like they are points in a labyrinth, which offer meaning and light beyond the confusing, dark passageways.

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[80] HINDI "Yaad rehta, tum . .ya tum ko life nay yaad rehta hai, ghar yaad rehta hai, na ma rehti hai, na bap rehta, bus sirf Allah rehta hai . .Bilkool sub ek intesaar rehta hai, sub ek jessa hojata hai. .(1- 231: G2B; YS)

This religious landscape extends throughout India and these shrines are duplicated in the home, as miniature versions. But of course, being situated in the home means that they exclude the social networking that public shrines allow. They allow connection only to the grander religious narratives of nation and Hinduism, but exclude the daily social and psychological enfranchisement that the existence of places of congregation offer.

> *Shilpa – "I miss all the holy places in India. Everywhere is spiritual. In alleyways there are shrines. Your soul gains peace, you know? Here, (in England) travelling to the temple is very difficult . . . . In India you get to see people. Any place, you get to offer prayer. On the streets, roads you come across temples small and large."*[81] **(AWRC)**

Public celebrations and festivals also take place in the streets and roadways. They are not limited to single temples or focal points. The crossroads of streets are the points where they build a prayer arch, like the ones used in weddings – *mandap*. The *chowk* business completely stops[82] the traffic stops, pedestrians join the celebrations, there is music, food and religious songs and prayer. For Shilpa it is not the event that is important but the fact that the streets and alleyways are all made part of the inclusionary landscape around. She does not feel alienated or distant. The religious activity ensures an intimacy, and a sense of belonging. This is translated also in the *look* of the streets and commercial districts. Religious icons are in all the shops and shrines, there is a smell of incense and camphor and there is an aesthetic, which she has tried to replicate in her own temple at home. The icons of the Gods and the music and prayers through which she celebrates them are at the heart of her home-life.

In England the religious landscape is fragmented and Shilpa points out that there are more obstacles between her and temples. This dislocation is compounded, by dealing with an aesthetically different geography in Harlesden. For many Hindus the visit to the shrine or temple is a central part of everyday life. Being in England creates a distance with this cultural practice. This connection made between home here and home prior to migration is made through materials and icons such as those discussed. However, those remembered places of home also included organic and natural places and ecological memories. The next section looks at objects that reflect the natural or ecological textures left behind, that are represented through craft and curios.

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[81] GUJARATI (1-21; G2ind; SK) "India ma bathi holy places bathi miss karu. Jya jay thya Bhagwan hoi. Thya jay ne gali ma Darshan kare ne awye. Apda athma ne shanty male, kabar che ? Aya bus ma jay ne mandir ma jawanu bow agru thay gyu . . .India ma apadne malnus jowa male. Seniye ni gali ma darshan karyaway. Street and road upper temple awe, nana mota."

5.5 Ecological curios, social memory and connection.

The touristic curios and craft objects that the women in the groups gather in their homes, have varied biographies. By this I mean that their routes are not exactly the same as their owners in that they are quite often part of the commodity culture. For example, for women from East Africa animal products and dark wood sculptures featured quite heavily in their homes and in their stories of East Africa. Copper plates, ivory products and Masai Mara curios were all listed as valuable in their presence in the women's homes in England. All of these things hold a "cultural vitality" (Gell 1986, p.114). They are not always deemed as objects with functions, but their meanings are infused with the biography or cultural markers of the owner. This cultural vitality within the context of East African touristic curios is one that is recognised and shared amongst the groups rather than being purely an individual relationship. These curios, when living within Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Tanzania or Zimbabwe, were part of the commodity markets, which defined these objects in a different way to their definitions in a British context. They are imbued with a sense of Africaness, but sold as tourist souvenirs in a mass market of similar tokens. The women in the groups make clear that these things (when living in East Africa), were considered kitch, or lacking in style. They are tacky remnants of a commodified ecosystem – Elephant tusks, zebra skin, ivory necklaces, leopard skin hand-bags are all examples of the splicing of the African savannah into saleable touristic souvenirs.

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Plate 5.7 – Bhanu's African copper engraving *(Sangat)*.

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 5.8 – Shanta's African copper engraving *(Sangat)*.

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 5.9 – Shanta's African photograph *(Sangat)*

> *Bhanu – "Like flamingo feathers with some ornaments on their table . ."*
> *Shazia – "Or those Mombassa gates in that copper, that is a must in most Kenyan houses"*
> *Shanta – "Nobody used to keep it in their home. We didn't have anything even on the walls no. Nothing in the house, only after we left I think we are thinking of. . ."*[83] *"My husband collects these David Shepherd pictures."* [84]*These are mostly animal scenes, elephants and the African savannah feature largely in all of them." (see Plate 5.9)*
> *Neela – "I have got. . .you know in my TV. room, I've got those little stools? They're from Kampala. They were one of those things, which came in the parcel. They're little tiny, but I still enjoy sitting on them because it's my little reminder . .my mum gave then to me when I got married because she knew I liked those. So those are still . . .I knew where exactly it used to be in our lounge when we were back home, and it's just nice to have something from the past. Yeah but mostly we left things as they were. Because all you could bring were suitcase."*[85] **(Sangat)**

Such objects are quite often bought by the women after leaving East Africa, or especially picked out because of their "souvenir" status. They are extractable, concentrated icons of the African landscape. In the process of being replaced, and replanted in the U.K. these touristic curios are imbued with different values and meanings. What occurs is a re-construction of value (Geary 1986). Whilst living in East Africa, the objects are just background things; together they form a collage, as part of the everyday, but without the heightened significance that the diasporic journey imbues them with. They are in a sense created anew in the process of their circulation. They may be bought as objects of little value but in the context of migration they are bought, given as gifts, or ordered at great expense to ensure their contribution to the cultural landscape of the home in England. Their intrinsic value is limited, but their symbolic value shifts through time; their contexts reconstructed. Their earlier value is heightened in their being dislocated along with the owner, but in a social context of recognition and signification. Thus, an elephant tusk, or a zebra skin bag, is valuable not only to the owner personally, but has a role in signifying to others who see it in the home; a biographical and cultural vitality which inevitably resonates with others within the community and without. These curios become treasures. Their existence changes a U.K. domestic space into one where Africa as a continent is inscribed as part of the valued and elevated experiences of the owners of the home. The value of the object and the value of Africa is simultaneously elevated, and simultaneously reconstructed.

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[83] ENGLISH (I- 2009; G2A; BP)

[84] ENGLISH (I- 82; G2ind; SK)

[85] ENGLISH (I- 1868;G2A; NS)

> *Darshna -"In your home do you have religious pieces that are always with you wherever you move?"* [86]
> *Bharti – "No. Not religious, but some of them like the carvings of Kenya, . .I still have them. Those were the pieces that we always have in the home . .Masai figures, animal. . . .the furniture I have carved, I bring from Kenya."*
> *Darshna – "...when you see these things what do they remind you of when you're home?"*
> *Lalita – "Mombassa... Well actually in Mombassa, even if you go out, you know on the beach or go to the streets you see people selling them you know. On the streets, kiosks, full of these carvings, and I think that is a kind of trademark of Kenya. And I see them and it reminds you of Mombassa. . . Mombassa? The memory is beautiful. . .But then I come back home . . .That's why I had to get very Asian furniture, because I had collected so many oriental things that I had to. My son doesn't like leather furniture, he doesn't believe in it. He said no."*[87] **(Sangat)**

There is a sense from some women that Indian or Asian textures are essential, and that even if a variety of objects are collected to make home, the Indian aesthetic has to dominate. There is a morality inscribed into this aesthetic; leather and animal skins are particular examples of this. There is an ambiguity about their place in the textures within the home. Animals are described as epic experiences in the women's descriptions. They are amplified in their, size, colour and are super-dynamic in the way in which they are recalled. Their size, strength and speed are vivid and made vital through the objects. This is not surprising considering the iconography of Kenya and the African Rift Valley, in general. For residents the African

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[86] ENGLISH (l- 908:G2B;DT and BM)

[87] ENGLISH (l-1091; G2ind;LH)

National Parks were accessible and immediate. A day out seeing the giraffes, alligators, hippos, tigers, elephants and monkeys was not unusual. Set off against the ecology of the U.K. these memories and experiences become heightened and magnified. They are imbued with sentiment, pleasure and pride until the objects that are refracting these moments are themselves elevated. The object and its own aesthetics are valued beyond their material worth and function. Even the seemingly grotesque can become the object of reverence, as the example below demonstrates.

5.5.1 Case Study Two: Anju and the Elephant's foot (Sangat)

In the second session at the Sangat centre I asked the women to bring in objects that were important to them in their home as visual objects. Anju brought in an elephants foot. Not a picture or a model but a real life foot pad, with nails and skin and hair. This foot had been turned into a stool with a dark wood seat attached (Plate **5.10** and **5.11**).

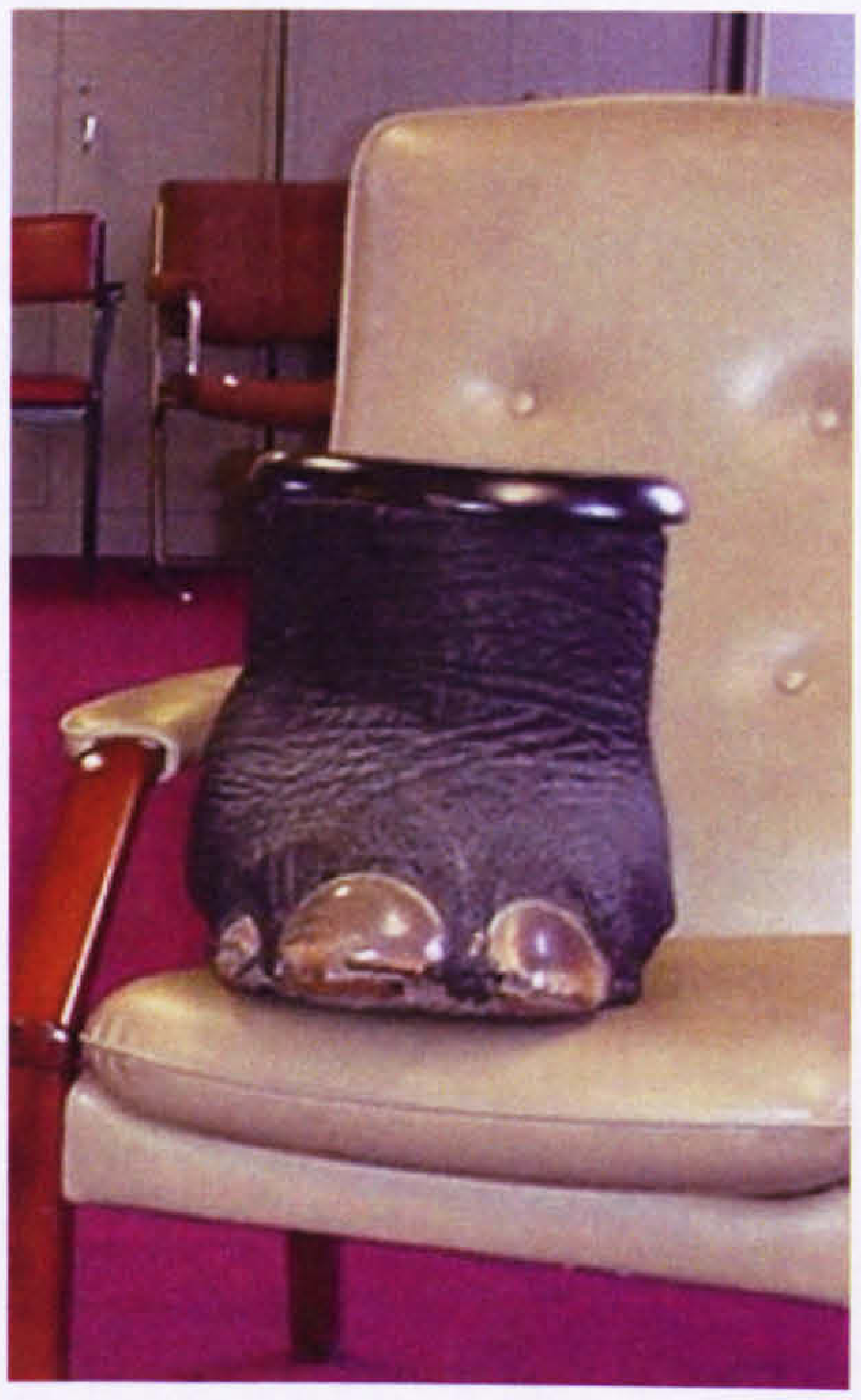

Plate 5.10 – The Elephant foot stool.

Plate 5.11 – The Elephant foot stool in use, at home.

The sight of this foot was a source of many reactions – ridicule, mockery, laughter, and empathy were amongst the responses from the group to the sight of this tragic object. Anju herself as she talks about this object is tearful. Her sentiments well up at the thought of animals in the African National Parks slaughtered each day for profit.

> *Anju – "I felt sorry for whoever killed that animal that's why I bought it. . .I've seen loads of animal migration in Kenya. I'm fascinated by animals, all sorts of animals in Kenya. So I've travelled to lodges where you can see most of the animals . .but I've been always fascinated by elephants. .There are markets there they sell . .in Nairobi there's the biggest market, and I was walking in that market and something just happened. That . .whoever killed that, I felt just so sorry that I had to buy that. .how old the elephant could be, but they couldn't tell me, because they didn't have any information. They just killed."*[88]
>
> *Anju – "It's funny. . .you never think that when you go and choose you always go and pick up these things. Why? Because it's built in you isn't it?"* [89]**(Sangat)**

Anju describes the collection of items in her home including handcrafted Mvuli wood furniture, coasters of animals in the National Park, copper etchings of elephants and ivory bracelets. She feels that the connection with these things is biological. She feels drawn to these textures and identifies with them as references to her home in Kenya and the importance of this connection there. For Anju, the vicious cycle of poverty leading to the destruction of elephant herds is horrifying. The city market in Nairobi is described vividly. It is huge. There are rows and rows of animal parts, animal skins, animal furniture, bags, and clothes of animal skin. She is empathetic with the fate of the elephant, maybe a young elephant, but also empathetic with the trader who kills because of poverty and a flagging economy. She is reconciled only by possessing the elephant foot stool. She owns the piece and is paternalistic in her response both toward the elephant and the trader. The trader is removed of agency but defined as an inevitable accomplice in the poaching and commodification of the precious flesh of the animal. This ownership and appropriation is translated as an act of charity, a soft-hearted response which sentimentalises the butchering of the elephant. The appropriation gives back some life to the object, in this new "reconstruction of value" (Geary 1986). In her home in the U.K. the commodification of the elephant is reconstructed as a life-giving, and meaning-giving process. The re-construction elevates the commodity to an iconographical reflection of "Africa". It also embodies the sentiments of loss, bitterness at the deterioration of African ecology, but also becomes an article of cultural signification, not a spiritual reverence but a relic to a lost landscape of belonging – Kenya.

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[88] ENGLISH (I-1266-1321 ; G2; AS)

[89] ENGLISH (G2ind;AS;1261)

Some women are vegetarian due to religious beliefs, and to them all life is sacred. They have, since leaving East Africa decided that these types of tourist curios are cruel reminders of a life that has been cruelly ended.

> *Bhanu – "I had a zebra skin as well, but em . .I just gave it away because I couldn't keep it in the house."*
> *Lalita – "I had two ivory pieces, I just gave it away . .And if they were God pictures, I just put it in the temple. Quietly wrapped it and left it in the temple."* [90]**(Sangat)**

Shanta describes quite vividly the way that traders used to come door to door in Malawi. They used to be from Mozambique, people poached from the National Parks that surrounded Malawi. She used to turn them away, but realised that they had no other means of making a living. This is deemed as a trade of black Africans, who are responsible and who kill the animals. The women rarely, as a group, accept their own responsibility in keeping the trade going through their purchases. This ties in with paternalism towards the black Africans, which sometimes is demonstrated as racial superiority. This is both moral and social. The positioning of the Asians in the British Empire in African countries influences the way in which Africa is remembered. I observed a difference between those who came directly from India and those who came via East Africa. Africa is "owned" in a different way to the Asian African relationship with India. India is described as a place of spiritual roots, and reference, but Africa is figured as a nation, which is celebrated in a nationalistic way. Kenya is regarded as home in both narratives of personal belonging as well as narratives of ownership and nationhood. This is emphasised in the way that language is used in their descriptions – 'we', 'our', and 'my', prefix place names and country names. The Indian women do the same with India. They see it as a national connection, as well as a place of home and belonging.

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[90] ENGLISH (1-1357: G2B;LH)

5.5.2 Nature and cultural textures of memory and identity

For many of the women, the effect of migration is evident in their attitudes and relationships with nature and climate both in England, India and Africa. These places evolve in their mind's eye to become symbolic of a relationship with nation, including a nation that is not necessarily a place of residence. Migration not only distances the individuals from family, home, country of residence but also takes them out of an ecological context. The move for many of them, was an abrupt dislocation from a tropical equatorial region to a cool temperate climatic region. This is a difference from cities and towns situated within savannah, dry tropical forests, desert and coastal biomes to London which is part of a broader biome made up of deciduous woodland and brown earths. Climatically, in the women's descriptions, the heat of the sun, the dryness of the air and the brightness of the sky are vivid memories. Arrival and adjustment are just as much about adjustment to climate as they are about making a home in a new nation. The physical environment influences them psychologically as well as physically. In discussions it becomes clear that the weather is a feature of their isolation and a feature of the obstacles they have to overcome to sustain day to day living.

Shazia below describes arriving at Mumbai (formerly Bombay, India) airport on one of her return visits.

> *Shazia – "It's the air. It's the smell. I mean that for me . . .maybe you all go there and think it's so dirty and foggy. "I get asthma, I get this, I get that . ." but for me you know the heat, the smell, when I get of the plane (in Mumbai) I feel Ahhh . . ."*
>
> *Hansa – "Garam Havva (smiling – heated air)"*[91] **(Sangat)**

Part of the project of resettling, re-territorialising has been to adjust environmentally as well as socially and culturally. These cultural and social dynamics are reflected in the women's contact, attitudes and practices in relation to landscapes in the U.K.. In defining 'landscapes' I have privileged the everyday and domestic environments of the women's local areas of residence. The women's ecological relationships are key to understanding the way that they feel connected. Their engagement reflects their rootedness and feelings of belonging toward certain places, landscapes and environments. A set of aesthetics can be traced through their connectedness that I will illustrate, by tracing the different narratives through which the women talked about plants, trees, air and earth. Nature is signified in a dialogue about home, belonging, and the ways it connects to their biographical landscapes, described in chapter four. These physical experiences are memorialised in different ways – as body-memories which are multisensory; re-memories which are not directly physical but remembered as such; and as testimonials to past environments.

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[91] ENGLISH (1-551-;G2A; SM & HS)

5.5.3 Diasporan Groves: The Palm tree as an icon of home.

A sense of ownership is the core emotion which opens up the possibilities for the women to feel a connection to England. The everyday textures of their environments are a route toward understanding their connections to the broader context of England, and some sense of territorial citizenship. My aim here is to gain an understanding of these connections to environment, which reflect the women's feelings of belonging. The narratives that the women create are very much about expressing connections to nature and landscapes. As in previous sections, their narratives describe real, imaginary and symbolic relationships with natural textures. Growing plants as a part of home-making in the U.K. is important, some of which is connected to practices of planting abroad in places such as Kenya, India, Uganda. For others, the plants trigger body-memories which are multisensory; the scent of a jasmine flower has the power to transport them back to their teenage years where there may have been a flowering jasmine below their bedroom windows. There are narratives recalling direct experiences, re-creating other environments in England, but also to re-planting organic symbols of life in another place. Part of these narratives express the complicatedness of migration and dislocation, but others are a celebration of the pleasure that the women get from plants, trees and landscape in England. These cross-over so that, sometimes, English roses are reminders of roses in Uganda, or fuschias triggers for memories of bouganvilleas in Africa and India. There are particular landscape icons which emerge which are about the elevation of certain plants, trees, or ecologies over others which are then metonymical of the whole ecology of other countries, and experiences had within them.

Palms are particularly symbolic of colonial projects overseas. They are iconographical in that they signify much of the colonial discourses about the tropics. The tropics have always figured in European discourse as a means of signifying narratives of biological racism, of signifying geographically a cultural logic of European superiority, and a sense of the 'other'.

The construction of the tropics, through colonial discourse, has a legacy in the contemporary imagination. Palms are a cliché within the tourist industry advertising to signify 'exotic' holidays, distant destinations, and an ultimately sensual experience. These are set against narratives about the urban, cities of cultural and intellectual stimulation, cool temperate destinations as hyper-modern and developed. Within the group's discussions, the palm was quite often recalled with pleasure as something that was special and missed. Below I have shown a plate of a painting by Hansa (Plate **5.12**) displayed at her home and a plate showing Melanie Carvalho's *'Goan Palms'* (Plate **5.13**). In the joint session with Melanie Carvalho I displayed a slide of a painting by Melanie of palms. On first glance, this represents an idyllic Goan seaside hut with palms.

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Plate 5.12– Palms, by Hansa *(Sangat)*

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Plate 5.13 – *Goan Palms*, by the artist Melanie Carvalho.

The women in the groups responded in different ways to Carvalho's painting. Many have tried to plant palms, mangoes, and guavas in their London gardens, trying to recreate the exotic in England. But these are rarely successful.

> *Bhanu – "In Kenya I used to grow in my garden, not here. I tried once, a coconut tree. It doesn't grow very much. It grows up to there (12 inches) and after some time it dies off."* [92]**(Sangat)**

The re-planting of seeds and pods of pineapple, papaya, coconut and date palms are all commented on by English horticulturalists, as part of the multicultural gardening techniques practiced here (Thomas 1998). Lalita has the greatest geographical mobility, having travelled globally with her husbands multinational firm. Lalita tells her group (Sangat) that having a palm means so much to her that she has to take an artificial one with her everywhere she goes. The plant's presence makes it home wherever Lalita travels. It is an essential artefact. It does not matter whether it is real or "fresh" as she describes it, but the look of it, the authentic texture of the palm tree has to be the same. The planting of the palm ensures safe settlement in the new home. It is part of the laying down of roots, and aesthetically provides a familiar corner. This 'landscaped' corner in the garden offers a respite from newness and strangeness. It is a symbol of constancy which stabilises and settles amongst the continued uprooting and moving. It also resonates with the soil of India, the layout of her father's garden and the greenness that she is used to. This re-planting of the symbol could reflect conservatism, but it also signifies a reverential relationship with the icon, not dissimilar to that discussed in the previous section on *mandirs* and religious icons. The mini palm tree emanates homeliness, and it allows for some level of belonging and rooting and thus inscribes the new territory of the home, with the old values home. Like the shrines, it has a productive and reflective presence.

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[92] ENGLISH (l-245; G2ind; BM)

> *Lalita – It's one Polynesian favourite and this is a tree, it's an artificial one, but this is a tree I used to have loads of in my father's farm and our house also. And wherever I went and I could put those trees fresh, I put in my garden in the same corners, with the same red ferns border. And I made a similar corner in whichever house I could do. . . . . . .It's a palm fern. You know a mini palm?"*[93] **(Sangat)**

In reaction to the slide of Carvalho's painting other women recall other relationships and episodes in their lives.

> *Hansa – "We had a tree, in Gujarati we call it Madaf, in Swahili, what do we call it? In our house everyone would gather there, and then whenever it rained all the children would say 'Ehh! A coconut has fallen! A coconut has fallen!'"*[94]
> *Puja – "This is at the seaside, I've seen it in Bombay, Mumbai. At Juhu, (and) Chaupatti beach."*[95]

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[93] ENGLISH (l- 1232; G2B; LH)

[94] GUJARATI "Amar pase jaal hatu, Gujarat ma kevi, Madaf Swahili ma kaye ne? Amara ghar ma awuj hatu, badha amara ghare hata, have jyare warsaad pare ne thyare badhaj children kese "Ehhh!! Nariar paylo! Nariar paylo! . . .Dar es Salaam ma. (l-325; G2C; HV)

[95] GUJARATI "Ah seaside ma, Bombay, Mombay joyu tu. Juhu, Chaupatti beach ma." (laughing)
(l-328; G1C; PP)

> *Manjula – "I remember Africa as well, in the villages, you see these kind of things."*[96]
>
> *Lalita – "In my house, in the back garden, we used to have 3-4 trees of coconut. And we used to have fresh coconut everyday. . . We used to be part of a green belt. So it is part of a landscape, tropical."*[97]
>
> *Neela – "I see Mombassa when I see a coconut tree. (laughing) Because the surroundings of Mombassa is full of coconut trees. What I can visualise at the moment is the African people, they get on these trees like monkeys, they climb up these trees, to get coconuts they climb up like monkeys do. And it really is an acrobatic thing."*[98]
>
> *Lalita – "Even South Indians do that. Even Thais, Thais. They climb up, they're very light people. Malaysia, Bali."*[99]
>
> *Shanta – "I think of Lake Malawi. Because there are coconuts because they don't pick much. Because it's hot there and it's right near the lakes. The huts, they have the same kind of huts."* [100]**(Sangat)**

On first glance at the image of the painting, the women in the groups recalled a love story with Jaya Badhuri, Kenyan coconut groves in Eldoret, Bombay's Chaupatti beach, the silver sands resort in Mombassa, Dar es Salaam, the Girna jungle in Kutch in India. The palm has direct resonance for the women. Real experiences and contact are recalled alongside descriptions of Africa, or Goa, or India. The trees symbolise the whole experience of the pleasures of the tropical ecology. The immediacy of the coconut fruit, the shade of the palm, and the intense heat of the tropical sun are all communicated through their stories. These stories are experiences of a variety of countries but symbolised through a single icon. The women are elevated into a sense of pleasure and heightened awareness of the multisensory memories recalled through the sight of the painting of the palms.

For Melanie Carvalho, the artist, this painting had its own story as she recounted to the group in her session. In her father's house she had been surrounded since childhood with pictures of palms and groves. She said that her father had recently removed a panel from the kitchen door and placed within the space a stained glass image of coconut palms. Melanie had never lived in Goa. She did not consider this her home or place of belonging, yet her father's stories over many years had instilled in her a sense of connectedness, with the landscape of Goa. The painting itself is 7' foot wide and 5' tall. It is actually a painting of a table lamp in her fathers home. Look at the image closely and it becomes clear that the scale is completely wrong. The trees would normally be about 60-80ft tall, the hut about 10'. The coconuts are the size of the front door. The image is symbolic of a sense of place; it represents the processes involved in remembering places of the past. The reality becomes embroidered, more vivid, some things exaggerated, some things forgotten. Melanie describes the operation of memory as a subconscious infiltration of her father's connections to the territory of Goa, but which has been transmitted to her through his stories. As Toni Morrison describes them, memories of a re-memory. Memory is operative in many different ways, from refractive or mnemonic images to recollections through embodied practices. The section below considers the role of gardening in the women's lives in relation to their positioning in the U.K. after migration.

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[96] ENGLISH (l-83; G2C; MR)

[97] ENGLISH (l- 97; G2C; LH)

[99] ENGLISH (l-431; G2C; LH)

[100] ENGLISH (l- 436; G2C; SK)

5.5.4 Planting and re-planting.

Gardening culture and its role in linking the women back to previous homes is considered in this section. This covers the relationship that women have with the plants, trees, flowers and animals in their versions of home. Throughout both groups', discussions certain plants, trees and textures reoccur – papaya, guava, mango, palms, bougainvilleas, jasmine, gardenias, hibiscus flowers, and the colour of the soil. When talking about a plant or a flower, one person's reference led to a shared understanding and recognition of the plant, and this further led to group remembering with enthusiasm and pleasure. The relationships are positive and specific, which leads me to believe that these relationships with plants/nature are a particular connection with environment, in the experience of growing up/living in India, Uganda, Kenya, or Pakistan prior to living in London. These, however, are not usually continued in a connection or active engagement with plants and flowers in England. In fact I would say that the opposite occurs, and the women in the group cultivate in London the plants and trees that they used to grow abroad. Individual interviews revealed attempts at growing palms, guavas, mangos, as well as flowers that used to grow near the equator. There was a continued need for these plant textures in their homes here, but this does not always translate to cultivating shrubs and flowers that are "British".

Gardening had been a really important part of life in East Africa for many of the Sangat women living in Harrow. The Sangat group that refer to their practices of planting and growing. The AWRC are not represented here as they did not talk about gardening, cultivation in these terms. For the Sangat group, not only was gardening a pleasurable pastime but very important to their sense of self. Gardening is a productive pastime and therefore, legitimated in their role as women through its feminine contribution to the household larder, as well as considered as creative and aesthetically improving to the fabric of the home. Doing the garden inscribed a sense of cultured productivity onto the landscape of home, without a sense of it being work. Quite often for this group, gardeners were at hand to do any labour. Digging, weeding and planting were carried out with aid from the *mali* (gardener).

> *Bhanu – "My father, he used to do it. Not gardening as such, but he used to plant trees. And he used to have a huge fish pond, he used to breed fish, it was part of his business and shop. They were all beautiful fish. The garden had lots of fruit trees as well. Not too many flowering plants. We had ferns and some flowering plants, like Bird of Paradise plant which is very popular in Kenya. And some others, otherwise fruit trees my father himself, had grown pomegranate, paw paws, guavas, mangos, even a coconut tree. . . We used to get lovely fruit like custard apples, sitaful. Everything, chicoo. It was a big garden, well I wouldn't know the size but about 100 feet. Not as wide as this one but as long. He was quite a keen gardener. . .And I think I have gone on my fathers side. I like it."*
>
> *Darshna – "What sort of things do you grow? Do you pick Kenyan flowers or just flowers."*
>
> *Bhanu – "Yes, Kenyan flowers like . .I used to grow geraniums. And Begonia from Kenya. Those are the ones I always bring."*[101] **(Sangat)**

The ecology and environment are celebrated in the women's descriptions. Whilst they talk it is with a feeling of remorse and loss. They are reminded that these gardens are no longer actively cultivated, not just by their absence, but also by their neglect.

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[101] ENGLISH (1- 217; G2ind; BM)

> *Manjula – "we had a beautiful house in Kampala, which I still remember and I looked after it so well. I was fond of gardening there. I used to do the garden myself. We had huge gardens all round. We had so many guava trees and mango trees and all. Obviously the very heavy work used to be done by a gardener. But I used to plant new plants myself. I go round and make sure . .tell them what to do and sprinkle water on the plants. I still remember my sister sent me some rose bushes from Nairobi which I grew in the front garden, and one of them was a black one. Black Rose. Just when it was coming into bud. I had to come here to do my studies. I thought when I go back I'll see my garden. Because the whole thing had been ripped out, and something new in its place (akhu bathu rip-off karawi ne navu karaywu tu). So I was so looking forward to seeing it again, with the new lawn and the new roses."*[102] **(Sangat)**

The women try to recreate these ecological textures in their gardens in the U.K.. The colours of flowers are an example of this. Bright coloured flowers are favourites, and women attempt to recreate this collage of colour in their own gardens in England. They are in the process of cultivating a new and relevant ecological heritage.

> *Manjula – "I just like bright reds and orange, all sorts of colours."*
> *Darshna – "Do you try and plant things that you grew in Uganda?"*
> *Manjula -"We tried looking for some, but no. Which ones were they?(Ola kaya hata?), you know, what do you call them? . .You know the pink ones that have got. . .Fuschia (not) nai. (sticky)pollen... Lillies. Yeah. All varieties, then there were yellow ones (tiny, tiny) nana, nana . .Oh God I forget the names. Even here they grow, throughout the year you get them.*
> *Darshna – "...daisies, buttercups?"*
> *Manjula – "tiny, tiny (nana, nana) round . .not buttercups, are they called buttercups? No. . . They're like full, completely full of petals. Yellow and orange. . .I think they're marigolds. . .I forget the names, In Gujarati everyone used to call them galgotas (Gujarati ma bathay nam che. galgotas keta ena.) I*

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[102] ENGLISH (1- 126; G2ind, MR)

> *know they're still available. (In Gujarati they're called) jewnaful, which I say, then gardenias. Jewnaful (golden showers) and raat ki raani (jasmine).*[103]

* * * * * * *

> *Hansa – "My husband is crazy on marigolds. He loves African marigolds. Yellow colour na ha gota geva na hoi? That's the one he loves. I like more . . .maybe because I've seen so many marigolds in India and when I've not seen Fuschia, and Silvia."*[104] **(Sangat)**

Flowers are representations of the aesthetics of home. These are scents, smells, and textures memorialised through the reconnection with these flowers in the U.K. This reconnection is the reconnection with the journey of migration, and the loss that this journey incurred for the group. The sight of the flowers and aesthetics of gardens are as important as having the material object. The flowers are symbolic, memorialised moments and relationships with a 'foreign' ecology. At the same time, the abandoned ecology is revered and elevated to the hyper-real. By hyper-real I mean that these ecologies become embossed, exaggerated and enriched with a luminosity of colour, through the lens of distance and mourning. The body-memories of the past contact ensure a heightened sensitivity to the characteristics and aesthetics of the past. The colours in the women's memories are vibrant and definite, the smells are pungent and immediate, and these evocations are pervasive in the women's everyday sightings of similar vegetation.

Jasmine has a scent that permeates throughout the women's memories of India, and East Africa. They call it *'raat ki raani'*. It is frequently mentioned in all the interviews. Its smell, its look and its presence is recorded as being part of the everyday textures of being in India, East Africa, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The flowers are described as irreplaceable, as the women had made efforts to find the plant here for planting. The flower heads were smaller, and the scent always more pungent. They were gardenias or *'chumpa'*. *'Raat ki raani'* translates as *'Queen of the night'*, and it is in the evenings that this flower's scent flows through the houses, gardens and streets of the women's memories. It is described by one woman as growing just outside her bedroom window in Kenya. Each evening the window is left open and she sleeps with the scent of jasmine and wakes up in a room smelling of it. The frequency of the talk about jasmine plants is surpassed only by the devotion the women have to its superior scent and the evocation of memories it brings.

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[103] GUJARATI/ENGLISH (l-211;G2ind;MR)

[104] ENGLISH (l- 348; G2ind; HS)

Bougainvilleas reign supreme in the women's memories. Bougainvilleas are revered for their colour. All the varieties are described. It seems that no matter which country the woman resided in, the bougainvillea stands out as the flower which signifies the best and most loved. It is clear that there is a particularly British relationship with Bougainvilleas, which has meant that this plant has been grown in the colonies. Bougainvilleas are iconographical of East Africa and India; they feature quite frequently in guidebooks and brochures of East Africa particularly. In the interests of further research there, is a need to contextualise the women's relationships historically; an understanding of this plant's ecology would be useful as its bio-geographical biography could explain the political and cultural pattern of its route through East Africa and India.

The planting culture ensured that the women had a good understanding of planting skills and seasonal tasks to be done in their gardens. The women talk extensively about gardening in Kampala, Uganda, Kenya, and India. In Uganda Manjula describes Jasmine, Gardenias, *Raat ki raani*, *Chumpa*, *Galgottas*, *Joy na ful*, and vegetables like *Mooli* trees, and *Kamalkakli.* Bougainvilleas in different colours, trailing and framing gardens and houses are recalled with great delight. In Malawi, Shanta recalls a huge flowering garden with a kitchen garden. The flowers included the pungent Indian *Champa*, *Golden Showers*, African monsters, money plants, Amaryllis, Arium Lillies, Gairlardia, Fuschia, Honeysuckle, Chrysanthemums, Red Hot Pokers, pink and blue Hydrangas, Knipfofia, Marigolds, Passion Flowers, Phygellius. Trees included Bougainvilleas, *gajarwar* Papaya, Avacado and Champu. Lalita recalls her father's garden.

> *Lalita – "Okra, brinjals, aubergines, like dhoodia (white gourd), which you call. . .chillies, mint, thalna (coriander), methi (fenugreek), no papayas they don't have. They have loads of trees guavas, delicious guavas. They'll be ready now. In the farms they are ready by August. But we start plucking them*

> *in June, July because we have so many, and we eat them. ..we like them raw."* [105]**(Sangat)**

The smell of ripening guavas is special to the women, the smell from the kitchen window in the morning, or as you are walking is described as intense.

> *Lalita – "Oh it has very dark green leaves, and it has a nice lemony, sweet and lime mixed smell. The tree has a smell, the leaves and everything has a smell to it. Guava is very strong. . . .Guava has dark green leaves, very coarse leaves, not soft leaves. This big leaves, roundish on the top, not pointed leaves. Little oval things. . ."*[106] **(Sangat)**

These smells are related to special places and times. The knowledges of plants and flowers link up to childhood games – the use of lychee seeds as scary flying cockroaches, or the tubular stalks of papaya plants for blowing bubbles[107]. For Manjula, it reminds her of the life on the tea estates in Uganda, where there was a strong smell of fresh guava each morning outside her kitchen window. For Lalita it reminds her of the vast family gardens in India. A home here could not be made 'safe' without the continued presence of essential textures like the smell of *mogran* (flower) the scent of guava, and the bright colours of African violets and plants. Shazia describes this as a means of sustaining some security, it is a form of sustainance

> *Shazia – "It keeps us going."* **(Sangat)**

Herbs and spices are the most common plants in all the women's gardens in the U.K.; growing coriander, fenugreek, garlic and flat leaf parsley is a very common practice. Hansa describes the growing of herbs and plants that were common in India.

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[105] ENGLISH (l-279; G2ind; LH)

[106] ENGLISH (l-221; G2ind; LH)

[107] ENGLISH (ll-1123, and 1129; G2B; MR 7 LH)

> *Hansa – "I think all the Indian ladies, we have a craze for coriander, fenugreek. Like my mother-in-law, she had such a craze for coriander, fenugreek, and tomatoes."*[108] **(Sangat)**

In the summer, the gardens of the Sangat group are homage to the cultures of 'home'. Barbecues are lit and the foods of India and East Africa are consumed. Sweet potatoes, green banana, sweetcorn, grilled aubergine, and cassava are just some of the foods cooked in the same way that they were in the open-air restaurants and beach fronts in East Africa and India. The connection with these natural foods is intimate and real, but also elevated to represent the culture of the place of India and East Africa. The foods bridge the geographical distance between 'here' and 'there'. The import of cassava offers a direct material connection to the soil of East Africa. It is an organic momento of a land that is home. The journey of the guavas in Wembley has been the same as for the women who deem them special. The materials of packing are as important as the fruits. The journey is as productive for the memorialisation of these organic moments as are their material qualities. The smell of a mango is a trigger for the real smell. Its own smell in the U.K. has no bearing on the memorialised smell. It has no bearing on the ecological knowledges that the women hold in relation to all the mango varieties available in East Africa and India.

> *Shanta – "In Jinja, exactly the same. It was famous for cassava. Very famous for cassava, green banana, and sweetcorn. Kenyan cassava was thin and dry, but Ugandan cassava was fleshy, moist, and fresh. Very nice, very sweet."*[109]
> **(Sangat)**

Gardening in India for Hansa was based in a flat, trying to cultivate flowers mostly in pots in the yard. She describes it as *an undeveloped hobby* because it was not such a common pastime as it is in the U.K.. In India, the knowledge that people develop about cultivating is rare, and they either leave it to the *mali* or do not do anything complicated. By contrast, England for Hansa has been where she does feel empowered to garden because of the huge access to skills, knowledge and products. The culture of gardening in England has allowed her to access cultures of cultivation. In England she grows the flowers that she wanted to in India and more.

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[108] GUJARATI/ENGLISH "I think all the Indian ladies, apadne thalna methi no craze bow hoi. Like my sasu had so much craze about this thalna, methi, tameta. (I- 321; G2ind; HS)

> *Hansa – "there, nobody did much gardening then (thya koi kare nai bow India ma thyare). This is again, now it has developed (have tho develop thaygyu che). People have learnt from here and they take plants from here to there you know all the flowers. . . .yes, like when I came here I used to find it fascinating that in libraries you get these free books . . .and you get so much stuff about flowers and things which you can learn yourself."*[110] **(Sangat)**

The texture, colour and smell of soils are all remembered by the women in their narratives. The soil is described as having properties which are not available in the soil here. There is romantic consideration, a romanticised earth.

> *Shazia – "I think with Uganda, when I went to Kenya about three years ago. I can't remember, and the red soil. It reminded me straight away of the soil in Uganda . . You don't get that. It's rich. . . It's only in Uganda it's red? Because in Kenya it's . ."*
> *Bharti -"But in Uganda it's even more richer. I remember when it rained all the water, muddy water, we don't go out in that and walk in that . . .And the smell you get when it rains ...I love that."*
> *Manjula – "We won't get that smell here! Full Stop, blocked sinuses! (laughter in the room)"*[111] **(Sangat)**

This is an example of where places are conflated; Kenya is almost the same as India. The soil of Kenya then becomes a memory of Uganda, it symbolises the country, rich fertile soil, which has a scent when wet which on memory of it takes Bharti back to the country. The

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[109] GUJARATI "Jinja ma exactly same, it was famous for mogo. Very famous for mogo, Meccai and matoki. . .Even mogo. Kenya no paltho, with very dry roots but Uganda no jado, ne fresh. Very nice, very sweet." (l-223; G2B; SK)

[110] ENGLISH/GUJARATI (l-363-374; G2ind; HS)

[111] ENGLISH (l- 2049; G2A; MR)

sight triggers memories of country, smell and the productiveness of Uganda. There is an elevation, a reverence and a feeling of the sublime which is repeated in the other women's experiences.

> *Bhanu – "I compare the soil (when gardening), the soil was so nice in Kenya (laughs) It's really nice soft soil. Reddish sort of, here it's all clay.. . .It is hard work. Well obviously in Kenya, you don't do it all yourself. Mainly we have a gardener, but yes they sometimes feel it's so easy to grow fruits . .and the soil is very good. It's not difficult to plant trees you know. "*[112] **(Sangat)**

The soil is remembered as fertile, almost magical, where papaya trees could not help but sprout, growing was easy, digging was easy, and gardening had no labour. It is always the case that the soil in England cannot match up. The soil in England is hard work, and difficult. This is an analogy of their struggle to settle, and the tropes of difference faced in their own experiences of racism, their skin colour and bodies occluding an easy assimilation.

The broader environment in the U.K. is shifting in relation to this process of presencing. Within suburbia, the networks of South Asians are evident in the environment as traditional suburban pursuits are undertaken. Gardening is an example of the physical transformations that South Asians have made to the environment. It has become an expression of this new Asian suburbaness which, through its practice, materialises the biographical experiences and ecological knowledges of the women who have moved into the suburban scene. This, in effect has helped in the landscaping of this scene, inscribing into it echoes of past ecological connections. Coriander, papaya, fenugreek, garlic and other Indian 'kitchen-garden' essentials appear in the garden landscape. These subtle expressions of migration through garden texture and aesthetics that are counter to preferred 'native' planting as expressed in contemporary writings about preservation of a native planting aesthetic (Buchan 1998). These ecological paradigms of 'native' and 'non-native' species are politicised further in debates on ecological racism (Agyeman 1990; 1991). For non-native gardeners however, flowers are cultivated because they *remind* the grower of the 'other' place of being, but are not necessarily of that 'other' place. In this context, pansies, marigolds, gardenias and roses all become metaphors for the bougainvillea. When South Asians migrated here, they came with their own imagined ecological portmanteau (Crosby, 1986). These also reflect cultures of remembering and reconnecting with the soil, land and ecology of other nations. An ecological oral history is inscribed in the landscape of suburbia, as part of re-making home in England.

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[112] ENGLISH(l-343; G2ind; BM)

The following section looks at the memory of these ecologies as they are made present through cultures of photography and film.

5.6 Photography, film and memory

In this section I have mapped out the various relationships that the women in the research have with visual cultures of photography. As a visual culture, photography, operates in different ways in the social and cultural contexts of the home. A very different relationship exists between women and photographs to that of other cultures of the home discussed thus far. The photographs that the women have are real moments and events, a recording of relationships in a specific time and place. The photographs that the women chose are from their real biographies. However, the photographs, too, trigger broader oral histories and personal relationships with people and place. They become symbolic of these places and the social networks in these places. The life stories that are drawn from these are extensions of these moments and photographed territories. Imagination and the text become interwoven to imbue the text of the photograph with symbolic meaning. The photo becomes both real and symbolic, and there is a double layering of narrative that is evoked from looking and describing these women's texts. This doubling has been illustrated in the examples below of family photography.

There is a constant interplay between the real and the imaginary which is illustrated in the women's narratives. There is an evocation of multi-sensory experiences through both the text of a film and the text of a photo. This is where the real and the imaginary merge. The real photo triggers memory from the imagination of other "texts" or textures. These in turn combine with the real, and over time come to symbolise the whole experience of the whole country India/Kenya, or feelings of belonging/ the whole experience of belonging. In effect, when memory fades or feelings are alienated (when depressed or sad) these texts become key in the re-connection with other moments of enfranchisement. The text itself, is imbued with "relic" status, an important part of an archive of materials, bringing together the whole memory, and memory of place. Fragments of the whole memory are lodged – in the film, the photo, the sighting of a mountain in a soap opera, the colour of a sari in a play, the cooking of food in an advertisement. These pieces are metonymical devices which trigger a memory of the whole experience, but this memory is not all real, but imaginary moments fused with real. The act of watching, the re-connection in itself, also becomes the process of creating the real. There is a material practice of watching a film in the front room on video, the enactment of which is more to do with the social practice than the text of the film. It is part of an extended practice across the global 'imagined' community (Anderson 1983) of other watchers of the film at the same moment (Brah 1996; Appadurai 1997). The practice also includes the inscribing of other family values such as socialisation, learning of language, the eating of food, all of which are cultural inscriptions. By these I do not mean an essential cultural inscription, but an evolved one which is authenticated in a family context. Below are examples of these cultures of inscribing, authenticating the real texts with imagined experiences from memory.

5.6.1 Photographic biographies : formal geographies of adolescence

Sheetal brings with her a photograph that she describes as *Dil no Tuklo*, a piece of (my) heart. This was said with such emotion that I did not, as I had wanted, take the photograph away to get copied. It meant so much that if I had lost the photograph in transit, it would be a slice of Sheetal heart – irreplaceable. Her relationship with the photo demonstrates some of the real, imaginary and symbolic values that are imbued in the materiality of the photograph. The text itself is an image of the *Bismark* found alongside the lake front on Lake Victoria. This image is so intimate that metaphorically it is a piece of her core self, the workings of which are dependent on this piece being in place, in her place of home.

> *Sheetal – "This is from my home town in Mwanza. This has been our focal point . .all my family and almost everybody from Mwanza has this place as their memoir. . . Yeah loads of memories. And everybody had their special thing with Mwanza rocks . .you know something connects. Yeah central to almost anybody if you ask from Mwanza, they will have something to talk about. Where the rocks were, it was intriguing every time we went there. You could never fail to be intrigued."*[113] **(Sangat)**

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[113] GUJARATI/ENGLISH(I- 169;G2B; Sheetal)

The photograph transports Sheetal to being at the rocks, the text takes her to the memory of Bismark rock, but not only does this take her there but also to a place where she is able to "connect" and explore her own mental and emotional imaginary. As a place of "intrigue" it is a stimuli for the imagination; this was a place that allowed her to contemplate and wonder. This makes the place special through the physicality of the rock and the power of the place in her memory. It was a place that was individually important in her personal development but a catalyst for her imagination to transform her sense of self. The experience of migration shifts this from a vital memory of this experience to a memoir, a place that is active only as a memory of these feelings of connection and wholeness. The memoir description evokes a sense of grief and loss, a moment of history rather than a place which is vital and present which can be reconnected with. These, in the context of Sheetal's description, resonate with her sense that there is no chance of returning to Tanzania to live there again as a permanent citizen.

The photograph for Sheetal triggers memories of leisure time in Tanzania where all free Sundays and Saturdays were spent travelling to the lake front. It was a focal point for the community but also personally for her. This was the place where she had her first dates, her first kiss, and also the place where family relationships were strengthened through doing group activities. The activity, through memory, gets polished and embellished with positive events; the memory is airbrushed, smooth and shiny. The refractions of the events are perfect refractions, with omissions and corrections. This image becomes imbued with a symbolic value that has through the distance travelled become more important and more imaginary than real. Symbolic of a rose-tinted adolescence, family life and a place of connection and belonging. Tanzania is symbolised through the image of Bismark rock, but Tanzania through memory has already been memorialised as an icon of a free, enfranchised, family home-place.

> *Sheetal – "This is like families would go down there. Couples would sit down there. There's my dad and mum with their friends, and there was numerous hours of fun and talk. Shanti (peace). Five o'clock you would go there and not finish until it went dark. There's three or four good hours. Akho time nikali jai. (All time would pass away)."*[114] **(Sangat)**

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[114] ENGLISH/GUJARATI (I- 127;G2B; Sheetal)

5.6.2 Kajal (AWRC): Family frames.

Here is a photo of Kajal as a young girl with her brother and his new wife (Plate **5.14**). At the sight of the photograph, Kajal was in tears. She hasn't seen her brother or her nieces and nephews in years, and she has not been back to Bangladesh in years. The village's name is *Balishastra*, its nearest town is Molobibazaar.

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 5.14 – Kajal's family *(AWRC)*.

Looking at this picture she describes the coconut trees and the rice fields. She also feels sad at the distance there is between her and her family. Her brother is not protective of her as he was when she was younger. She has faced the separation and divorce from her husband alone. She has raised three children alone.

The picture itself is very formal; the backdrop is a classic iconographical landscape in a photographer's studio. There is a river or lake in the foreground and palms to the right. There are flowers and clouds annotating the classic scene. This type of luscious scenery as backdrop is not uncommon in Indian studio photography. Pinney (1997) refers to this as conforming to a very particular set of rules. The formality of the sitters is in tune with the formality of the backdrop. But there is a hyper reality (p140) to the image. The colours are intensified and the forms are defined heavily by the brightness and solidity of the colours worn. There is a hyper intensity that is imbued in the image through aesthetics. Kajal's own reaction is expressive of the way that the picture is a memorialisation of her family. Not just those within the frame, but also those not included. The term for taking a photo in Gujarati and Hindi is to '*ketch*'- this means to take or to draw. When translated it seems that there is a sense of taking something away. Pinney (1995) elaborates on this attitude as being connected to the role of the photograph in the recording of the past and present. The photograph is revered actively as an icon of the life of the person. Individual portraits are made at religious festivals and other religious moments – marriage, birth and death. These portraits are the story of that person, and encompass the being of that person. Pinney also connects these practices of portraiture to the religious practices of Hindus. On prayer after death, there are rituals and rites performed on the photograph of the person in the same way as rites and rituals are performed on chromolithographs of religious icons. Pinney argues that amongst Indians

> "most have a number of old images which continue to accrue potency as they become accreted with marks of repeated devotion – vermillion tilaks placed on the forehead of deities, the ash from incence sticks, smoke stains from burning camphor." (Pinney 1995, p.111)

For Kajal this image is a direct tracing of a significant and material moment. The physicality of photography is exactly that, it is a tracing of the light reflected on the solid materials in the frame. The family image is taken from that reflection in the lens. This photo is given a reverence because of the tracings of that moment, but also because it has been elevated from that moment, made potent through the reverence that Kajal gives it. This reverence in the everyday imbues the photo with a value beyond a sentimental record. Pinney (1995), describes this as giving the photo "breath", the photo evolves its own life through the context of display, but is imbued with a "soul" through the reverential way in which it is treated by Kajal. These photos are singular, they are not numerous and therefore made more precious. For Kajal, this is a piece of her family "taken" from them, and watched over by her. Her relationship with the image is about the recording of a past moment, but more crucially to keep this moment alive through making it potent in the practices of the everyday.

In terms of oral history, the photograph records the social and cultural fads of that time such as clothes, carpeted floor, lush, green "fruitful" surroundings, indicate wealth and prosperity. The backdrop exists to ensure a statement about position and success are encompassed but also to record a moment in a fixed way. The formality is deliberate. The family members do not show emotion: they are there to record their history and social connections. This purpose has been played out in Kajal's relationship with the photo. Her own sadness is a reminder of her brother's distancing, but also of her own marriage break-up. Her family has been broken and she has been failed by the promises of the perfect framing of families within this genre. The phograph is symbolic of family networks and moral living, at the same time as being symbolic of Bangladesh and the ecology of Bangladesh. Through gazing at the image she is reminded of her very real blood relations, who are superimposed with imaginary narratives about nation, family and marriage. The image is symbolic and is treated as a piece of archive. But this has the status of relic, the more time that passes by.

5.6.3 Body-memories and cinematic cultures of dislocation

The experience of watching a film affects viewers in many ways, not least in that film cultures activate the social networks of viewers, 'imagined communities' (Anderson 1983) of viewers. The culture of the cinema complicate the analysis of visual cultures in relation to diaspora; in particular this bears on the way that body-memory and the visual together operate as points of triangulation for the new communities of South Asian settlers to Engand. Cultures of watching and viewing film are complicated by the commodification, marketing, and commercial politics of distribution, consumption and contexts of display. Despite these obstacles in analysing the relationships between text, viewer, and the social act of consumption, Bollywood plays an important role in socialisation and cultural history. The activities of cinema-going, video-watching or satellite-viewing are prioritised as real, everyday connections with cultures of language, religion, social mores and a re-inscribing of identity practices. The act of going to the cinema for the women has been part of their lives from a young age. The women talk about going to the cinema in groups, as a social occasion. The text of the film was not always primary, the gelling of social groupings was most often, more important. Film-going in East Africa and India is an example of the way that visual culture is multifaceted in terms of analysis. In this respect I regard film culture as a means of 'presencing' past geographies and contexts of viewing the film. This broadens the event from being explicitly about a text to the location of the cinema, for example, in India and East Africa. What remain powerful as a body-memory in the women's recollection are sensory experiences; the smells, sights, and feel of the air, food and the society who had come to be part of the event; the recollection of a different crowd passing comments with girlfriends; the smell of the Indian cinema- musty, old and tired.

> *Lalita -"All those things you never think of when you are there. The smell and the darkness and the romance of the cinema is different, because it was in that auditorium it was different. . "*[115] **(Sangat)**

The sensory evocation expressed by Lalita, is critical in understanding of the way that new cultures of film-going in the U.K. recreate the sensual memories of the past. This is illustrated in the following quotes.

> *Neela – "The effect is fantastic and I think we never used to have ordinary cinemas in Mombassa, we always used to go to these. "*[116]
> *Anju – "It's because it's the open air, a young town watching a film together you know . . .it was like a little society"*
> *Shazia – "It's like a picnic, but watching a movie sort of thing. "* **(Sangat)**

Such trips are recreated here in the U.K..The act of going to the cinema is a group event, and up to thirty people will go together as part of one group. Eating, family togetherness, seeing the film and hearing each other's comments during the film, provide the multisensory experience which forms the memory of film going in East Africa and India.

> *Shanta – "In Malawi we did the same . .same thing with driving. We used to do the same thing, we go early, sit there. Tell your friends if you're coming out or not. They decide we leave at the same time, we park nearby children play and we bring pyjamas with us, so before the picture starts we put them on . . "*
> *Bharti – "Decide what you're going to cook for each other. "*[117]

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[115] ENGLISH (l-891- 910; G2ind; LH)

[116] ENGLISH (l- 647; G2B; NS, and AS)

[117] ENGLISH (l- 1452-1459; G2B; SK and BM)

> *Manjula – "It used to be fun, it used to be a social place for everybody to meet. Everybody was in open space, people used to go early. Because the film started when it gets dark because it was outdoors, so people go at 5-5:30, while it's still daylight. . .and at 7 o'clock, everybody has good food. Everybody shares their food. And everybody tries to park near each other so kids can get together and watch the movie."*
> *Bhanu – "Go for walks."*
> *Manjula – "Pass comments. .yeah go for walks."*[118] **(Sangat)**

These descriptions are clearly evidence of the complete multisensory experience being an essential context to the film. The community is watching together, almost as an extended family. Chatting, eating and socialising is particularly a focus. The women describe the drive into the cinemas through jungle and open land. The cinemas are outside of the cityscape and they literally get there by entering into the "wilderness". The wildness of the journey and the exotic animal smells are heightened in the descriptions. One of the Indian women mocked the hyper-reality of the recalled memories in the extract below. The animals are described as magnified and more immediately present. The descriptions together form a diorama almost of African wilderness. When viewing films in the U.K., these landscapes become 'presenced' through the new viewing practices in auditorium and the narration of oral histories of these past events.

> *Manjula – "It's not pretty because where we used to go driving, we used to go through a kind of jungle. Where I am saying was always a weird smell, before we entered the drive-in side."*[119]
> *Anju – "You could hear the animals. . .because of the National Parks . .and one a herd of elephants must have come out of the National Park and obviously you could hear ah. . the noises."*
> *Shazia – "These people from Africa, as the fashion progresses, their stories will get wilder and wilder! (laughing). . .next the lions will be walking in the cinema, you just wait."*

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[118] ENGLISH (I-810; G2B; MR)

[119] ENGLISH (I- 828; G2B; MR)

> *Manjula – "…a thousand cars coming out of the cinema. So there is always a craze, and everybody wants to get out quickly because once you pass a certain, you know, row of trees, you know it's very stinky, very bad smell because it's really outside . .the outskirts of Kampala."*[120] **(Sangat)**

In this sequence, the two women are talking about two different cinemas, one on the outskirts of Kampala, the other on the outskirts of Nairobi. Cinemas in Mwanza are described as the same as those in Malawi, Mombassa is the same as Kampala. In the group discussions places are conflated through their descriptions. These conflations are quite often privileged over specific co-ordinates, places and events. Through memories, space-time is interwoven in a created memory where the specificities of smell, sound and sight are more important than actual geographies. These similarities and conflations signify the fact that these are constructed memories of sentiments, and sensory moments. The women remember the textures of the experience without acknowledging their change. The tense is always mixed, past merges into present. This qualifies the moment as transferable, and mutable. But it is sure in its signification, the moment is mutable but the signified is a particular scene, a constructed landscape of cinema going through the animal noises, dry savannah and as a familial network of a homogeneous community. The heterogeneity of African society is absent; the heterogeneity of Asianess itself is absent from their descriptions. The memories are iconographical in their reverent privileging of the memory rather than the material and social structures of the moment.

The women's first experiences of cinema-going in Britain are significant after the experience of migration, and contribute to their re-settlement here. Cinema-going becomes a site of consolidation of the community and a creation of an un-alienating environment in England. Manjula below describes the first time she went to the Indian cinema in Ealing Road, Wembley. The act of going was as important as the sighting of a mass of Asian bodies, and related sights and smells.

> *Manjula – "Yeah it was a kind of get together because weekdays nobody could meet so this was like a social day out. Every Sunday, without fail we used to go for a movie . . .and it used to be amazing because there were no Indian*

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[120] ENGLISH (1-721; G2B; AS)

> *shops (in Wembley), and you know like on the bus (smiling) on that particular day, you used to see so many Asian people coming out for the movie so everybody used to look."*[121] **(Sangat)**

Cinema is and was a cultural magnet for the Asian community. It galvanised the community socially, and empowered them culturally. The act of going gave a sense of community, and the solidarity it offered to the crowd was a means of giving confidence to the newly arrived communities. Seeing a physical presence of Asian bodies is an uplifting experience, and feelings of alienation and isolation are minimised through this creation of a new and real social network. Cinema-going altered the social geography of the U.K. but also ensured a reawakening of the memories of social geographies of East Africa and India. Women reflected constantly on the differences between cinema-going now, and then. These past memories were relived through the landscape of cinema-going being altered, soon foods like the varieties available in East Africa and India would be available, along with the ethnic economic development in the cinema areas allowing for all sorts of cultural products to become available. Clothes, kitchen utensils, fruits and vegetables were sold alongside cassettes of film songs and jewellery.

> *Manjula – "Also the movies reminded us of home, like after coming here when we used to be reminded of home. Although I'd never been to India when I came here. I still felt as though it was part of me. I used to feel nice when I watched Indian films. You know I felt as if I'd come from there (India) you know. Although I knew I wasn't from there, but my parents were. Somehow I had some kind of attachment to that place."*[122] **(Sangat)**

The women remember the films with poignancy. Tears are shed as films which have been seen over and over again in India or East Africa, are reshown in the U.K.. But for the women it is not the text of the film that is primary, but the actual display of aesthetics, which are social and cultural, which are important. Lalita describes her first sighting of an Indian movie after leaving India. It is 1972 in Montreal, Canada.

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[121] ENGLISH (I- 386; G2B; MR)

[122] ENGLISH (I-430;G2ind; MR)

Lalita – "so he (husband) said 'what are you talking?', 'which one you want to see?' . . .(lalita said) 'Both! . . .I don't want to come home. We'll have our lunch there, we'll have our diner there and if they repeat the show I'll see that one also . .even if it's the third time.' He said 'O.K'."

*"And that's what happened, they showed "**Khabhie Khabhie**" first 1-4, and then 4-5 was off, and then 5-8 they showed "Bobby" and then everybody wanted "**Kabhie, Khabie**" and then some more crowd came and they ran a late night show 9-12 for "**Khabhie, Khabhie**" and I sat again! . . .Because I knew maybe we'll never see it again. It was already five months, six months I was already married and I hadn't seen an Indian wedding or any Indian kind of TV or anything, anything Hindi speaking. So after that again nothing for two months and then in August they showed one movie "*[123]**(Sangat)**

The emotional response to an Asian event is significant. Lalita does not mind which film is shown, she enjoys the whole experience of the Indian film's language, aesthetics and of being in the cinema with other Asians. Each film is three hours long. She watches three showings in a row, demonstrating the power of the meanings of film going beyond the textual. The experience is symbolic of the broader cultural practices of Indianess. The senses are stimulated in relation to an appetite for a particular cultural production. The desire for these is fuelled through the absence of Indian aesthetics and language in the everyday. The satiation of desire is mediated through the film text, but only wholly addressed through the context of watching.

When talking about the film text itself, recollections centre on social and natural environments. Sometimes the landscape imagery is described as a powerful signifier of the whole pre-migration experience. Bollywood films become a site of memorialisation of home, this process of reverencing emerges out of symbolic and iconographical imagery and narrative within the text. Films become points of remembering sites of location, not actual lived places but iconographical images of India, Kenya, and Uganda. The films also allow a connection with certain textual cornerstones of culture such as literature, and language. The film songs are examples of this (Dudrah and Tyrell 2001). Film texts also operate as a place through which the oral histories of migratory groups are refracted. The layers of film text, as one example, offers a parallel to the workings of memory in the sense that Toni Morrison argues that images are stores of memories for those who have no history. Memories themselves are not fixed and true, but are memories of stories and reflections; what she terms in her novel *Beloved* "memories of a rememory" (Morrison 1990).

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[123] ENGLISH (I-480:G2B;LH)

The Indian film industry as a whole constitutes new non-localised ethnic projects, and constructions of ethnic identity. These are termed 'global ethnoscapes' by writers such as Appadurai. (1997). The viewing of a film can trigger memories of a past history, fragments of which are lodged in the whole text. At the same time, the practice of watching can give new meanings to the location from which we view the film. I use the example of the film *Guide* (Annand 1965.) as a film that was discussed by many of the women for its evocative effect on them as viewers. *Guide* was an enormously popular film, with high production values, based on a novel by R.K. Narayan, with an acclaimed musical score and choreography; all the ingredients necessary for a Bollywood blockbuster. The film, in its opening sequence, is a montage of landscapes across India. When the women view these scenes in the film, they trigger memories of India, but not necessarily first-hand experiences of India. Filmic landscape epics are superimposed with actual journeys remembered, memories of stories that are visualised but, most importantly, are reverently praised as representing a spiritual locatedness in a country that was not necessary a place of birth or residence. Sumita Chakravarty describes this as

> "the self enclosed romanticism of the gesture of recall, the metonymic substitution of the Hindi film for India, is generally a means of effecting closure of constructing rigid mental boundaries between past and present, parent culture and adopted culture, belonging and exile, nationality and naturalisation" (Chakravarty 1993, p.3)

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 5.15 – *Guide*, (dir) Vijay Annand, 1965.

I would argue that the importance of this metonymical effect is that rather than 'effecting closure' through 'rigid mental boundaries', as Chakravarty shows, the films trigger multiple experiences, oral histories, and memories of memories. The metonymical effect of aesthetics, sound and iconography is to be an inclusionary set of sensory textures, which resonate a broad set of experiences, memories, life-histories and sensory experiences of the past. The scenes become icons of a multi-textual engagement with film as a visual culture that signifies a body-memory. The Bollywood film becomes the site of crystallisation of the processes of identification. This simultaneously offers fluidity and fixity, and it allows for a multidimensional relationship with images that are viewed through the eye but actually contextualise the practices of the body. Indian popular commercial cinema has come to represent a kind of psychic investment for migrants from India all over the world. It operates on many different levels. For all the women in the research, *Guide,* had a special meaning. The film text on its own operates as a prism. It allows a connection between localities spatial and temporal connections, which are stores for experiences and relationships. Landscapes in the film become icons of moral order and citizenship as well as aesthetic expressions of a cultural history. The journey that Raju (Dev Anand) the lead character takes, is more than a journey between two co-ordinates. It is a pilgrimage through the icons of Indian landscape, which trigger senses of connection with a Hindu spirituality, morality and understandings of individual citizenship. For others it holds more poignant memories:

> *Bharti – "That clip to me reminds me of how we've all moved through different places. . And when you leave, like you've got 24 hours to leave Uganda, what do you pack in your suitcase? What do you bring with you, to this new place? You've got all your memories, all your family. . .anything that's important to you in just one or two bags."*
>
> *Shanta – "this reminds me of the innocent life you know without any worries or anything. . Say like he hasn't got any pressure, him and his mum enjoying life. . .free. . .now, he's got his potli (knapsack) and that's it."*
>
> *Hansa – "(I remember) scenery, going in the car and those Gulmer trees, because we used to go to Bombay to Gujarat by car. Not many people did at that time."*[124] **(Sangat)**

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[124] ENGLISH (I-G2B; G2A; HS)

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 5.16 – *Guide*, (dir) Vijay Annand, 1965.

For some women the film extract triggers a memory of actual journeys made through India, while others recognise landscapes within the sequence. They describe actual places in India, or routes through these. But when I asked ‘when did you go?’ Or ‘how did you like it?’ most of the women had never visited these places, or had never even seen India. But somehow the film refracted memories of memories that their parents or family members had recounted. India was inscribed onto the film text. The film becomes a testimony to India through these inscriptions; the iconographies of home are witnesses through the act of watching the film. The film becomes like an archival record of the experience of Indianess as a means of fixing a cultural heritage in celluloid, and a personalised means of recalling re-memories of a notion of ‘homeland’. This is a relationship with visual cultures in the public sphere, which is reverential but secular, different from the deep spiritual cultures of the shrine within the domestic and private sphere of home.

5.7 Conclusions

I have shown in this chapter how practices of the visual are as important as analyses of representation. Practices of embodiment, mimicry, and processes of connecting with texts and textures allow a situatedness, a territory of belonging to be formed through a dynamic relationship with visual cultures. This is not a reduced sense of folk culture or race culture or bio-culture but an expansive one which allows for a multiple number of self definitions and practices. Memory activates connections to the past through providing the testimonial record of a lived past, a body-memory of mutisensory recollections, and a collage of rememories which constitute a set of co-ordinates for the process of identification and belonging. These multiple memories provide a sense of inclusion which has aesthetic, sensual, and psycho-sociological dimensions. Memories, form the basis of the new 'structures of feeling' relevant to the diasporic journey. and essential to the forging of a new residency in a new territory of home. A new identity is figured through the lens of memory and uses the co-ordinates of migration to do so. Co-ordinates of home are situated away from the women's place of residence and citizenship, sometimes in real places or imaginary intangible places. But the women's sense of connectedness to places outside England, reflects their relationship with, or reaction to, belonging within England. This examination of the groups' relationship with visual media has offered insights into what places are desired, safe, and owned and, in turn, what are the points of enfranchisement.

Chapter 6 is an examination of remembered and imagined landscapes which are materialised through the paintings of artist Melanie Carvalho. This is where the women's imagined landscapes of home, serve to form visual media; a set of canvases that together form a collage of the women's environments of enfranchisement, and belonging.

CHAPTER 6 – Ecological Imprints: Memorialised Landscapes of Home

6.1 Introduction

This chapter links into the work done in the third group session in the series, entitled 'landscapes of home'. This session was a result of a collaboration with landscape artist Melanie Carvalho. My aim in designing this session was to engage with the women's visualisations of their 'landscapes of belonging' and to analyse their representations of these. I wanted to ensure a grounding of the research in the practice of visual culture as it is engaged with in the public sphere by an art practitioner. By collaborating with an artist I have been able to investigate the artist and her role in the production of visual culture, in the context of her positioning as an Asian artist. This final group session was the last in the triangular methodology. This chapter completes the process of mapping the women's identity positioning from engaging with biographical mapping and lived landscapes (chapter 4), to investigating the refractive natures of visual cultures in the domestic sphere (chapter 5), to engaging with the landscapes of identification as they are imagined and memorialised. Together these chapters effectively symbolise iconographies of whole countries, regional landscapes or more intimate environmental memories. These imagined geographies of belonging, reveal the women's identity positioning in relation to landscapes that are defined as home. Home again becomes a relational tool in defining citizenship, belonging and identity. Memorialised landscapes of home are figured in different forms and visualised in complex ways. This research was an attempt to draw from the women a mind's eye view of this landscapes of home, which are represented here as materials for analysis of the complexity of diasporic identity and positioning in the U.K.

Part One is an overview of theory and methods that informed the collection of materials and design of session three in the group sessions. Section **6.2** is an examination of the way that landscape and identity have been considered within geography, while **6.3** considers how the biography of an artist figures in the production and display of their art. Section **6.4** and **6.5** review of the methodological approach in this third group session. **Part Two** is an analysis of the women's written and drawn descriptions of their 'ideal landscapes of home'. **Part Three** is an analysis of the set of canvases that were painted by Melanie Carvalho from these descriptions. **6.10** compares the differences between the Sangat group descriptions and the AWRC group. Finally, section **6.11** concludes the chapter with a review of the identity-politics revealed in the process of analysis of the descriptions, canvases and the biographies of the participants and Melanie Carvalho. All the descriptions can be found alongside Carvalho's painting from them in the Thesis Appendix **5**.

PART ONE

6.2 Landscape, Art and Identity politics

As I discussed in Chapter **2**, within cultural geography, landscape as a 'way of seeing' has dominated ways of thinking about landscape. Cosgrove and Daniels (1988) discuss interpretations of landscape through different cultural examinations of the intersection between cultural materialism and national dialogues. Cosgrove particularly has endeavoured to determine the materiality of the landscape genre in painting and societal understandings by considering the genre as a political and economic tool for the ruling class to consolidate their ownership of territory and to extend this into cultural norms and values. This 'way of seeing' explains much about landscape and its meanings as part of class relationships. It is a radical materialism, which undermines capitalist ideology. However, this conceptualisation excludes the day-to-day relationships with landscape that are experienced by non-elites. It also excludes an examination of landscape as a 'way of seeing' from the perspective of the post-colonial citizen. As a member of oppressed groups under Imperialism, the territoriality of landscape as a 'way of seeing' effectively undermines other senses of ownership, communality of experience and a human-centred value system of the earth and its aesthetics.

The descriptions examined in this chapter offer a way into the post-colonial imaginary, which effectively sits in between two diametrically opposed ideological elites. Firstly, the ruling class within a colonial economy, had its ideological positioning expressed through a cultural construction of "landscape" based in East Africa, the Indian sub-continent and Caribbean. This has resulted in exclusionary post-colonial national cultures of identity. Secondly, the 'way of seeing' of a global Imperialist expansion ensured the prevailing cultural ideology of landscape was centred at the heart of Empire, in England. As a result, an alternative landscape ideology which is set up against colonial perspectives, and sometimes against 'westnocentric' cultural ideology, has evolved in the post-colonial period. Post-colonial migrants, therefore have experienced the cultural expressions of landscape ideology from both the British and Post-colonial nationalist perspectives. Their landscape imaginary allows for the expression of many things including not only landscapes of the everyday, but also a set of iconographies informed by life experience in the colony and without. The set of descriptions produced in this chapter, reflect life experiences as perceived within the concept of landscapes of home, but they also offer insight into the landscape iconography of home from the women's positionality at the centre of Empire in England, their place of permanent residency.

My examination of the women's representations has been informed by an approach to the aesthetics of ordinary, everyday landscapes, which are domesticated landscapes of childhood, adolescence, and of fantasies about home. The descriptions become a record of these experiences, but also ground the understanding of post-colonial positionality in relation to landscapes which are constituted as safe, un-alienating, free and productive. As a collection they are a set of naively drawn sketches or immediately accessible descriptions. Collectively, the materials represent a set of lived, ordinary landscapes. They offer an insight into a set of aesthetics, which reflect the meteorological and climatic differences between life in the post-colonial state, and life in the U.K.. They also have ecological detail which represent those intimate textures of nature, which are remembered as iconic symbols of this biome as discussed in the last chapter. Beyond the ecological is another thread of iconography, which is how these places are part of a different nation. When read in relation to the transcripts, ecology within the frames of the descriptions becomes representative of the nation. As discussed in the previous chapter bougainvilleas, palms, jasmine, the beach, all become icons for both national and intimate geographies of Kenya, India, Malawi, Pakistan etc, in the minds eye of the women. They talk about these plants and places in terms of "In our country" or "We" representing a nation. These icons are politically expressive of the diaspora experience of defining identity in relation to two or more senses of belonging to a national identity. Territory has been privileged as a point of centring home as a place of belonging.

6.3 Black Artists, biography and visual culture.

In this research, collaborating with an Asian art practitioner was a deliberate goal. Before I explain the logic of this, I would like to contextualise the work of Black and Asian British artists within formal art history. I believe that this history has had an impact on the practice of producing art, and had an impact on the politics of the design of the session co-ordinated with Melanie Carvalho, and the aesthetics of her art works. Within art history, Black artists in the U.S. and Britain are practitioners engaged with issues of identity and belonging within their work. Their positioning, as black diasporic artists working within western art history has been defined by their identity and informed their intervention. My own interest here is to consider Melanie Carvalho's positioning as a landscape artist,within art history, and the interface between her biography and her creative practice. Understanding politics of production and display is necessary in the analysis of Melanie Carvalho's paintings in Part three. In Plate **6.1,** have used Kara Walker as an example of the way that the identity of the artist defines the reception and production of their work, and how black women artists in particular face a stereotyping of their work and positioning within the public sphere of art exhibitions.

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 6.1 – 'CUT' 1998, oil on canvas, artist Kara Walker.

This is an image of Kara Walker's 1998 self-portrait. It is a life-sized silhouette made of black paper glued to a gallery wall, showing a young woman sailing through space with her arms thrown back over her head. If you look at the image, beneath its initial sense of celebratory movement, there is evidence of self-mutilation. Her wrists are cut, neatly severed at the joint with a razor she holds in her left hand. Blood spurts up to the sky and down to the earth. Review journalist, Gwendolyn Dubois Shaw describes the image, which was produced in a reaction to a photograph of Walker, in the Art and Design journal *'Parkett'* as her:

> "attempts to better understand her own role in history by re-creating it in the present... .The pain of constantly performing such an artistic identity may be read in the artist's adaptation of the quartet of unravelling braids found in the photograph. The two tightly bound braids recall not only the braids of stereotypical pickaninnies . . .but in their affinity to the hairstyles found on good little black girls, evoke the middle class assimilationist role the artist herself has rejected." (Dubois-Shaw 2000, p.129)

Within Walker's work, the substance of her body, the blackness within the art is a vehicle for exposing her feelings about the mutilation (metaphorical) she endured through succumbing to a professional success based on a biological and cultural stereotype. Walker feels that she has prostituted herself to the racist gaze, controlled by an internal dynamic which fixes her subject and her body in powerful colonial oppression. She feels commodified as the latest consumable *"a product presented to a hungry white audience"*. In this quote, Walker is reacting to public success, which for her is as an object of a gaze, a plaything and not an active dynamic expressive self-consciously artistic subject. She believes her success is based on the fact that she fulfils the stereotype; she fits the acceptable face of blackness – sensuous, sexualised and playful.

Walker's experience is not unique. The history of this burden of representation is rooted in the history of art history and its Occidentalism toward non-European practioners. Ernst Gombrich (1950) describes the European engagement with non-European culture in the experience of Paul Gauguin. Gaugin left Europe in search of a simpler life,

> "For he had more and more become convinced that art was in danger of becoming slick and superficial, that all cleverness and knowledge which had accumulated in

> Europe had deprived men of the greatest gift – strength and intensity of feeling, and a direct way of expressing it." (Gombrich 1950, p.551).

Within this argument it is clear that "cleverness" and ultimately civilisation is placed spatially in Europe and that emotion and expression are located outside of European intellect. Spatially this has been interpreted as an engagement with the East as a space of nature, emotions and a pre-modern savagery, which incorporates a connection with the unrestricted subconscious. In artistic terms therefore, the aesthetics of this exotic place were an un-selfconscious primitivism that was a result of a savage existence and expression. Gombrich concludes that

> "He was proud to be called "barbarian". Even his colour and draughtsmanship should be "barbaric" to do justice to the unspoilt children of nature he had come to admire . . .He tried to enter into the spirit of the natives and to look at things as they did." (Gombrich 1950, p. 551)

This is what is regarded as the discourse of Primitivism which assumes that the human subjectivity of "other" artists is at a different point of development, which has resulted in a natural expressiveness in cultural forms. Primitivism has very little basis in the material cultures it refers to but is an idea in Western culture by which others are defined. Primitivism is often defined as something that has been overcome in the West, and as something that Western culture is not. Primitivism is not the collecting and recording of artefacts as part of a benign historical exploration, but instead it is part of a functional discourse within colonialism. As Said explains below

> "a system of knowledge about the Orient, an accepted grid for filtering through the orient into Western consciousness – the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all non-European peoples and cultures" (Said, 1978, p. 27).

Primitivist discourse continues its hold on Western art historical thought, by the way that non-European artists are defined as being outside of Modernism. Rasheed Araeen states that this legacy within institutions of Western Art such as the SLADE, ensure his position as marginal. He argues that due to his identity (Pakistani/British/Asian)

> "the context or history of modernism was not available to me . . my position as an artist was therefore within the text" (Araeen 1987, p.9).

Araeen becomes an object of Western art and not a self-expressing subject engaging with Modernism.[125] The response to this oppressive definition, for many artists has become central to many artists' practice, unfortunately. It informs their palette, subject matter and decisions about the materials and media. The artist, therefore, is oppressed further in terms of self-expression and identification. These arguments about aesthetics and belonging are central to the thesis. Women artists within the black community are particularly concerned with the use of particular textures within their work. 'Textures' within feminist art history are employed as significations of a particular gender and race politics (Parker and Pollock 1987; Himid 1990). These arguments complicate Melanie Carvalho's positioning and production within the thesis and the art world. As a practitioner she has worked consistently against being 'pigeonholed' as an Asian or Black-British artist – in fact on meeting me these concerns and fears rose to the surface. She was clear that she did not want to be simply defined as an Asian artist. Yet all of her contributions to discussions touched on her biography and experiences of racial prejudice within and without the art academy.

6.4 Grounded theorisation through creative practice

The nature of the research in the thesis has been to gain a grounded theorisation of the diasporic experience. My focus has been visual culture and its role in the process of triangulation and positioning with which diasporic groups engage. The purpose of the last group session in the series, was to work collaboratively with an art practitioner to formulate a creative process within which the women would create and produce a piece of visual media. I was open to collaborating with any visual media including photography, film, painting and collage. I approached several community artists in North and West London with a view to designing a group session. I wanted the group to create a piece that could be analysed as a visual culture, which 'fixed' their connections, experiences and imaginative landscapes of home. *Home* was a key concept, which I considered as a constructive way of allowing the women to locate themselves in an unalienating place[126] and where they had a sense of belonging. Safety, belonging and home allow for a relational tension to be set up which forms a productive analytical thread. The importance of recruiting an Asian artist was essential, because an 'Asian' artist would share an identity with the women, thus limiting any feelings of self-consciousness, and increasing the potential for cohesiveness amongst group members.

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[125] Araeen uses the exhibition entitled "PRIMITIVISM", held at the MOMA, New York in 1984 to develop his argument about neo-Primitivism which locks non-European art practitioners outside a dialogic position within Art History, and places them outside modernism. This exhibition included works by African artists rarely ever seen as well as works by Picasso. The exhibition for Araeen was both exhilarating and depressing. The sight of so many works of art by black artists that he had never seen was exhilarating, but the exhibition perpetuated further the division between Western art and non-Western art. The exhibition ideologically defined the geographic positioning of the black artist as spatially outside modernism, outside the West and as a result trapped temporally and ideologically outside of the 20th century.

On meeting Melanie Carvalho, I discovered that she was conducting a London Arts Board funded project entitled "Landscapes of Home". She wanted to recruit 'ordinary' people from the community to take part in her project. Landscape for Carvalho is a productive paradigm, which allows for reflection on identity and an individual's own configuration within the term "Landscapes of home". This project was based upon Melanie Carvalho's experience as a landscape artist at the British School at Rome in 1997. She is interested in

> " how people identify with landscape. And how people create sort of myths, you know, nationalism is based on lots of myths that are related to landscape and I'm interested in how people, personally, do this." (Interview by Paul Anderson, Ecumene, 17/7/00)[127]

The canvases from the Asian women's groups conducted with me represent a third of the total number of canvases Carvalho has completed. Carvalho is interested in the way that Landscape painting allows the creation of a set of layers which can be brought together to produce a 'third' place, which is about the merging of Carvalho's interpretation and the original imagined place. Carvalho describes this below.

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[126] The concept of home in this context is conceived in imaginative terms, a place of security, seclusion and unalienated identification. However in reality 'home' for many of the women in their day-to day lives has been a place of sexual, and violent abuse. This is in no way disregarded within my treatment of their testimonies. I use the term 'home' as a conceptualised place of belonging in the imaginative geographies of these women.

[127] See Anderson, P., M. Carvalho, et al. (2000). "Intimate Distance : fantasy islands and English Lakes." Ecumene 8(1): p112-119. for an article based on this interview.

> *"Well in this project in particular painting's important because it's about landscape painting and how that plays a part in mythologizing all these ideas. From the descriptions I specifically made landscape paintings on a landscape format canvas, a ready made canvas . .That also gives it a sort of credence. Anyone can make a description or make a drawing and people think, "Oh that's sweet", but the minute you make it into a painting it has its own presence and it doesn't belong to the person that made the description. It's a portrayal of another place, which is the kind of idea behind the whole project." (Interview with Paul Anderson for* ***Ecumene****, 17/7/00.)*

Carvalho has been trained as a fine artist and was awarded a British School at Rome scholarship in landscape painting in 1998. The combination of a formal approach to 'landscape' that the artist has and the language of non-practitioners has presented difficulties in terms of analysis. Within the research I have treated Carvalho as a participant in that she was interviewed in the context of her biography and discussed her work in light of landscape and its link with identity in Britain. I have also inscribed her in the thesis as a practitioner and set up her relationship as a producer of visual culture against the informal creativity of the women in their home spaces. This dynamic has proved productive and theoretically interesting. As a practitioner, an Asian woman and a theorist on landscape and identity, the thesis research has been benefited from depth and subtlety of Melanie's contribution.

I wanted the women in the study, to feel a sense of ownership of the analysed materials so that the thesis was one of synthesising my analysis of transcripts, with material forms that had been produced by them. I wanted the session and the outcomes to be an empowering and imaginative creative process that would not simply mine the women's experiences, biographies and ideas. The methodology incorporated a way of returning something to the members of the group. In the case of this session, I was to give each person a painted landscape print of their ideal landscape of home, for their descriptions were the source of inspiration for the artist. This has also produced another way by which the women actively engage with these paintings once completed. The distribution of the images ensured that these prints themselves become part of the women's visual cultures in the home which reflect their landscapes of home and belonging.

6.5 Conducting the 'landscapes of home' session.

In the session itself, Melanie Carvalho gave a slide talk of her work and interests in landscape painting. Carvalho described her own biography in relation to her work and her experiences at Art College. The women in both the AWRC and Sangat groups responded to her talk and it became a free-flowing dialogue between members of the group and Melanie Carvalho. Part of the slide talk was to show the women slides of paintings made, based on other people's descriptions of their 'ideal landscapes of home'. They were shown both the descriptions and the paintings made from them. After a break the room was organised so that there was a work table which had a good supply of colour pens, pencils and paper. The women were invited to take part in Melanie's project but had an option to leave. The women were also encouraged to think about their descriptions in an unconstrained way, unlimited by individual places, experiences or memories. We told them that they were free to draw or write, or both. Before the women started their sketches, descriptions and drawings, I conducted an exercise whereby I asked the women to 'meditate' or visualise themselves going to their 'ideal landscape of home'. This was as a result of my wanting the women to relax and be unconstrained by the group dynamics and context. This type of exercise is based on the work by Claire Cooper Marcus's work on environmental biographies (see Chapter 3).

The underlying premise to the design of this session is that the representation of landscapes of home by the women, represent the link between issues of identity, landscape and ecological memories. There is a larger body of work within psychology, which looks at the relationship between environment, biography and senses of self. In the 1970s, Claire Cooper Marcus[128] and colleagues used environmental biographies as a means of tuning design and architecture students into their environmental values. Being transported back to their childhoods through a relaxed and guided fantasy, and awakening a sense of ideal landscapes of imagined security, Cooper Marcus's students were able to use their descriptions to open up their imaginations to environmental design as could be applied to buildings and urban landscapes. The focus is on early experiences of environment, and the memory of those early textures. Much of a child's landscape is experienced in a very personal way. It is a landscape largely forgotten by adults; it is possible however, to remember favourite childhood places and to re-experience the emotions and activities that happened there. In a guided meditation technique developed by Claire Cooper Marcus (1979), people are led by their childhood self to rediscover their favourite childhood places. Images of places, of friends, and of childhood pleasures come back in rich profusion. The value of these memories is to uncover some early environmental connections, but also to contextualise the present relationships with environment that people have.

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[128] Claire Cooper Marcus is a Professor Emeritus of Landscape Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley. See also -Marcus, Claire Cooper. *House as a Mirror of Self: Exploring the Deeper Meaning of Home.* Berkeley: Conari Press, 1995.

In the session I based my technique on Marcus's in that I asked the women to close their eyes, relax, and then in their mind's eye, to travel to a place that they imagined as their ideal place of home, and security; a landscape/environment, which was safe, secure and very meaningful to them. The 'Marcus technique' was used as the basis for the technique to relax and open up the imaginations of the group members. I did not for example emphasise 'childhood' or 'environment' as themes, but did use a meditation technique to get the women to move away from being physically self-conscious to a state of letting their minds focus on internal thoughts and fantasies. From each description Melanie Carvalho produced a representation from her own interpretation, in oil, on canvas as a means of materialising the imagined landscapes of home further. The role of the artist was also very interesting, as I analysed her paintings in light of her own biography. Within art history there is a tradition of analysing the work of black artists in light of their identity. I do not wish to treat Carvalho's work in this reductive or essentialising way, but merely treat her interpretations as I treat the women's own descriptions – as an ecological imprint of post-colonial identity politics. Within the descriptions are both a memorialisation of migratory history, and a sense of a visualised connection to a territory of belonging and identification. The palette, brush strokes and representations of both the women and the artists have their biographies inscribed. This is discussed in detail later in the chapter.

Firstly I would like to introduce the descriptions themselves. At the end of the session there were 6 descriptions from the Sangat centre and 17 from the AWRC group. Some women drew sketches, some wrote their descriptions out and others did a combination. The Sangat group produced predominantly written descriptions, and some women in the AWRC group did more than one description. The AWRC group were very relaxed and laughed about their drawing and colouring, because it reminded them of being at school as children. In the Sangat group the women were relaxed but much more conservative as they limit their descriptions to written text, with some annotation. I interpreted the written descriptions as an example of the differences in class positions between the two groups, and the Sangat group's higher literacy levels.

The technique was successful in reducing formality and any inhibitions that might have deterred their participation. The women were asked to write or draw this ideal landscape of home, and the result was the set of descriptions discussed in this chapter.

At the end of sessions in both groups, Melanie Carvalho explained that these descriptions would be treated as blue prints for the paintings that she produced. She aimed to treat them as technical 'instructions' to paint. She wanted to be as true to the descriptions as possible as she describes below:

> *"The use of painting as a medium is important in the work because it is also about how landscape painting as a genre plays a part in mythologizing ideas of where we're from and who we are. From the descriptions, I made landscape paintings on a landscape-format canvas in oils, all traditional materials . . .The painting has it's own presence and it doesn't belong to me and it doesn't belong to the person that made the description. It's a portrayal of another place, which is the idea behind the whole project.*
>
> *"I try to do the paintings in one sitting. The idea is to be as objective as possible and respond technically as possible, without elaboration. To create a landscape painting from someone else's imagination is really exciting." (Anderson, Carvalho et al. 2000, p.115).*

6.6 Methods of Analysis

The descriptions that the women made included drawings of actual gardens, plants, buildings and land. As the women were writing and drawing, the AWRC group talked through homes in Lahore, Gujarat, Bangladesh and Kenya, and their sketches symbolised something of these places. Only one of the women produced an impressionistic image of an idealised landscape of Mombassa. Memories made up of particular objects, plants, buildings, and climates were put together in a collage, combined to form a singular image from multiple memories. The drawings are individual expressions of physicalities, the colour, shape and texture of these environments. The places from the women's imaginations come alive on the page; their drawings are expressionistic and real at the same time, scales, shape, perspective are all a little out of sync as in any amateur drawing. The descriptions benefit from a raw impression translated onto the page and were completed in stages, different objects added one at a time. They are immediate and accessible; their transparency allows the viewer to add colours and build on these textures, creating another imagined impression.

These descriptions are a reflection of tangible moments of connection that the women have with their own imagined home. It is a fixing of the image from the material of the minds eye. Part of the process of fixing is the process of memory. We remember moments, which are fixed as images; these ocular impressions are over time fixed in their mental translation to become stills that are recalled. These recalled stills were materialised through the session in three forms; in the descriptions, in the transcripts of the discussion, and in the final canvases painted by Melanie Carvalho. The process of reverencing of certain natural aesthetics, places and connections were recorded as part of a process of imaginative memorialising. At each stage of the methodology in this session there is a process of layering that occurs, each stage allows for the image to be imbued further, taking the impression further away from the 'real' moment remembered. This distanciation over time serves to strengthen the meanings of these mental photo stills; the individual sections of the image making up the whole are all fixed and re-fixed, recreating them as iconographic triggers of the whole memory. Within these visualised memories the triggers are multisensory body-memories. Whilst the women write and draw their descriptions they recall the physical scents, feel, sound and taste experienced at the place they are representing.

Through this process the women create a historicized visual image, but one which resonates with all their senses. These are also multi-temporal, not fixed on a singular moment. The women of the group recall their landscapes of home in the AWRC in a wet autumn in London, in a group context. Such a context obviously fixes and recalls these images differently to the way that they might be recalled at home, or in the process of oral storytelling to their children. Many of the women said that they had never drawn these places, or ever even been allowed to express themselves through drawing before. The visual images fix the women's testimonies to past landscapes. They sketch a record of the environments of the past, not as specifically as a photo, but an inscription dedicated to this past environment. This is an intentional act of preservation of an environmental memory for a future audience. The descriptions and canvases discussed in this chapter are representations of these representations, thus translated to a different 'audience' in a particular context. The women's representations are created with an artist and researcher present in the room. This must have resulted in their own 'translations' even before the images are made on the page. This was double-edged; without us there would have been no recovery of these individual's visualised 'landscapes of home, but with us present these landscapes may have been envisioned differently in response to our perceived expectations and contributions. There was a clear difference between the two groups in that the AWRC group gave drawings to express their landscapes of home (only one woman was literate in English). To counter this, I annotated their descriptions by transcribing their verbal descriptions. They spoke to the drawing at the time, and these comments were taken down by me in English onto the A4 sheet. In the debriefing after the AWRC session both Melanie and I noted that the descriptions given were less fantasies or dreamscapes but were based on memories of specific places. These were childhood homes, or places actually visited, lived and remembered. There were two stages to the analysis of these descriptions. Part Two is an analysis of the written, and drawn descriptions completed by the women at the AWRC and Sangat. The descriptions are made by the women on an A4 sheet, prepared by Melanie Carvalho – below is a complete reproduction of this. Part Three is an analysis of the seventeen individual canvases, painted by Melanie Carvalho from the women's descriptions.

6.6.1 Case Study One – Kajal (AWRC)

In Kajal's description the whole image is drawn with colour pens. Kajal has picked orange, red, yellow and green. They are the brighter versions of these colours. She has drawn a house with a grey roof and chimney; the chimney has smoke flowing from it. The sun is high in the sky, and bright. There is a pond with fish, different coloured fish; coloured birds – orange and red, surround the pond. The flowers in the garden are varied, "bottle-brush" flowers, marigolds, and yellow daisies. In the house Kajal has tried to show the structure of the house. It has two floors with people in the rooms. Prominently in the front garden is a flag, a Bangladeshi flag green with a red circle in the centre (Plate 6.2).

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 6.2 –Kajals description (AWRC).

Kajal has brought to life a brightly coloured place where she used to live. The house has particular people and objects in it. The roof is indicative of a cross between a corrugated roof and a slate roof with a chimney. Bangladesh and its climate are not usually connected with notions of chimneys and fireplaces, these are much more part of English housing. This is possibly a remnant of the British Empire, a left-over house design. It seems that the house is an idealised home; the structure of two floors with well-defined living spaces also indicates cultivated living spaces. They are designed and considered. The roof of slate and the smoking chimney also are indicators of an upmarket house built of advanced building materials with provision for heating. The garden is a feature, which has an emphasis on lushness, greenness and life. There is a pond, which signifies an active gardening regime as well as a lot of bird and plant life. The plants are not anonymous, but reference particular species. These are drawn in detail. The care and detail with which they are drawn indicate closeness or a clear record that Kajal has of these flowers. The picture has been completed with people and, most importantly, a national flag. The flag situates the description concretely in Bangladesh, but its presence is also disruptive. It disrupts the picture from being a memory of a particular domestic landscape that is known intimately and remembered with emotion, to one where it is obvious that the landscape is remembered from elsewhere. The purpose of the flag is primarily to indicate the position from which we are viewing. We are viewing from outside and we are externalised through the presence of this national symbol. There would be no other perceivable reason to have a national flag outside a flowerbed at home. It is only the distance, which separates Kajal from home which ensures its presence. The flag's presence is indicative of an inclusionary landscape of home, which is inclusionary at a political, and economic as well as a personal level. It records a pride and sense of belonging. This situates Kajal's ideal landscape of home away from her place of residence and citizenship in England.

Imbued within the scene are the textures of an experienced home, but these are also textures of a Bangladeshi naturescape. Scents, sounds, tastes and textures are flattened and removed but are subtly present through the aesthetics of the description. The description frames the background within which Kajal situates herself ideally. Her identification is routed through these aesthetics of environment. Her description is celebratory, however, and there is little sadness in its depiction. The immediacy of access this description provides is heightened by the boldness of colour and the effective colour, which describes a different worldliness to Harlesden. This other world is a collage of her childhood memories and her sense of belonging to a landscape which is textured. It is not a flat overview of a territory but a combination of a known dwelling (Lucas 1988), and an iconography of everyday scale Bangladesh.

PART TWO

6.7 The women's 'ideal landscapes of home' descriptions

The interpretation of images made by the women and Melanie was done through a coding process where I looked for the relationship between imagined landscape and actual biography of the women. The coding of these lead me to analyse these visual descriptions in relation to their memorialising of the local ecologies of depicted places. I looked at the 'sites' and 'modalities' as summarised in recent publications on visual methodologies (Leeuwen and Jewitt 2001; Rose 2001). In the analysis of the descriptions made for Melanie Carvalho, I focused on expressing their 'compositional interpretation' as advocated by Rose (2001). This compositional interpretation became a means of coding the visual images. These codes were contextualised in relation to their production (in a group interview process) and the biography of the producer. These descriptions are tracings of mental images, and their composition reflect landscapes in three different ways. Firstly there are *space-specific* landscapes which recall a landscape which is real, and remembered. These are described as ***testimonies*** as they record places, and are a collage of actual pieces of places in the women's memory.

Secondly I have shown a set of descriptions where the women give an *impression* of an ideal landscape, which evokes sensory memories. These are linked to the ***body memories*** of their experience in a place, but are recorded on the page as impressions of these aesthetics and textures of that place. These are not attempting to trace or record the actual landscape characteristics but give a sense of place through the description. Thirdly I examine the descriptions that specifically refer to ***childhood memories***. These are interesting in their location rather than their look. Childhood is the place of nostalgia and idealised in these descriptions. It is clear that some images cross over into more than one category, but this grouping has been a way into making the analysis manageable and coherent.

6.8 Place-specific Testimonials

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Plate 6.3 –Chandan’s (AWRC)

Chandan's description (Plate 6.3) is a drawn sketch with a sentence recording the space-time of the description; it is an example of the type of descriptions that are defined as **testimonials** to a specific landscape. Chandan locates her landscape in a memory of a moment, and thus the description is a ***place-specific*** collage. This has icons placed within the frame that together make a real remembered place. This is not time-specific, but is a historicized imaging of memories of a singular place over time. In this description Chandan sketches a set of water structures including a well, a water pump, a water tank and a swimming pool within the same frame. These are figured around a house, which has a garden path and a tree which has palm-like leaves but is labelled 'Almond tree'. The sun is high in the sky. Time is figured in the image as a sequence denoting the progressive development of access to and domestic use of water. The use of water was originally limited to provision available by well. This well has a small *loto* (copper carafe) attached to it. This indicates a limited access but also an economy of use. The water pump is next to it. Both are in the front of the scene. They are more immediate memories. As we move back, the water tank is attached to the house. It is evidence of wealth and the overcoming limited access and availability of water. To the right of the frame we see the pool; an indulgent, superfluous pool. It is coloured a turquoise blue. It is like a vision. The blue is significant; it is vibrant and significant in its presence. The colour and the size indicate its dream-like luxury.

This description is labelled "My ideal home in Dhrangadhara". It is the pool, which is imagined, and this is a futuristic projection setting up a tension between past scarcity to a future excess. Indulgent and unnecessary, the existence of a pool in Kutch would be a fantasy because, in reality, the heat and extent of the dry season would make it an exotic and fantastical project. This is an area where water is revered because of its scarcity. The fact that the pool sits alongside the well, indicates the temporal projections of the cultural practices and values of water. The pool can only be imagined from the position of outsider. The projection made possible by migration. Water is not at a premium in England and so the possibilities of a pool in Kutch are imaginable. The sketch therefore is framing a way of seeing this domestic landscape in context of the development of infrastructure, access and socio-cultural practices. Water, from being a necessary resource becomes a material of play. It is an aesthetic and material presence, which lifts the description from a time-space specific memory. The landscape is a collage of water icons, which are a historical sequence of the materials that Chandan has used and memorialised in relation to India. They are emblems of place, culture and a value-system for water, which shifts in relation to migration.

The remembered places of the past are remembered through different ways of seeing the past. Sometimes in the images it is clear that these are scenes of a childhood home or a nostalgic view of a specific experience. The past can also be read by the icons within the frame. Water and the way it is depicted is illustrative of this. On the beach, or a swimming pool or at a lake these scenes are leisure scenes where the women idealise the pleasure of these water features in their past. Water is also present in a domestic context, a water pump, tap or tank provide a reflection on the development of the country at the moment the image is from. In the idealised scenes it is available freely, and exists in an exoticised form. The ecology is also depicted in different ways. Plants are fixed in places to ensure that the difference in biome is evident. Sometimes the plant is present as part of an intimate memory of a scene where the plant was always part of that place. Jasmine has been discussed in Chapter 5 as evoking memories of many religious rituals, romantic encounters or just the heat and scene of that place.

Shilpa's description (see Plate 6.4) is an example of how a *place-specific* description evokes an ecological memory.

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 6.4 – Shilpa's description (AWRC)

Shilpa in her description evokes a scene in Sudan; its dryness and lack of water are evident. The heat of the sun and lack of vegetation, ponds and plants except for date palms are illustrative of the desert climate. This Sudan scene is different from a childhood scene; it is recorded as a specific view from a window in her home in Sudan. Shilpa describes a way of life. This is recorded in the frame. The focus is on the difference in the shape of the houses. They are built as round mud huts, with dried grass on the walls and roofs. The image is like a tourist photo; it has nothing of a personal nature within it. The image is an iconographic overview of a scene, rather than a detailed intimate childhood landscape. This memorialisation flattens the image and the items within the frame are designed to indicate the order of the landscape, as a visual record. This description is a **testimony** to Shilpa's environment in Sudan, and the world she looked on to from within the confines of her home.

Shanta's description (Plate 6.5) is an example of a *place-specific* written description. She writes a description of a place called Thika Falls, where there are fourteen waterfalls. This written description is annotated with a drawn image of a gramophone. In the description Shanta says that this is a childhood recollection from the age of nine to eleven years old. I have linked my analysis of this description to Shanta's biography and her home interview, and by 'triangulating' the components of the three sessions I discovered that Shanta's experiences of picnics at waterfalls and the lakefront were a constant in her life in East Africa. As a child in Kenya she had gone to Thika, but later as an adult, she visited Lake Malawi. In her home in Pinner, Shanta has photos of these picnics at Thika falls on display.

- Describe below, in writing, or a drawing, or however you like,- the landscape that best represents your idea of home.

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 6.5 –Shanta's Description (Sangat)

The photos of these moments give context to her written description. They represent leisure-spaces in East Africa, where Shanta visited as part of a convoy of family cars, just like in her pre-teen years. The effect of looking back is to record the place and a way of living in those years in East Africa. The description also frames cultural values and norms as lived out in these times. In many of the descriptions within both groups it is evident that the idealised landscape are formed with versions of moral living imbued in them. In Shanta's image, it is clear that this is a description of the whole extended family going to Thika falls, in Kenya. These are her teenage years as an adolescent. She describes this as "childhood". A scene of pleasure and fun is created. There is music, dance, singing, and eating. She describes travelling in a truck, the journey being part of this ideal landscape, the textures also are important. The stones are cool, and smooth, the music invoking. The scene is also a moral scene of family values expressed in a joined journey, with a picnic being as important as the journey. There is a wholesomeness reverberating throughout her description. People are swimming fully clothed. This is a subtle illustration of communal living, where there is a singular moral code. The house and garden ideal, which is rarely achieved in the U.K., is embraced by many of the women as possessing moral value. Comments, were often made about the way that living away from South Asia has influenced the moral conduct of their children. England is considered as having a modernising but sometimes destructive influence on the acceptable practices of social behaviour and individual life choices. In the representations, relationships that are non-sexual are all evident, and partners are absent. These created landscapes are asexual and familial (see Appendix **5.13** for Melanie's Depiction).

6.9 Impressions of Body-Memories

Describe below, in writing, or a drawing, or however you like, the landscape that best represents your idea of home.

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 6.6 – Kokila's Description (AWRC)

An impressionistic description like Kokila's (see Plate 6.6) is an example of a written description that reflects the essence of the place, or the sentiment of connection that the woman has to the place. In this image, there is a feint line on the page. The faintness allows for an impression to develop in the viewer's imagination. The scene is suggested: the tree, and the river are non-specific. There are no indications of location, scale, colour, or grounding. But in her description, Kokila evokes a sense of place, which is an impression of peace, and sublimity. This is a scene of prayer at the Subramati River, in Ahmdabad. The only well-defined object is the prayer pitcher, which is the *loto* (copper carafe).

There is an absence of detail but its absence inscribes a sense of emotional and mental clarity: the moment of devotional prayer and sacrifice. The tree is not described as any type, but it is drawn like a tree in England – an ash or oak. This is indicative of the position from which the tree is drawn, from elsewhere. The aesthetics are scenic with a sense of memory and reverence imbued in them. The final painting (Appendix 5.5) actually taps into the scenery without intrusively re-working it too much. The objects in the description are not collaged or layered, but tightly joined in the memory of prayer at this riverside. The tree is symbolic for shelter, for nature and fixes a location without grounding the scene with man-made structures. The river is idyllic because it is not fixed in shape or topography. It is simply suggested in a symbolic image of flow. An unpolluted, organic life giving force which is ritualised through Hindu religious practice.

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 6.7 – Kanta's Description: "Mombassa" (AWRC)

The second impressionistic image was drawn by Kanta (Plate **6.7**); this is one of three images that she did, and all of these are reproduced here. In this description Kanta fills the page with colour. There are only three identifiable things within the frame; the word 'Mombassa', a coconut palm, and a sentence that reads "carefree days before coming to U.K. Aged 14". The palm is iconographical in that it is used as a symbolic representation of a tropical idyll. Mombassa is the scene. The colours used are part of the idealisation of African beaches. The aesthetics are more important than the icons, however. Reds, pink, purple, green and turquoise are juxtaposed to depict the collage of colours found in any paradise idyll. The evocation is of a place beyond objects, but imbued with a sense of pleasure, freedom and sensuality. This sentence which annotates the image, indicates the position from which Kanta remembers; it is from the place of being in England, with all the care and worries that the move has meant. These are not only assigned to being in the U.K. but also possibly the burden of responsibilities that increase with age. The writing is part of the picture; the text is part of the aesthetic of the description; placing the text within the frame is reflective of the importance of written English in Kanta's experiences of living in England. This is reiterated in her other two descriptions.

In her second image (Plate **6.8**) Kanta writes:

> *"Days of Childhood. Despite poor – poverty background. Dreamy no pressure before pressure of settling in new culture, meat eating, speaking English with accent, not being understood."*

This is evidence of the negotiation not only of place and alienation from new locations but also the core means of survival and expression are at stake. Kanta was forced to eat meat and was also very self-conscious about her speaking English with an accent. The children of British East Africa all were taught English at school, a legacy of imperialism, but these learned words when they had to be used in the U.K., were a source of humiliation and difference. For many migrants, in-betweeness also involves linguistic relationships.

The impressionism of the drawing is an expressive tool. It creates a placelessness with signification for certain emotions and moments. Fixing and defining are secondary in these descriptions to the intellectual engagement with identity and non-locatedness of these emotions. The palm is featured but no other ecology is featured. This again is a placeless icon figured to locate a memory of another biome, not defined as a local place but as an experience of textures. These figured as a placeless experience allow for the description to become a dialogue about positionality, placelessness, and exclusion. The third description by Kanta is an example of this. The words below are overlayed with fluorescent green lines in the form of two plant like objects with green tendrils flowing from them (Plate **6.9**).

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 6.8 – Kanta's Description 2 (AWRC)

Describe below, in writing, or a drawing, or however you like, the landscape that best represents your idea of **home**.

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 6.9 – Kanta's Description 3 (AWRC)

The words italicised below dominate Kanta's third description.

> *"Understood without tension Tree flowing having to explain!!!! Acceptance."*

These words connect with the line drawing merging together to evoke a sense that there is a freedom amongst this world of green organic flows. There is a desire for acceptance mentioned in each of Kanta's descriptions (Kanta was one of only three women who completed more than one description). Home for Kanta is the space where she can be understood, accepted and feel under no pressure. Her drawings are not traumatised expressions of alienation, but celebratory of a memorialised past where a certain scene or set of colours could signify settlement, and inclusion. These colours and icons are important in that they are familiar and intimate evocations of a sense of place which offers an inclusionary home where she has belonged.

6.10 Childhood Memories

Nostalgia and memory are imbedded in all the descriptions, whether they are written, or sketched. The effect of memory is to connect certain events and experiences from the past to the present. Nostalgia has the effect of tinting, smoothing and idealising the past. Nostalgia adds a romantic glaze and elevates the memory from the grounded reality of the moment. Memory also serves to stretch and layer the past as it is informed by sensuous recollection, emotional meanings and fed by oral histories and other media. The memory and its accuracy are contingent. The only way to trace the nostalgia with which the women fabricate their minds-eye view of the past is through their celebratory attitude to things in the country they lived in before migration. Childhood homes, in all the images, are decorated with positive, idyllic emblems; cultivated gardens, spaces for play, ponds, lakes, swings and solid two storey house structures.

Describe below, in writing, or a drawing, or however you like, the landscape that best represents your idea of **home**.

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Plate 6.10 – Zubeida's description (AWRC)

Childhood is the key thread in Zubeida's description. She has a house and two children running towards the house. Their path is decorated with birds and flowers and grasses. There is a large flower by the house and the house is drawn like a face. Under the description Zubeida has written -

> *"Pakistan Lahore. My childhood was in this house, with huge garden, my dream is for my children to play in the huge garden. Children playing with swimming pool. Gulab, Chumeli – white flowers. Ducks – Jasmine smell. Weather – neither very hot or very cold. Orange fruit – tangerines." (from Zubeida's description.)*

The description in itself is a naively drawn happy scene. The annotation describes where the drawing fits within Zubeida's imagination of an ideal home. There is an interplay between a European sense of a garden ideal and an Asian one. Flowers such as jasmine, chumeli (honeysuckle), and roses all exist alongside ducks and tangerines. These seem discordant within the description; European icons placed in a South Asian context. The swimming pool, as also seen in Chandan's description, is an icon of luxury; its excess is evidence of wealth and an abundance of water. Whilst drawing this sketch Zubeida talks about how she would like this scene for her children, a house in a sunny climate, with these flowers from her own childhood and an idyllic house. She projects her own childhood into the aspirations that she has for her own children.

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 6.11 – Puja's Description (AWRC),

Describe below, in writing, or a drawing, or however you like, the landscape that best represents your idea of home.

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 6.12 – Darshna's Description (AWRC)

Puja and Darshna's descriptions are reproduced as Plate **6.11** and **6.12** respectively.These two descriptions are childhood memories that are wholly significant in their depiction of childhood. I have put them together because of the ***splitting*** of the page that occurs in both descriptions. In Puja's description she draws three lines dividing the page. Each section is part of a story of landscapes of home. The splitting of the page in these two sketched descriptions can also be analysed in terms of a splitting of self, or of a multifaceted identification with place. In Puja's description the page looks like a set of scenes in a guidebook or a series of postcards. The top layer is drawing of a house and kitchen-garden; there is a label 'mothers house'. The trees include papaya, limbla (bay leaf), with flowers. The second scene is of a cow and a calf and a thatched shelter for them. The third is a figurative scene showing Puja, and her three brothers and sisters. The first layer signifies the importance of her mother's home in Puja's life. The domestic garden space is shown as an ideal family kitchen garden. This is a very practically drawn garden in that it includes a water tap, food, and the house structure and is recorded as a particular childhood home. The cows represent a sentimental memory; an attachment to a place in an idealised agricultural setting, a cow with shelter suckles a young calf. The splitting is a tool by which Puja represents three layers of her memory biographically; her family home, her siblings and the rural idyll which she treasures. There is not a temporal splitting, but an identification split on the page between these relationships. In the second section her siblings are the background for herself which she has drawn larger than the others. Here she is separate to them. Her distance from them is signified. Puja has not seen her siblings since the 1970s. She is identified differently in each scene. Her landscape of home is split to ensure a variety of connections and sentiments.

6.11 Differences between the AWRC and Sangat descriptions

As I have stressed in previous chapters, there were many differences between the two groups. Although both groups were made up of first generation migrants who travelled to the U.K. in the 1970s, their different socio-economic positioning in the U.K. effects their perceptions of idealised landscapes of home. The level of confidence, access to travel and geographical mobility are all reflected in the scale and scope of the descriptions.

Within the Sangat session the women produced descriptions that were mostly writing, with some annotations. They reflect very broad experiences rather than the local collages which dominate the AWRC. As an affluent group, their relationship with migration is quite different in that the women quite often visit the country from which they came. Some have maintained property there, as well as having active business connections. Leisure experiences inform their landscapes of home much more. These are less dominated by childhood memories, and more idealised landscape descriptions made up from experiences and memories. The written descriptions allow us to imagine the aesthetics of the place, depicted to a greater degree. There is a wider frame because the descriptions are more sweeping. They lack detail and the pedestrian iconography of the internal domestic spaces of the AWRC. These reflect the women's confidence and their scope to appropriate many different types of territory. The Sangat group also have a greater appropriation of space and mobility is greater within London too.

> *Lalita – "Whatever I had in my childhood, what I cherished, I had tried to look for it after we've been married and I have found such places, now I cherish them as well. So for me it has been a continuous process of enjoying similar things."*[129] ***(Sangat)***

This is Lalita describing how this ideal landscape has been conceived. It is a search for places that in her childhood were wonderful experiences; she seeks these for solace everywhere she goes (since leaving Delhi). She found her peaceful place at Derwentwater. So Derwentwater reflects her remembered Nainital, and now Nainital also reflects back Derwentwater. The two have merged into one: both cherished as a singular place which is a source of pleasure, security and identification (Plate **6.13**).

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[129] ENGLISH (1-597; G2C; LH)

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Plate 6.13 – Lalita's Description (Sangat)

Lalita's description is an example of the ways in which the Sangat women had a different positionality in relation to landscapes of home. The annotated drawing is a classic iconography of the English Lakes. Its aesthetics reflect a European vision of lakeside scenes. The image is layered with foreground, water feature, house, and trees on the horizon. This description is titled "Nainital and Derwentwater". There are 'tall alpine trees' on the horizon, 'rolling green hills' and there is a 'smell of pine fruit and green grass'. The house Lalita draws is amongst the trees but overlooking the lake. The lake is in the foreground with a 'winding pathway' on the edges of the lake for walking and riding. In this image, Lalita brings together two continents, Asia and Europe. The trees, the French windows of the house, the smell of grass and pine fruits all contribute to the European feel. But the title's 'Nainital' is a reference to Lalita's childhood holidays in the hill stations above the Delhi plains. Lalita does not miss the old landscape so much as emphasises the finding of new landscapes that make her feel the same way. These new versions sit comfortably alongside the old memories. There is a dynamic relationship, which is actively sought between the two. The specificity of the place in Nainital is not as important as the connecting elements within. These are individual icons like the alpine trees, the winding path, and the lake. This reflects a confidence in appropriating these new iconographies, where they become a site for identification as opposed to the landscape in England being unsettling, alienating and repulsive. There is not a push toward India for Lalita but a bridge built between the two.

Within the AWRC descriptions, ***a specificity of place*** is much more evident. These detailed landscapes of home are domestic and pedestrian. They are literal mappings of house structures, plants, flowers and people. In the Sangat group there were two descriptions that evoked an intimate sense of a specific set of objects that had been in a garden or home, but even these descriptions from Manjula (Plate **6.17**), and Hansa (Plate **6.16**), have a broader scope. Manjula's description includes the lakes and hills of Uganda as part of the overview, and Hansa's description is more about incorporating an idealised cultivated garden designed for leisure. The garden's flowers are detailed reflecting an intimate knowledge of flower species in abundance. They are more complex than the simple home reflections of Chandan's second image (Plate **6.14**), and Sarabjit's (Plate **6.15**).

Describe below, in writing, or a drawing, or however you like, the landscape that best represents your idea of **home**.

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 6.14 – Chandan's Description 2 (AWRC)

Describe below, in writing, or a drawing, or however you like, the landscape that best represents your idea of **home**.

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 6.15 – Sarabjit's Description (AWRC)

Describe below, in writing, or a drawing, or however you like, the landscape that best represents your idea of home.

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 6.16 – Hansa's Description (Sangat)

Describe below, in writing, or a drawing, or however you like, the landscape that best represents your idea of home.

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 6.17 – Manjula's Description (Sangat)

The wealth of Manjula's family is reflected in the description (Plate **6.17**) – badminton courts, a factory and the estate grounds full of tea pickers and processors. These are all owned by her family. The lakes of Uganda are figured behind all of these; this indicates the potential scope of mobility an ownership of the territory around. Even though the scene is not economically possessed, it is ideologically owned. In Manjula's descriptions of her father and brothers setting up the business, they have literally carved out an economic landscape in Uganda. They cleared land to construct plantations and a processing factory. Although this description is of a home, in reality this home was very much Manjula's overview of her holiday residence. She lived there in the school holidays as a child, therefore the freedom that she had to explore and appropriate are related to the liminality associated with holiday time. Manjula expresses a desire to return, it is an unalienating idyll which has happy memories.

The testimonies to home that dominate the AWRC descriptions have *a specificity of place* rather than a layered *idealised landscape.* These are areas, which are localised through specific icons on a more intimate scale. The Sangat group's broader *idealised landscapes* are figured as part of a series of experiences. There is a sense that the Sangat group are surer of their position within England which has fed into strengthening bonds rather than accumulating anxieties about their situation. There is nostalgia but this is not a regretting, negative sense of loss, rather a remembered, sentimental, revered sense of place.

There is less of a connection with the *specificity of ecologies* within the Sangat group; there are general sketches of grasses, flowers, and natural scenery. This is because they were descriptions of landscapes that were broader in their ecological record. The AWRC group recorded fewer things but these were placed in a particular context and specificity. Almond trees, date palms, papaya, jasmine, honeysuckle are all placed as they are remembered in place in the gardens of homes. In the Sangat group there is more of a cross-over. Women talk about roses being planted in Uganda from Kenya, and fuchsias being planted in India from Harrow. Their mobility allows for a perception of place through movement rather than stationary locales. The Sangat group associate more with the greenness and rural idyll of England. The suburban flower fads of England are reflected in their idealised gardens. The Victoriana of water pumps are placed in these descriptions, whereas the water pump in Chandan's image (Plate **6.14**) is something that has been pre-modern and is not romanticised, as in Hansa's (Plate **6.16**). Hansa said that she got the idea of putting a water pump in her garden from the Ideal Home Exhibition in London, whereas Chandan remembers the hardship of relying on one to obtain water for basic domestic activities such as cooking, bathing, and cleaning.

Describe below, in writing, or a drawing, or however you like, the landscape that best represents your idea of **home.**

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Please return to: Flat 7, 51 Tudor Road, London E9 7SN

Plate 6.18 – Neela's Description (Sangat)

Hansa's suburban fantasy includes ivy, geraniums, fuchsias and this hand-pump. This is a scenic garden, with an Indian wooden swing which can sit up to four people. In this description there merges the figuring of English plants in an Indian climate with Indian garden furniture and props. There is even a balcony from which to hold the view. The Sangat group view their ideal landscapes as luxurious touristic holidayscapes. For example Neela in her written description (Plate **6.18**) describes this scene as Mombassa, but it could be in any holiday brochure for beach breaks. The palms, waves and "me relaxing in a hammock" all contribute to a restful, contented image of a woman on holiday. Leisure is paramount in these descriptions. The AWRC descriptions, by contrast, have a sad nostalgia where, although the woman may be present in the frame, she is not in leisure mode. Simply being there in the picture is the ideal. The fantasy is not stretched to a bodily inertia. The Harlesden group's idealised landscapes offer insight into idealised visits to childhood homes. These visits, for most, have not been possible because of financial considerations. The AWRC descriptions are not projected fantasies but are reliant on memory. The Sangat group seem to involve a lot more imagination and reflect a considered depiction of somewhere which is a collage not of icons forming one place, but of many places merging to form an ideal.

Shazias (Sangat) description (Plate **6.19**) is an example of where the real and the fantasy merge.

Describe below, in writing, or a drawing, or however you like, the landscape that best represents your idea of home.

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Plate 6.19 – Shazia's Description (Sangat)

> *"I was in the temple near my parent's home. Its on top of a hill surrounded by a park, it has marble flooring. In my imagination from the top of the temple, where I would sit on the temple steps, I would see the sea, palm trees in the distant horizon on one side and lush green mountains/hills on the other side. The sea and the sky would merge."*

In this description Shazia starts at a specific location. As the text continues, we are taken into her imagined landscape which frames this temple. The sea, palms, and the horizon classically set up a layered landscape viewed from a position of height and where there are no interruptions to the view. In this actual place, the sea and the scenery do not exist. Mountains and hills are also implanted as part of the ideal. A collage is created to make a place which is not remembered. For the AWRC, collages are made up of icons that existed in the garden, home, or locale of the individual. In neither case the memories of a real scene, but made up differently, to a different scale and sense of idealised place. (see Melanies depiction in Appendix **5.14**)

Producing the images as drawings and written descriptions allow the women to reflect on their many experiences with biographical landscapes of home. They reflect and weigh up what has been significant and what has not. The way that places are memorialised and remembered is significant in the way that they reflect the women's identification with those places. On seeing their descriptions, the women extend these representations and imbue them with colour, sound and scent through their talking about them. From these varied and intimate landscapes of home Melanie Carvalho produced a set of 17 canvases. The production of the canvases are a form of interpretation of the descriptions, as well as being representative of Melanie Carvalho's own creative palette. The final paintings that Melanie produced are themselves productive and reflective. Carvalho aims to create a 'third place' on the canvas, through the act of painting. This inscribes her palette and interpretation onto the description producing a new representation which is productive and fixing. The sight of the canvases stimulated the women's memories and imaginations further, as I will illustrate in **Part Three.**

PART THREE

6.12 "Describe a Landscape......" an exhibition by Melanie Carvalho

In this section I want to analyse the production of paintings that were created from these descriptions by landscape artist Melanie Carvalho. The paintings were exhibited at University College London in an exhibition titled "***Describe a Landscape*** . . .", in July 2000 (see Appendix 3), and at the Royal Geographical Society annual conference in Plymouth in January, 2001 (see Appendix 4). In this analysis, I wish to focus on the relationship between the women's representations and Carvalho's interpretation. I have analysed the works in the context of Carvalho's own diasporic identity and interest in landscape painting. Landscape is a productive medium for Carvalho in addressing issues of identity and belonging. She always uses mediated sources for her landscape paintings; these include photographs, postcards, and other techniques. The idea that any landscape painting is a realist representation of an actual scene is challenged by Carvalho. She opposes the notions of realism in landscape representation. Instead a landscape is full of possibilities; layering and perspective allow for a flexibility and creative practice. Carvalho uses this layering and framing to understand landscape as a mechanism of interrogation into issues of memory, and identity. This is an analysis of the landscape paradigm. Thus "landscapes of home" are, for her, a way into the imaginary of individual perceptions of landscape, and their importance in the process of framing individual identities.

Carvalho's 'landscapes of home' project is about gathering individual perspectives and to use these as a basis for creating a collection of painted canvases of the descriptions, each one creating a landscape representation beyond the original minds-eye image. In the studio Carvalho sought to create *technical depictions* of the descriptions. She saw herself as a technical executor of the women's descriptions onto canvas with oils. Carvalho used the descriptions as a blue-print for the paintings. She wanted to be 'true' to their descriptions. This raised the issue in that the two groups had very different levels of literacy and communication in English. This meant that one group were reliant on drawing and the other group were dominated by written descriptions. The difference in the two practices was that written descriptions would allow Carvalho greater freedom to depict a landscape scene than would a sketch in a description. This gave Carvalho freedom to produce a more 'coherent' painting with a more 'picturesque' outcome. The women themselves raised this with her in the session at the AWRC.

> *"This is a bit of a concern that, because a lot of their drawings they were really worried that they would look really childish, and they wanted me to make them more picturesque, but when I saw the descriptions, they didn't look childish to me, they looked really beautiful. They were beautiful drawings. And they weren't a Western mode of drawing, because they were quite a flat perspective, there was a lot more pattern than there is in the Western tradition of landscape. So I tried to incorporate that kind of pattern drawing into my painting which they all might see as being childish, and what they want to see as a "proper" ideal of landscape."*[130]
> *Melanie Carvalho.*

Ideas of proper "landscapes" to be held up against naive art were a constant tension when women at the AWRC drew their descriptions. The effect of this was that Carvalho took on board their concerns and reflected this in her painting of the descriptions onto canvas. In Appendix 5. are the whole set of canvases that Melanie Carvalho painted from both the AWRC and Sangat descriptions.

6.13 Painting 'other' Landscapes of 'home'

There is a sense that Melanie's own biography has influenced the composition, aesthetics and a particular landscape imaginary represented in the canvases. The way that Carvalho imagines landscape is through her own understanding of memory. The composing of the painting allows for a temporal and spatial flux. The memories are coordinates from which to compile a current positioning, culturally and socially. The women's landscapes of home are set apart from their real landscapes of Harrow and Harlesden. They are inscribed with a place that is a collage of different textures and different sensory moments. These are idealised ecologies of lush green plants of East Africa sitting alongside Indian and English ones. The pleasures of these different sensory moments are recreated by Carvalho to produce a collection, which, in itself is a collage of these idealised landscapes of non-location.

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[130] ENGLISH – p10; 17/7/00 Interview with Paul Anderson see *Anderson, P., M. Carvalho, et al. (2000). "Intimate Distance : fantasy islands and English Lakes." Ecumene 8(1): p112-119.*

Carvalho has been trained in the landscape genre and as a British school at Rome artist inscribes the canvases with these conventions. The women in the groups have their own definitions of landscape which they discuss. There is a duality that is continuous in their descriptions. Some of the women themselves talk about landscape in the sense of a European definition understood commonly as an objective overview of a landscape scene which has limited presence of industry, the urban, or people. At the same time, there is a presence of specific places in their descriptions. This is particularly noticeable in the Sangat group descriptions. This is conflated with Carvalho's own positionality in relation to this idea of nostalgia and "looking back". At the exhibition of the canvases, a close friend and Lalita (Sangat) describe their reaction to the exhibition.

> *Lalita – "But I think that Mel's experiences had come in on the oil paintings as well. Particularly some of them, because when someone describes say a beach with coconut palms I think she can visualise quite easily the beaches that she's seen in Goa. Two of these pictures. I thought, this is Mel's picture of her place, and I didn't realise it was someone else's."*
> *"Yeah, you couldn't do it any other way." Observer*
> *"But that's obvious that you're going to have to put in your own . . .because they're the only images you have of a place, then, your place. . . .Often I did have to completely make-up . .I mean they described trees that I didn't know, so all I had was their drawings. So I used their drawings of a tree but it's made up." Melanie Carvalho.*[131]

Carvalho has a strong relationship to the iconography of Goa, which is identified by her through her father's celebration of this through displays of pictures and objects in the family home. I discuss this in relation to her painting ***Goan Palms***, in chapter 5. Inscribed in this painting is a memory of others' memories, especially her father's. This memory is more interesting because of her father's occlusion of his experience of living in East Africa. Carvalho describes how her identity as it has been shaped. Biographically Melanie Carvalho was born in Zambia. Her father lived for many years in Uganda, but throughout his life he did not talk about this part of his life, only the earlier years of living in Goa, India. Melanie had very strong images of Goan India, but very few reference points to East Africa. This biography has led her to employ landscape painting to engage with this mythologizing of identity, and belonging to certain territories. Her identity was a complex one which was edited down for a number of years. Carvalho's experience whilst training also made her question this occlusion of complex identitifications in favour of neat stereotypes. The project *'landscapes of home'* ultimately allows for complexity, fantasy and multiplicity to be expressed in a formal ideologically defined genre of art. During her time at St. Martins School of Art Carvalho was encouraged to paint in a certain way a certain aesthetic because of her identity

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[131] Transcript E, page 8, tape-recording's of reactions to the exhibition, UCL, July 2000.

> *" . . .they love exotic imagery and they find it interesting. I always felt that it wasn't really me, and I did it just to please them. .. . . .I thought English people don't make paintings about being English so why should I make paintings about being Indian?" Melanie Carvalho, personal interview.*

It was later that she decided that she always painted images that seemed to have a longing for some far off place . . .attracted to the idyllic, framed scenes or landscapes.

> *"It made me think about how my father always had this idea of back home. I didn't realise that he'd given me this sentiment of back home but it was a non-existent place for me . . . .you know I'd never been back, back home wherever this is . . It made me realise that you can't go back home, and you can't photograph back home but you can paint back home because it's in your imagination. Because you can paint whatever you want, you can paint an image of back home." Melanie Carvalho (personal interview).*

The effect of Carvalho's interpretation is to enlarge and to multiply the sensory moments that are inscribed on the canvas. These are her own experiences, which are inscribed. By mediating the descriptions further. She seeks to develop these into new scenes. She has inscribed herself through the process of recall, recalling places from her own imagination, but most importantly she inscribes a personal aesthetic into these landscapes of home. Carvalho acknowledges this process as a natural one, which cannot be avoided, but tries to limit the effect of this by her aim to produce the painting in one sitting.

> *"So as I was saying they're a lot simpler, a lot more naively painted than the last ones, because I also paint them in one sitting. I'll sit down and I'll try not to leave it until I've*

> *finished. Unless I have to. But that's so they're all painted wet on wet. That's the style of the painting. .it's much more impressionistic, or immediate."* [132] *Melanie Carvalho.*

> *"Because they're like working drawings. And I like responding to technical things which they have in them. Because they are different to your usual way of drawing. They are pattern based."*[133] *Melanie Carvalho (personal interview).*

The palette used is quite a distinctive set of colours and juxtaposition of colours. There is distinct tropicalness that is represented. Pinks and reds sit next to each other with greens and yellows. Carvalho paints these aesthetics through the descriptions, bringing them to life. The paintings are vibrant and colourful. They are also made to be contemporary, because of the glossy texture. This gloss adds newness to the images. It creates a sense of lightness that does not reflect a faded memory or imagination but a vital one. This resonates with the women's descriptions of India and East Africa, especially in the AWRC group. Carvalho describes the connection between palette and her visit to India.

> *"And also in India, people do have bright colours, they wear bright colours a lot, probably because of the light, picking up on it. When you come back here you realise how black and grey everyone dresses. People did describe the colours of flowers and I've just put those colours on in certain combinations, which has created a tropical sense." Melanie Carvalho (personal interview)*

The palette in Carvalho's case serves as a biographical inscription where an environmental, or biographical inscription is reflected. This is about place-exposure, as opposed to a racialised aesthetics. This is a subtle relationship between colour and culture, where cultural products and artefacts are an expression of a lived experience or of re-memory of relationship with the aesthetics of the environment; of light, air, scent and sound. These are the relationships that are being translated and expressed in the descriptions. These are further transformed through Carvalho's own occularity.

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[132] (l- 558; G2C; MC)

[133] Transcript E, p17, tape-recordings of the reactions to the exhibition, UCL, July 2000.

Describe below, in writing, or a drawing, or however you like, the landscape that best represents your idea of home.

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 6.20 – Puja's Description (AWRC)

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 6.21 – Puja's Painting (AWRC)

There is a continuation of the landscape convention in Carvalho's treatment of these descriptions in the way that the people in the canvases were understated, For an example of this in her painting of Puja's description (Plate **6.20**), Puja's family have been removed and the rural idyll emphasised in plate **6.21**. People are present, but very much objectified rather than being subjects that are important in the composition. The bodies blur into the environment around them, their agency is limited to a brush stroke or an object within the idyll. Other examples include Hansa, Zubeida, and Neela (see Appendix **5.9, 5.8, 5.12** respectively). The differences between the descriptions and canvases are very hard to identify in fine detail, as the differences are sometimes deliberate. Carvalho shifts perspective and emphasis in them. In Zubeida's description (Plate **6.22**), there are two figures walking toward a house. There is a large flowering plant next to the house with a pathway lined with flowers. The description says:

Zubeida "Pakistan, Lahore. My childhood was in this house, with huge garden. My dream is for my children to play in the huge garden. Children playing with swimming pool. gulab *(roses), chumeli (honeysuckle), ducks – Jasmine smell. Weather neither very hot or very cold. Orange fruit – tangerines." Written annotation from Zubeida's description.*

Describe below, in writing, or a drawing, or however you like, the landscape that best represents your idea of **home.**

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 6.22 – Zubeida's Description (AWRC)

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 6.23 – Zubeida's Painting (AWRC)

From this description Carvalho paints a canvas where she has made the pool dominate at the centre, with tangerines or oranges framing the picture. There is a body swimming but not recognisable. The flowers are painted around the pool as a meadow. The figures and the house are absent. Their absence confirms Carvalho's landscaping of the description. She draws the elements that Zubeida remembers but sets them out to create a modern tropical idyll, where the pool signifies a luxurious wealth. A water fantasy is created rather than a painting reflecting a more personal still of children playing in the garden of a dream home. This composition is self-consciously shifted around for a different perspective. The image is a result of deliberate translation, a constructed mediated representation of Carvalho's and Zubeida's imaginations. It could be described as two perspectives, which normally are juxtaposed as being within the same frame. The artist as an outside interpreter and practitioner and the woman's subjective description is mediated formally onto canvas. These interpretations of the descriptions were received positively, and with praise for Melanie Carvalho's artistry. The women's responses were recorded and are analysed in the following section.

6.14 The women's reactions to the exhibition.

The exhibition in July 2000 at University College London, allowed the women themselves to view the canvases in a gallery situation. Their comments and reactions were recorded. This was a nervous moment for both Melanie Carvalho and myself. The women had entrusted us with their intimate descriptions of real homes, personal fantasies and some projections that combined the two. The purpose of the exhibition was to give something back to the groups. This was an act of reciprocity which recognised the women's contribution and investment into the research, and an ethical issue for me personally. It was a means by which we gave the women some token of appreciation so that the process was less about mining them for their oral histories and imaginative geographies, than about being a reflective and reactive process. At this event, each of the women who gave a description was given a photo-quality print of the painting. These were almost A4 size that they could take home with them. For the artist it was the first time that she had got verbal feedback from the people who had contributed descriptions for her project.

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 6.24 – Shilpa's Painting (AWRC)

Overall, the women were very impressed. The AWRC group came first to see the exhibition. There were many tears at the sight of the paintings. When Puja saw her painting (Plate **6.21)** she said, *"This is the place where I played as a child"*. For her, the canvas was the place. It was not a metaphor but a representation that was the place. She was tearful at the sight of it; she had not been there for over a decade. Shilpa also described her painting (Plate **6.24**) as a really beautiful image, it reminded her of the desert in Sudan where she lived. It was a true representation for her, that reminded her of her life there. The emotional response of many of the women is captured in Kanta's comment below.

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 6.25 – Kanta's Painting (AWRC)

Kanta – "For me, you know, this really gets at I suppose in a way what I feel inside."[134]

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[134] Transcript E, page 1, tape-recordings of reactions, UCL, July 2000.

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 6.26 – Manjula's Painting (Sangat)

In the Sangat group the reactions were very similar, and the women were also very touched. Manjula said that when she shows it to her mum, she will be pleased by the accuracy of it. The painting (Plate **6.26**) is the only representation of this place now, as all the photographs were left behind, because of expulsion. Lalita was also very pleased with the representation (Plate **6.27**). Nainital, for Lalita, represents a very precious time in India. The combination of water and greenness along with peaceful surroundings are a recipe for security and serenity which Lalita tries to recapture whever she goes. Melanie Carvalho and Lalita discussed the ways in which specificities of place can be treasured, but also rendered unimportant when compared to the recapturing of sensory memory that new landscapes can evoke.

> *Lalita – "I have noticed that with landscapes, they jump down on your mind from childhood. Wherever in life that you move, you try and locate if possible a place to co-relate or to you. . Know it's just there. . . .You look or it wherever you go in the world."*

I just love it. I just like it. When I came to England it was the first thing I want, I want to be near a lake"[135]

Melanie – "So I gave it a sort of Northern light, because so many people had a tropical light . . .So that you couldn't really tell whether it was India or . . ".

Lalita – "A landscape can be from anywhere, anyway."[136]

Image removed due to third party copyright

Plate 6.27 – Lalita's Painting (Sangat)

For Lalita, the canvas provides a zone that is spatially and temporally in flux. It resonates with her own dual connectedness with both the UK and India. The lake is an iconographic memory, at the sight of which she recalls two places at once. The symbol is iconographical because in both Derwentwater and Nainital there are other features that she had not described. She says that in Nainital there is a development of houses along the whole perimeter of the lake. In Derwentwater, she describes her exclusion of the yachts as being deliberate.

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[135] ENGLISH (l-396:G2C;LH)

[136] Transcript E, page 12; LH/MC, ibid.

> *Lalita – "I didn't mention a yacht. I don't come to do things. I'm too much into the normal landscape. . . It's about the lake. Because I made such a big link, and the hills! Beautiful. Lovely."*[137]

6.15 Conclusions

The methodological process used in this session was very productive and 'messy' in the effects of this three-way dialogue. There was an issue of language and meaning, which manifested itself most problematically in the use of the term 'landscape'. This was sometimes the result of the more formal conventions that Carvalho recognises against the women's own vernacular landscape definitions, and at other times a difference of meanings in different languages.

> *Shazia – "But Landscape doesn't just mean sand, sea, mountains, hills. It can mean streets even . . ."*
> *Melanie Carvalho – "Yes, street scenes, em I suppose these aren't strictly landscapes. They are sort of, this is only a couple, there are a whole series of beaches. . .Now living in a city as well it's quite difficult to sort of paint landscape, because its something unknown to you and you don't really, you're not really familiar with it."*[138]

In this exchange it is obvious that Carvalho excludes the urban when defining landscape, this is interesting in recovering the women's own theorisation around landscape and the rural. For other women there is a more formal, nationalistic definition of the word 'landscape'; the word ***Matabhumi*** was used in the session with the AWRC, by some women. This word is a direct translation of ***Motherland***, but in vernacular use has politically nationalistic connotations, especially when used by Hindu nationalists. It was very difficult for me to translate terms exactly as they are expressed because in vernacular use the meanings to words shift in meaning and emphasis. However, using a different translator for each language spoken, would have involved using at least 4 translators at any one time. Using a transcriber for each language would also have been a logistical problem, in addition to the loss of consistency in the transcribing process.

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[137] Transcript E, page 12, ibid.

[138] (1-46-54; G2C; MC)

The definition of visual culture within the thesis has been addressed in the context of memory and identity politics, this chapter has taken these arguments to the heart of fine art production. Diasporic memory in the forms of **body-memory** (sensory), **testimony** and **re-memory** have been inscribed in the formal medium of fine art painting. These memories 'presence' the experience of post-colonial migration in the sphere of art history, and its effects on identity and belonging within the U.K. for South Asians. The 'presencing' of these memories, in this project, has assisted the interrogation of the formal genre of landscape. The research project ensured that non-elitist landscape perspectives (represented in the women's contributions) were/are given a platform within formal networks of art exhibitions and art history. Their memories and projected landscape ideals are materialised and recorded in the canvases. Carvalho's project is subversive in its political rupture of parochial and nationalistic landscape ideology; instead landscape becomes an inclusionary, and expansive medium. Identity is centred in the 'landscapes of home'. The centring of self in an idealised landscape gives the power of perspective, overview and ownership to the subject; it is no longer a genre of objectification and disempowerment of subjects; the post-colonial gaze of the women, is empowered. The women's perspectives incorporate lost landscapes, nostalgic pasts, and their biographical histories. These images are inscribed with the strength of their diversity. Complex, multiple connections to landscape are possible within Carvalho's frame; it is beyond reductive identity politics of nationalism.

The landscapes that have been described are revered. The reverencing through memorialisation increases with distance and time. The ecologies of these places are figured equally with the value of them as childhood or biographical places of belonging. The women recall the scent of jasmine, the shade of the tamarind tree, the aesthetics of nature in the South, and the feel of the sun high in the sky with reverence. These textures become icons, metaphors for the whole place. These are not separate from the women's identity as figured in Britain; it is a relational self-definition. Their Englishness is defined in relation to these 'other' landscapes reflecting the 'doubleness' of everyday living, at the same time as displaying the complexities of belonging as it manifests all their relationships – temporally and spatially.

The ownership that the women feel towards these imaginary and real territories are extended to their ownership of the prints of these imagined landscapes of home also. The places of belonging, fixed in the form of a visual image, have since been placed in the women's homes, giving the process of enquiry a circularity. These become part of the visual cultures, which are inscribed in the women's homes. These are images of memories, memories of memories, conflations of continents and sensory experiences, all contained as part of a dynamic archive of diasporic journeys situated within their homes in England.

CHAPTER 7 – Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

The thesis has been a long journey through the different processes involved in the geographies of diasporic identification, the spatial and temporal scales of which have included global, regional and intimate geographies of being, belonging and remembering. The connections between these points of movement and settlement have been framed through cultural dialogues and have been explored by examining expressive cultural exchanges within the South Asian diasporic network. These connections are both productive and dynamic but have remained constant in the figuring of identities formed as a result of migration and disruption from geographically bounded notions of identity. My concluding chapter summarises the research findings in a reflective analysis of the thesis approach and my research in practice.

My aim was to ground my theorisation of cultural identity without fixing or essentialising the subjects of my research, or the cultural dialogues that they engage with. Landscape, race and memory have been productive theoretical tools of research. Women who have experienced diasporic migration have been the source of the material that I have analysed to interrogate the value of culture as a means of investigating cultural geographies of identification. This final chapter draws together the central findings of the thesis, including an appraisal of my methodological approach. *Iconographies of Diaspora* have proven to be tangible and imbued in the expressive cultures of the South Asian diaspora, I have used these to ground my conclusions.

7.1.1 Grounding Identity

This thesis has been an articulation of diasporic positioning through the materials of culture. Landscape, race and memory have been the theoretical tools employed to understand diasporic identity through the textures of a lived experience. This lived experience operates at a distance from the ideologies of national landscapes but not separately from their power and presence in everyday culture. In the thesis, I have moved away from researching the framed iconographies of high art. Instead, connections with landscapes have been figured on the scale of intimate textures, memorialised environments and aestheticised environmental connections. This could be defined as an *ecological materialism* that figures 'landscape' as a potent 'way of seeing' the environments of lived experience, as landscapes connect with our political definitions of ourselves. We frame the environment through our experience of it but, most importantly, through our cultural definitions and exchanges with it. Our positioning within environment fixes our perspective which is defined and figured by our political identity. Gender and race have been privileged in this thesis because of the way that they affect engagement with landscape, place and environment. Asian women in West London have been studied as a group with a particular experience of post-colonial migration. This migration – sometimes forced migration – from East Africa and the Indian Sub-continent allows for figuring migration as a rupture from national landscape ideologies. The investigation of the South Asian diaspora's social, cultural and political positioning within the structures of citizenship in Britain is fertile new ground for landscape research, and productive for the theorisation of identity, culture and environmental connectivity.

In the theoretical review in Chapter 2, I considered the debates within landscape research and privileged the cultural materialist approach to landscape research. Cultural materialism within geography has defined landscape as a political ideology which is demonstrated through representations of landscapes in high art media. These theorisations figure landscape as critical to the fixing of cultural dialogues about national identity and belonging. This is linked to the humanistic debates centred on notions of landscape as home, and *dwelling*. These concepts allow for an intimate notion of landscape that is not a pedestrian relationship, but a Romantic vernacular. The location of landscapes of dwelling as something intimate and tangible allow for an inclusionary geography. They are tangible in their positioning in the everyday environment which makes their appropriation universally possible. The issue of racial exclusion and environmental appropriation of space were then considered as Chapter 2 engaged with culture as a mechanism for identification. Memory and culture are linked as mutually constitutive; without memory there is no cultural 'tradition', and without culture there is no dynamic measurement, or expressive device for the purposes of remembering roots – biological or material.

Chapter 3 detailed the research design which grounded the research in individual's experiences in their daily lives. The design of the research was shaped by the principle of triangulation. The research methodology had three strands. This has enabled the means of mapping the geography of the 'triadic' relationship experienced by diasporic groups (Safran

1991; Brah 1996). The triangulation of the methodology also attempted to ensure 'theoretical adequacy' (May 1996), to be discussed in 7.2. The grounding of the research in lived experiences and oral testimony was built into the research, resulting in the use of in-depth group discussion with Asian women. I am committed to collaborative research. Therefore, the choice of using community centres as a research base and the recruitment of an artist were both an attempts to re-ground theorisation through real social landscapes. The collaboration with the artist, Melanie Carvalho provided the means to examine both the production and consumption of visual culture, within the confines of a PhD thesis. The analysis of visual culture and a participant profile combined, gives context to cultural networks of South Asian migration as they operate in creating 'imagined communities' on a number of social, cultural and geographical scales. The triangulation of methods served to shape the structure of the thesis as each session defines the subject of each of the three substantive chapters (4, 5, and 6).

Chapter 4 discussed results of the biographical mapping session, recovering bio-geographies of South Asian migration to the U.K..The analysis of these migration routes was made in context of political geographies of colonial rule in India and East Africa. The women's journeys were charted as gendered and racialised geographies of movement. Landscape, memory and race are figured through their actual physical experience of geographical mobility. These diasporic journeys are fixed through actual co-ordinates of travel and settlement. These routes are framed by the women's racialised and gendered life-worlds.

Chapter 5 grounded my theorisation of the role of visual culture in processes of identification, by consolidating connections with places of belonging. These are places of identification, stored or refracted through visual cultures in the home. In the chapter, I analysed the women's own theorisations of the role and nature of visual cultures in the home, concluding that domestic cultures are a dynamic store of refracted iconographies of identitification.

Finally, Chapter 6 addressed questions of cultural practitioners' positioning in engagements with diasporic belonging, this was addressed through conducting a collaborative project, involving the participants in creative practice themselves. This figures the cultural producer as an important component in the understanding of diasporic identity. I argued in Chapter 6 that the practitioners' positionality within British culture has a specific political and social meaning. They are consciously engaged with questions of visual culture and creating expressive cultures. The active creation of visual culture enables me to interrogate specifically the politics of production in relation to biographical detail. My collaboration with Melanie Carvalho offered a unique opportunity for me to locate my concerns with landscape, memory and race at the point of women's imagined geographies of belonging. The materials produced from this project constitute an archive of the connective biogeographies of belonging, of the women and the artist simultaneously. In the section **7.2** below I will evaluate the methodological orientation and practice of grounded ethnographic research.

7.2 Methodological Conclusions

7.2.1 Grounding Positionality

The methodology was designed deliberately to ensure that the women themselves – their voices, mental maps and cultural connections were elevated and, most importantly, recorded. The methodology has been one of enabling the development of grounded theory as opposed to simply evaluating and researching the women's positioning within particular essentialist models of ethnicity and cultural studies. The research was designed to be empowering and ethical in its practice. Through setting up reflexive and discursive in-depth groups, I not only drew out the women's personal thoughts but also their processes of self-theorisation. By inscribing these knowledges and their words in academic writing, I have engaged in the political project of recovering occluded geographical knowledges and marginalised voices. I have not limited the women's identities to classic anthropological fixing of cultural identity through cultural materials but have attempted to inscribe the cultural dialogue as it is made meaningful *in situ*. The site of home, the site of the racialised body and the voice of the triply oppressed subject, are *presenced* in the material of the analysis. These women's voices resonate with political, social and cultural theorisations about their 'ways of seeing' their environment. They chose their artefacts of signification, and scrutinised their meanings as a social and cultural group. The joint discussions are a co-analysis of each other's research contributions. The *ground* of the research is created by the women who participated in the research: they mapped their biographies in the first session; they chose visual and material cultures in session two; and finally they drew and wrote through their imagined 'landscapes of home'. My action of giving the women control in defining the source materials of their identification does not diminish the value of my skills as researcher. Rather, the experience enhanced the skills that I have, and enriched the research material. I trusted the women to express their ontological engagements through the process of research. They, in turn, gained trust in my ethics and motives, which enhanced the analysis further.

This raises the issue of positionality. Many colleagues have asked me *"could anyone else have done this research?"*. I have always wanted to respond with *"Yes, of course."* But as the months have passed, I have found it harder to confirm this. Firstly, I want to express my reasons for wanting to say *"yes"*. The reason is an issue of politics. By saying *"yes"*, I would extend, in theory, the possibilities of all researchers conducting research (within the appropriate ethical boundaries). By saying *"No, only I could have conducted this research"*, I believed that I would fall into the trap of having to define the research as a *situated* research methodology.

This methodology is not about the personal subjectivities of individuals but about looking out from individual's lives, with their political perspective of the world, to theorise their tools of identification. These tools of identification are namely landscape, visual culture and migration. Thinking about this answer more closely, I have come to the conclusion that the specificity of my identity, skills, and personality all combine to make creative, successfully executed, research methodology. This is not to say that I have unique skills but that the women responded because of what they considered grounds for giving me their trust, reciprocity and ideas. My 'Asianess' gave me access to the AWRC and Sangat centres and my work experience in social welfare allowed me the communication skills and vocabulary that was necessary to secure trust with these gatekeepers. The women responded to my language skills, age and racial identity. They considered me as 'insider' because I made clear my political project of inscribing 'Asian' migratory histories in academic work. Their solidarity was evident in their body language, their encouragement and enthusiasm. The research became a collaboration, a joint investment between many parties – the women, the centres, the artist and myself, the researcher. The depth and richness of the collaboration has been amply deconstructed, I believe, in the materials analysed in Chapters 4 and 5. Each party involved in the research process has received recognition, kudos and gained materially. As a bonus, some of us had experienced personal empowerment and growth but this is something that I cannot confirm through empirical evidence.

The evaluation of my methodological approach has highlighted the need for future research to critique qualitative methodologies used to research ethnic communities and women in Britain. My concern is that there is a need to evaluate the ethics of these methodologies, their effectiveness and relationships between theory, method and analytical strategies. These would extend debates about the new generation of 'hybrid' methods emerging from cross-disciplinary research. There are also theoretical and analytical issues arising from multi-lingual research, especially when conducted with ethnic minority groups. Little has been published on the impacts of qualitative research on subjects who suffer social exclusion and marginalisation. This thesis has been a starting point of evaluating the ethics and politics of these research practices.

7.2.2 The politics and ethics of collaboration.

I would like to take the opportunity here to discuss, in a little more detail my conclusions about working with the artist, Melanie Carvalho, in the 'landscapes of home' project. The design of the methodology used in this third session was both productive and problematic. The co-ordination between three sets of interests – the women's, Carvalho's and my own, proved difficult logistically, professionally and intellectually. Carvalho's project was very compatible with my own, and we worked extremely well together. However there was conflict in terms of our trust in each-others ethics and aims. The collaboration was successful, both sides successfully attained our objectives. I would, however, recommend that in any similar project a legal contract be drawn up in order to make clear intellectual rights and copyright on images. This professional tension did not hinder the relationship with the women who participated but did create obstacles to smooth negotiations. In this project I was fortunate in being able to communicate and build up trust with the artist and we worked towards developing the partnership. After pursuing legal advice, I have learnt that in any collaboration of this type between artists and galleries or commissioners of art exhibitions (such as local authorities and lottery funded community projects), it is prudent for both sides to have legal protection of intellectual property rights, rights of reproduction and clarification of the ownership of the final art works.

In this collaboration there were several parties with interests of ownership, reproduction and display. The women themselves produced their descriptions from which the paintings were made. In this research, they consented to take part in Melanie Carvaho's project, thereby conceding claims of ownership. The final artworks were produced on materials paid for by the artist. However, all exhibition costs, publicity costs, and reproduction costs (for the women's prints) were met by UCL. At what point do UCL interests stop and the researcher's (mine own) or the artist's begin? There were also ethical concerns, in terms of ownership. At some points I felt that the women themselves may have felt exploited as their reactions to the images were very emotional, and thus some women wanted to buy the paintings. Was it right for them to have to pay a market rate? These questions were also of concern to the artist and we discussed them honestly. We concluded that the women had ownership of the prints of the originals but that the paintings themselves were the intellectual and material property of the artist, rights of which were secured through her funding contract from the London Arts Board. The reproduction of the paintings in the thesis and published articles has been approved by Melanie, and I am indebted to her for her kind permission to reproduce them here and for providing slides and prints of all the paintings and descriptions.

7.3 Key elements to my grounded theorising

7.3.1 Theorising visual culture

Visual culture is figured as productive and integral to cultures of identification, for the South Asian diaspora. In *The Black Atlantic*, Gilroy (1993b) examines the process of a metonymical slave memory resonating in the sounds of a Black culture – Black musical production. Within this thesis I have sought to examine the role of visual cultures in resonating biographical and spatial connections of the South Asian diaspora. I have figured visual cultures as having metonymical and refractive qualities, not of an essential race memory but a memory of environmental enfranchisement. The operation of the metonymical qualities of the visual cultures within the diaspora was the route into the refraction of landscapes of memory. I believe that these landscapes are part of the process of consolidating narratives of national identity and biographical ecologies. There is a logic of the visual which allows for a fixing of an image not necessarily locked in time. The aesthetics can be a collage of a series of different sensory memories figured as a place. This is a place that can be a collage of temporal moments. The focus on the visual cultures in the home has been a deliberate investigation into the everyday, local, vernacular engagements with cultures of identification which are situated away from the usually dominant cultures of national identity.

This investigation has led to a theorising of the multisensory nature of visual cultures and the complexity of visual cultures that are materially important objects as well as visually significant. The culture of Bollywood film on video in the home for some women is as much about the videotape itself as the film. The cassette has a biography which is just as important as the film it contains. The physical presence of the cassette in the home serves as a metonym for the film but also for the moment it was bought or given. For one woman in the study, a video cassette which was a gift from her father was the only thing that she still had. The cassette holds resonances of her relationship with him as well as the meaning of the film itself. The use of visual cultures as a means of mapping these spatial resonances has been two-fold. Firstly, it uncovered the role of visual cultures and the processes of identification for the South Asian diaspora. Secondly, within the collaboration with the artist, Melanie Carvalho, the women engaged in a creative process which revealed their idealised visual landscapes which were significant illustrations of their mental visualisations of landscapes of home. Home has been a constant within the research, as it offers a sense of security and belonging. Asking the women to define their ideal landscapes of *home* – as opposed to a specific place or geography – allowed for an approach whereby the women were free to imagine any landscape. These landscapes of home were intended to draw out relations with everyday, domestic visualisations of environments that were not limited to elite cultures of landscape such as 'nation'. The conceptualisation of landscapes of belonging as *home* allows them to be mobile and fluid. This is in contrast to singular, bounded and immobile notions of citizenship, and national identity.

7.3.2 Landscapes and signification in the everyday

Landscape has been figured within the thesis as a theoretical tool defined to include the landscapes of the everyday, the local ecological and post-colonial geographies. There have been multiple illustrations of the way that landscape, as an academic paradigm, has been exclusionary of these local and racial relations. The thesis, therefore, has sought to use the term in an inclusionary way through illustrating that landscape is figured in the day-to-day lives of the South Asian diasporic group. Looking at everyday relations allows for a re-theorising of the positioning that diasporic groups have in relationship to landscapes that are nationalistic icons and the more intimate landscapes of home, both in England and abroad. The everyday experiences of landscape that these women have is a cultural record of their bio-geographical maps of location and ecological and sensory memories that they hold of place. Landscape in the everyday is thus theorised as a means of storing and restoring co-ordinates of identity, a tool of *placing* in relation to, as well as a means to define a utopian home which counteracts a constant alienation from the ecological, cultural, social and political structures of England.

Landscapes refracted in the domestic cultures of the women not only become a mental store of places visited and places recalled through memories of memories but also signify a moral aesthetic. These memorialised landscapes of their imagination become cultural records in a way that a formal history cannot be. These moments of recall are formalised, layering the experience of migration, relocation and dislocation, but remembered in the context of the social and cultural values that are integral to those places recalled. These could be considered cultural and racialised historical geographies.

The recovery of this omitted history has been embedded in the thesis through methodological and theoretical premises. The recorded oral histories and sensory memories form a body of knowledge that is a record of the influence of migration on the women and their configuration of their own identities. These are figured within ecological connections, cultural practices and their more direct effect on the social and cultural geographies of the places in which they have lived. In the experience of East African Asians, their presence in East Africa was crucial to the changes that the colonial rulers planned for the social and economic landscape of the territories of these countries. East African Asians cleared land and through their labour formed the landscape of British East Africa. This sense of enfranchised citizenry was not the experience of a complete freedom to appropriate the whole landscape, but was an extensive citizenry that was allowed through the practice of racial hierarchies which favoured the Asian above the African.

This positioning has shifted in their new post-1970s British citizenship. The variations and differences in South Asian cultural practices and their domestic cultures of identification that have evolved and are articulated in Britain today, are reflective of these subtle and complex bio-geographical triangulations, at each node of settlement. My research has tried to demonstrate that differences exist and continue to shape the "structures of feeling" that are expressed through visual and material cultures in the homes of South Asians today. Such cultural dialogues are not fixed discourses shaped by racial type or ethnicity, but are shifting and continually being informed by a global network of technological media and trade. The women's biographies have been dynamically linked to the specificities of the visual and material cultures in their home. This is the matter of connection and reconnection, allowing the construction and re-construction of their identities. These I have figured as triangulations that the women make using biographical references and physical locatedness. The process of triangulation is a continuous one which has been described in and is reflected throughout the three empirical chapters in the women's own biographies, their metonymical triggers in the home, and their recorded idealised landscapes of home.

Landscape, for the artist Melanie Carvalho, becomes the only place where memory, fantasy and a lived experience can be recorded and be articulated visually. The canvas is the site of layering the various points of triangulation. These are not necessarily real co-ordinates but crucial ones which inform the process of self-location. These are cultural, historical and aestheticised landscapes which record versions of the past and projections of ethnicity. The specificities of the body in different moments and places, the discordancies and those easy moments of belonging are reflected together through presence and absence. The aestheticisation of these figurings further allow for an understanding of the situation from which the images are created. Aesthetics become an essential part of the bio-geographical mappings on the canvas. The depictions of earth, land, nature and ecology all contribute to an understanding of the artist's positionality. In the same way, the women in the research use these resonances of places, and materials of the home which trigger them, as a means with which to connect to places which were home or could be home. Their connections with places through these triggers of identification allow for a self conscious engagement with landscape which is a fitting method of embedding memories, sensory experiences and ecological textures to inform their decisions about their social and cultural identity. The image of a place, a landscape, offers a "look back" with all the richness of photographic memories, sensory memories and imagined utopias. This is an historicized account, which fixes but is flexible. It not only allows for a relational identity but also allows for temporal flux in a way that an elitist national identity does not. This is a way of identifying and belonging without exclusion. Migrants are always outside or marginal to national stories and these women, in particular, demonstrate the ways that they deal with multiple residencies, multiple citizenships and dis-enfranchisement.

In terms of a future research project I would like to extend this thesis enquiry to focus on Asian men. I would like to examine the extent to which the domestic environment, and material cultures are a relevant store of cultural connections with landscapes, ecologies and local places of "home" (Middleton, 1992). I would wish to compare relationships of landscape, memory and diaspora as it is understood in the daily lives of Asian men. In particular I would like to investigate men's role usually as the first family members to migrate and its influence on their relationships with different places of settlement. These men were the members of the Asian community who arrived first, cleared land in British East Africa and whose labour physically re-shaped the economy, culture and landscapes of their settlement (Brah, 1996). They were engaged in the masculinist exercise of clearing the "frontier", fashioning an economic landscape of tea, coffee, and arable plantations in East Africa. To what extent did their envisioning of the new landscapes of East Africa reflect a mixed landscape ideal which incorporated their memories of Indian landscape? Men, who settled and forged new industries, did much to shape new ecological patterns as well as economic structures in East Africa. Their practices of planting and engagement with these new landscapes and ecologies are a necessary point of research in the larger project of the recovery of South Asian migratory history. I would also look at the way that these cultures of landscape are reflected in the men's engagement with visual culture (Kirkham, 1994; Appadurai 1997).

7.3.3 Memory and geographies of 'being'

Memory and its construction is considered as a process throughout the thesis. It is significant for the South Asian diasporic group in that it becomes the sole location of a historical record. From Toni Morrison's (1990) theorisation of memory in relation to race, I have considered the premise that memory operates to resonate other memories of other experiences - sometimes from family members – but most importantly from dialogues of oppression and marginality. Memory, oppression and gender are fused for Morrison as a necessary means of historical record. Its presence acts as a fixer of identity in the everyday. Memory resonates through the material and visual cultures that the women in the study have in their homes. They become a physical archive of migration but, most importantly, form a set of metonymical devices which trigger memories of other places. The two groups involved in the study had very different socio-economic backgrounds. The Sangat group reflected on moments and places more as cultural tourists than the AWRC group. The Sangat women's descriptions reflected quite classic landscapes and iconographic memories of places. One examples the way that the Sangat group have intimate knowledges of gardening, and cultivating domestic kitchen gardens. These are framed and picturesque versions of past domestic landscapes. The women in the group AWRC, recall landscapes that offer a less picturesque tint but are more socially real. They connect with the land through their experience of toil and labour in the farms or as workers in quarries. These women have lived in quite harsh conditions where they have had to carry water from the well or rivers. Also, as women, they have carried the brunt of the heavier burden of rural gender values. They have had less control over their life decisions or even their households than the Sangat group. The way that their memories resonate a different framing of the past subtlety reflects these differences. The landscapes are more biographical and have a feel of immediacy compared with the Sangat groups more 'picture postcard' iconography. However, memories, for both groups continue to be relational to their position here in England. The past is not only a historical archive but also a place of idealisation and fantasy. The struggles and race divisions of East Africa, the communalism of India and the injustice of the rural caste system are toned down in favour of the scents of fruits and flowers, the feel of the sea breezes and the warmth of the night air. Memories of childhood are also reflections of the doubleness of memory as nostalgia merges with real experiences. The romanticisation of childhood is juxtaposed with feelings of security, territory and a fixed sense of belonging.

Migration and race figure in spatial and temporal relations significantly for these women. The reasons for their migration are racial, fixed by the racial politics of colonialism. The spatial and temporal dimensions to their ethnic positioning within different nations are in flux. The moments are actual but the differences in economic development and their positioning within the racial hierarchy shifts in each mode of migration. From Indian Sub-continent, to the East African "sandwich", to post-colonial immigrant, they provide different space-time moments (Harvey 1990). Many Indians left villages that had no in-house water and sanitation to live in East-Africa where they were considerably wealthier compared to their African counterparts. The Africans were their domestic servants in Kenya, living on less than 5 percent of the household income. From this situation the group has moved to the U.K. where they are dependent on social welfare and housing benefit, and experience racial prejudice. In their new places of residence at each moment of immigration their bodies signify "other" space-time moments. On arrival in the U.K., the Asian women were subjected to virginity testing. They were an incoming flow from a mythologised Eastern other. These experiences have begun to be uncovered through the women's narratives and descriptions. Shifting space-time experiences have enriched the cultural archives that these women's stories represent. It has been impossible, however, to explore comprehensively these experiences within this limited thesis – it is an area for further research.

7.3.4 Cultures of dialogue, critical identities

The women in this thesis have been defined as marginalised voices within society. This has resulted in my investigation being situated within the domestic sphere, within the realms of culture. Here, are the tools of the everyday that signify, define and produce cultures of dialogue about race identity. It is quite often the case that culture forms the basis of political self-definition and a basis for the challenge of prejudicial practice. Black artists particularly have demonstrated their aptitude for engaging head-on with race politics in Britain through their practice. These expressive cultures are operative on different contexts of high art and popular culture. These boundaries, however, are fragmented and brittle as much work on *Visual Culture in Britain* (Holt and Barlow 2000) has demonstrated. The time has come to re-theorise the medium of visual culture and its pervasive character, operative beyond traditional academic definitions. Race, memory and landscape resonate within the visual and material cultures investigated within the thesis. What I hope to have uncovered are the socio-cultural processes that are at work in the everyday, material lives of this diasporic group. Their geographies of migration have been situated in cultural signification and material memorialisation. Both of these refractions have been defined within a visual grammar of "seeing". A diasporic occularity has been mapped, showing journeys and their remembered multisensory dimensions. The aesthetics of these memories, in the context of diasporic groups, signify a different biome; the women's ecological relationships and their sensory memories all evidence their biogeographies. However, these memories and connections are not one and the same. The only thing that holds them together is the experience of a journey – the diasporic route to the U.K. Their journey is not of a singular racial migration as in Gilroy's thesis on the African diasapora (1993b), but of a singularly classified group who had rights of citizenship to the U.K. and who also migrated to take these up in the 1970s. These Asians are not of a singular biological lineage or of a singular post-colonial migratory route but have been classified as a singular ethnic type under the British Empire. This has the effect of the group having resonances and practices that are about a sense of "Indianess" but these are not part of an essential racial identity. These practices and resonances within their material and visual "structures of feeling"/cultures are joined through the experience of a diasporic connectedness, consolidated through a shared experience of a migratory journey. This journey is figured through experiences of arrival and of looking back. As Shazia says, *"We are neither here nor there"*. The thesis has been a process of mapping this sense of identity and the role of visual cultures in fixing identity in relation to various moments and places in the women's landscapes of home. It has also been a process of mapping the heterogeneity within the South Asian diaspora which is too often figured as a singular ethnicity within social science discourse.

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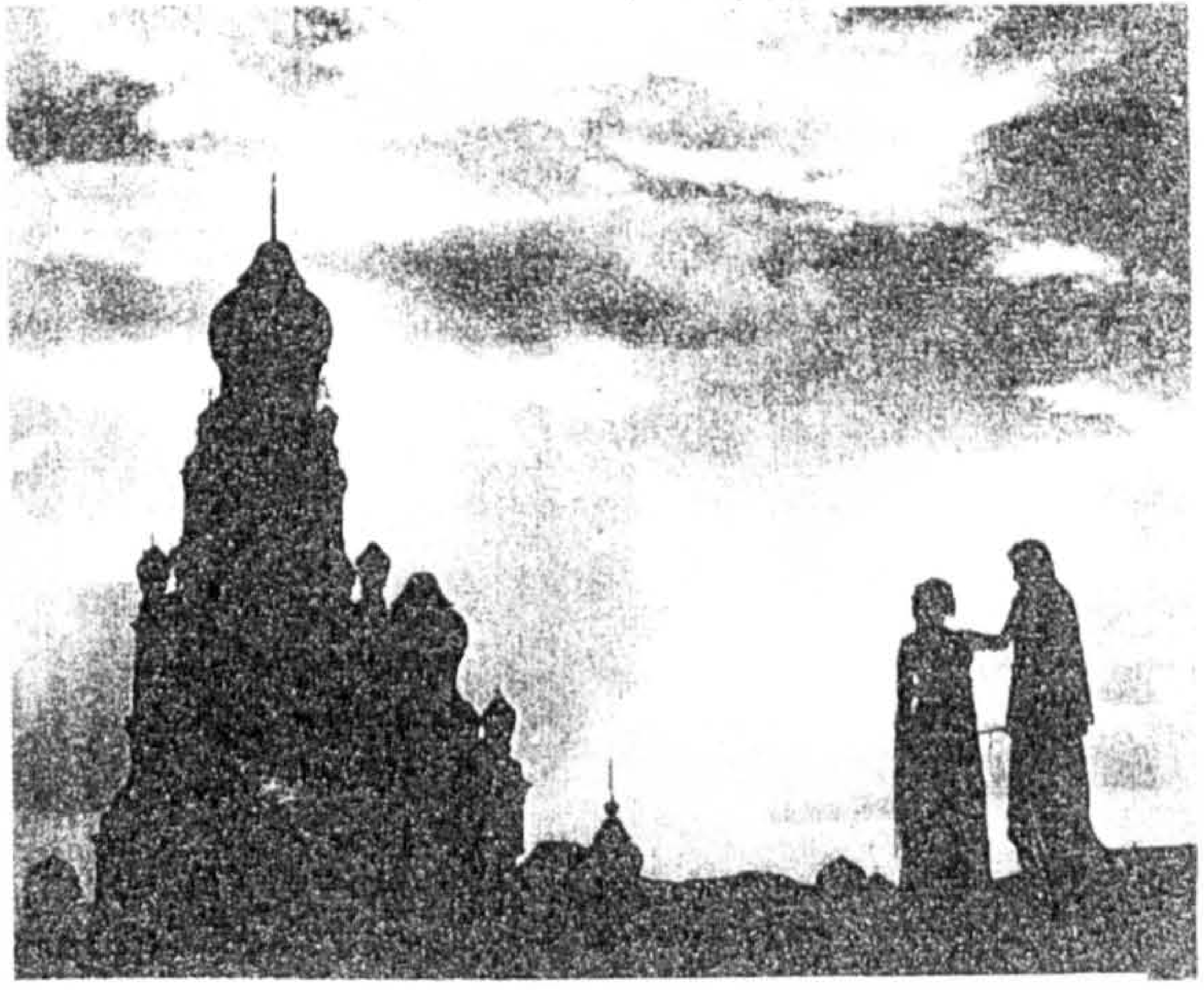
APPENDIX 1 – Recruitment Posters for Group Sessions

LANDSCAPES OF "HOME"

Landscapes of "home" are on satellite t.v., Bollywood films, and photographs, are a part of everyday culture. Come and join in a discussion group about landscapes of the past, present or future that remind you of "home". These are WOMEN ONLY discussions at the Asian Women's Resource Centre, in Harlesden , starting Tuesday 14th September at noon. Lunch and travel costs (maximum £2:50) will be provided.



"जन्मभूमि"के भू-दृश्य

'अपनी जन्मभूमि' के भू-दृश्य, स्टैलाईट टी.वी., बॉलीवुड की फिल्मों और तस्वीरों में सांस्कृतिक दिनचर्या का एक हिस्सा हैं । आईए और "अपनी जन्मभूमि" के भू-दृश्य के अतीत, वर्तमान व भविष्य के बारे में हो रहे विचार-विमर्श में भाग लीजिए जो आपको घर की याद दिलाऐंगें । यह गोष्ठी जो केवल महिलाओं के लिए है, जो एशियन वूमेन रिसौंस सेंटर, हारलसडन (Harlsden) में 14 सितम्बर की दोपहर में लगाई जाएगी । दोपहर का भोजन (लंच) और यात्रा की कीमत की अदायगी (अधिकतम £2.50) भी की जाएगी ।

Tuesday September 14th at 12 NOON

VENUE : ASIAN WOMENS RESOURCE CENTRE
108 CRAVEN PARK ROAD
HARLESDEN. NW 10.

TRANSPORT : ⊖ Harlesden, or Willesden junction on the Bakerloo line
Buses: 266, 268, 18

ਘਰ ਦ ਧਰਤ-ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼

''ਘਰ''ਦੇ ਧਰਤ-ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ ਸੈਟੇਲਾਈਟ ਟੀ ਵੀ, ਬਾਲੀਵੁਡ ਫਿਲਮਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਤਸਵੀਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਹਰ ਰੋਜ ਦੇ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਅੰਗ ਹਨ। ਤੁਸੀਂ ਵੀ ਆਵੋ ਅਤੇ ਇਕ ਗਰੁੱਪ ਵਾਰਤਾਲਾਪ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਗ ਲਵੋ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੀਤ, ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਭਵਿਖ ਦੇ ਧਰਤ-ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਗਲਬਾਤ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ ਜਿਹੜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਘਰ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਦਿਵਾਉਂਦੇ ਹੋਣ । ਇਹ ਵਾਰਤਾਲਾਪ **ਸਿਰਫ ਔਰਤਾਂ ਲਈ** ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਏਸ਼ੀਅਨ ਵੀਮੈਨ ਰੀਸੋਰਸ ਸੈਂਟਰ ਹਾਰਲੇਸਡਨ (HARLESDEN) ਵਿਖੇ ਮੰਗਲਵਾਰ 14 ਸਤੰਬਰ ਨੂੰ ਦੁਪਹਿਰ ਵੇਲੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ । ਦੁਪਹਿਰ ਦਾ ਖਾਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਫਰ ਦਾ ਖਰਚ (ਅਧਿਕਤਮ £ 2 : 50) ਦਿਤਾ ਜਾਏਗਾ ।

માતૃ ભુમીના કુદરતનુ દ્રશ્ય.

આપણા માતૃ ભુમીના ફોટા અને નકશાઓ આપણને ટી.વી અથવા બોલીવુડ ફિલ્મામાં જોવા મળે છે. આ વિષય ઉપર વાતચીત માટે આપ બધાને મારા આમંત્રણ છે. અને આપણે પહેલા, અત્યાર અને ભવિષ્યકાળ ના કુદરતનુ દ્રશ્યની વાત-ચીત કરીશુ. આ મુલાકાત ફક્ત સ્ત્રીઓ માટે જ છે. આ મુલાકાતો 'એશીઅન વિમિન્સ રિસોર્સ સેન્ટર', હાર્લેસ્ડનમા સેપ્ટેમ્બરની ૧૪ તારીખે બાર વાગે શરૂ થશે. (Asian Women's Resource Centre, Tues 14 Sept) ભોજન બિલામા આવશે અને અઢી પાઉન્ડ સુધી ભાડાના પૈસા આપવામા આવશે.

"گھر" کے مناظر (Landscapes)

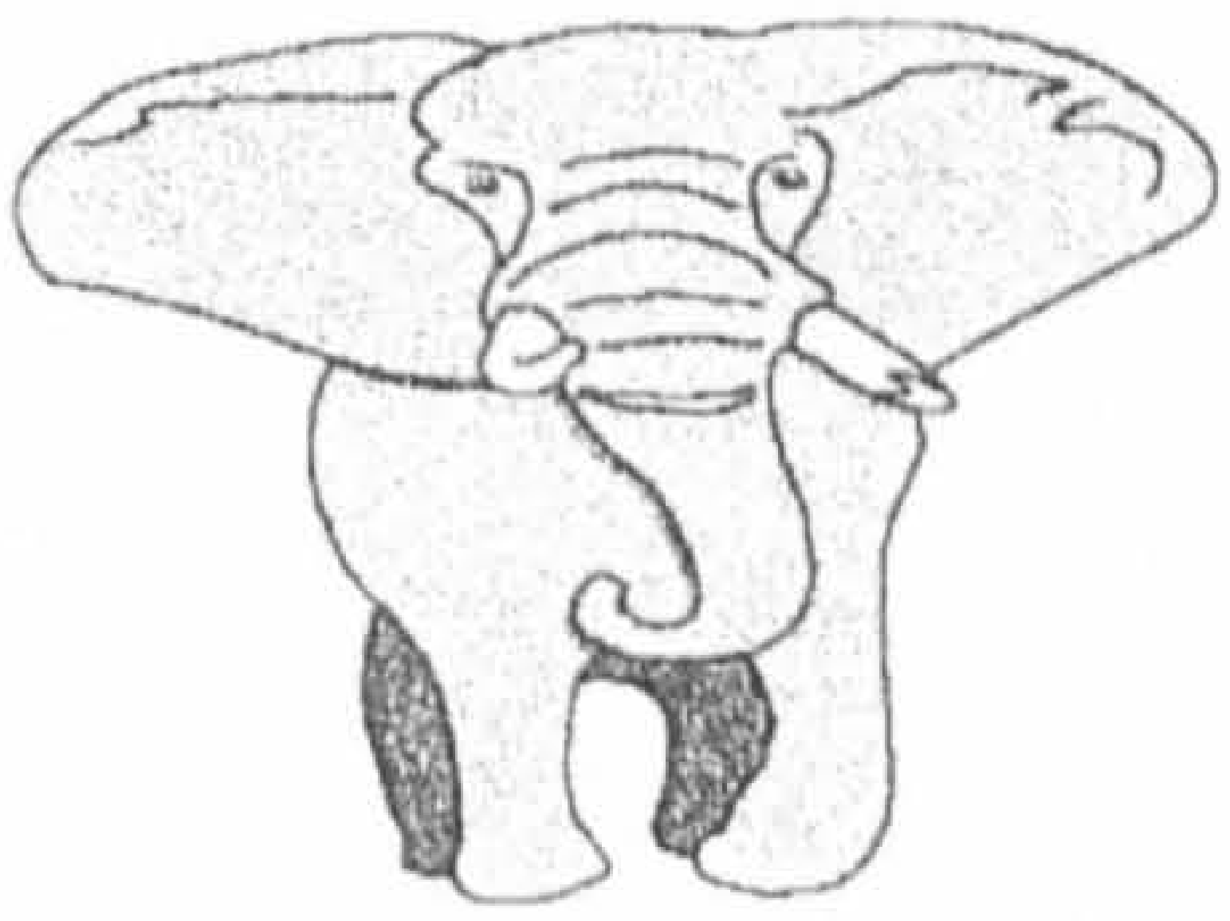
"گھر" کے مناظر سیٹلائیٹ ٹی وی پر، بولی ووڈ کی فلموں میں اور عکسی تصاویر کی صورت میں روز مرہ کی ثقافت کا ایک حصہ ہیں۔ آئیں اور بات چیت کے ایک گروپ میں شامل ہوں اور ماضی حال یا مستقبل کے گھروں کے مناظر کے بارے میں گفتگو کریں جو آپ کو "گھر" کی یاد دلاتے ہیں۔ یہ بات چیت ایشین ویمن ریسورس سنٹر ہارلزڈن (Harlesden) میں صرف خواتین کے لئے ہیں جو منگل وار 14 ستمبر دوپہر میں شروع ہوں گی۔ لنچ (دوپہر کا کھانا) اور سفر کے اخراجات (زیادہ سے زیادہ 2.50 پونڈ) مہیا کئے جائیں گے۔

Landscapes of Home

Landscapes of "Home" are on Zee T.V., Bollywood Film, and everyday photographs and objects. Come and join a discussion on places of the past, present or future which remind you of "home". These sessions will be women only sessions held in Harrow.

We require volunteers to discuss your experiences of home.
Free transport and food will be provided.

This will be part of a PHD study run by:
DIVYA TOLIA-KELLY, PhD Research Student at University College London
Contact: 0181 424 0855/ Mobile: 07930 967429
E-Mail User@tolia.softnet.co.uk



APPENDIX 2 – Landcapes of Home: Blank Schedule for Description

Describe below, in writing, or a drawing, or however you like, the landscape that best represents your idea of home.

Please return to: Flat 7, 51 Tudor Road, London E9 7SN

APPENDIX 3 – UCL Exhibition 2000 Publicity

Describe a landscape...

You are invited to a selected show of paintings by Melanie Carvalho. The paintings are the result of a collaboration between the artist, the women of the Harlesden Asian Women's Resource Centre, the women's group from the Harrow Sangat Centre and Divya Tolia-Kelly, a Ph.D researcher in Cultural Geography.

Women from the groups volunteered to answer the question set by the artist;

'Describe, in a drawing, or a piece of writing, or however you like, the landscape that represents your idea of home'

Melanie then proceeded to make a one-off landscape painting on a small ready-made canvas of each description.
The exhibition is the first time that volunteers from the group will see the paintings made from their own words or pictures.

The exhibition runs Monday 17th July through to Friday 21st July 2000 at North Cloisters, UCL, Gower Street, London WC1H

(Drinks launch Monday 4pm, all welcome)

Thanks to Divya Tolia-Kelly for organising the workshop sessions and enabling this collaboration,and to UCL for providing the exhibition space. This exhibition is part of a larger project conducted by the artist with financial support from the London Arts Board.

UCL

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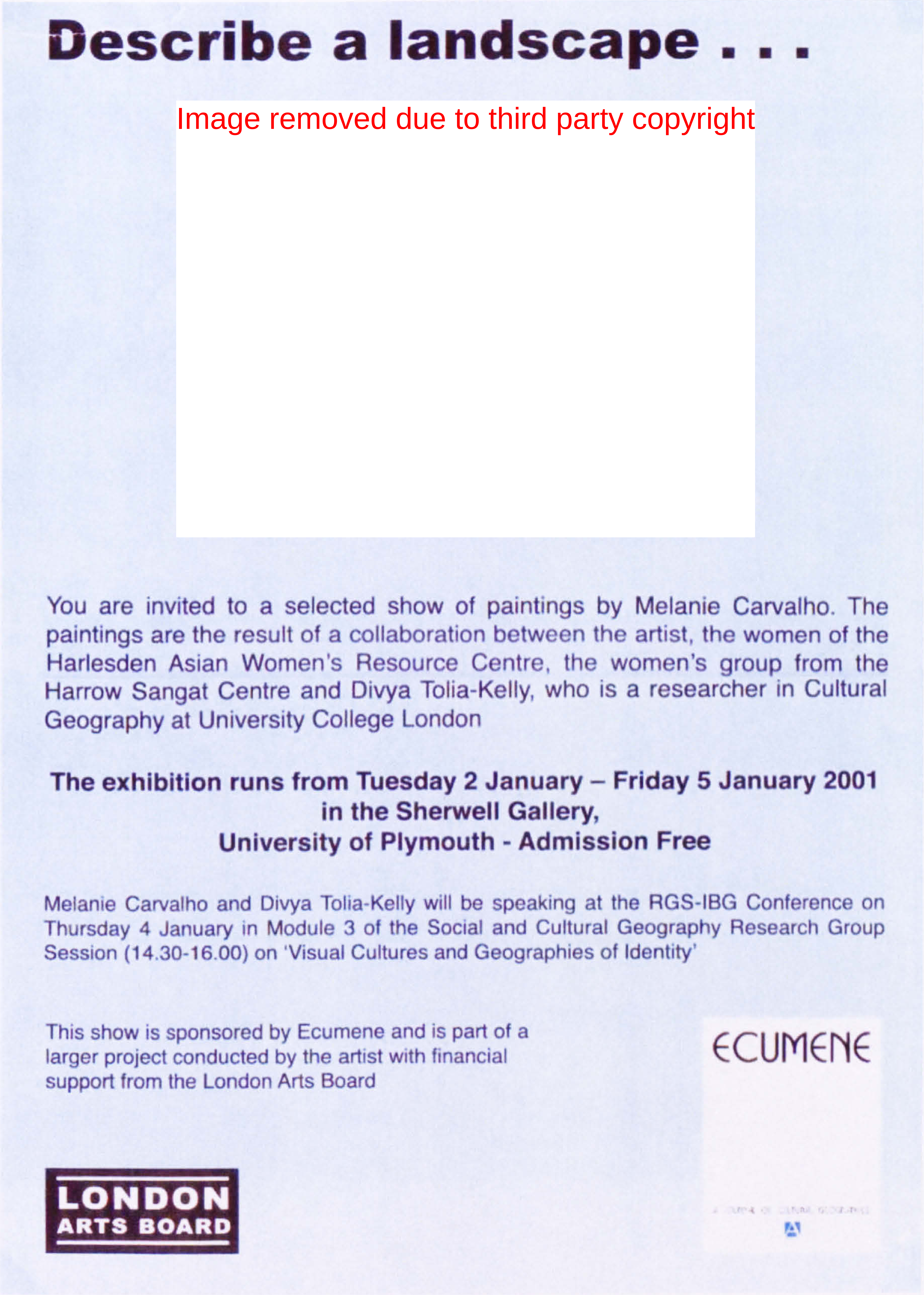
Department of Geography

APPENDIX 4 – RGS/IBG Annual Conference 2001: Exhibition Publicity



Describe a landscape . . .

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You are invited to a selected show of paintings by Melanie Carvalho. The paintings are the result of a collaboration between the artist, the women of the Harlesden Asian Women's Resource Centre, the women's group from the Harrow Sangat Centre and Divya Tolia-Kelly, who is a researcher in Cultural Geography at University College London

The exhibition runs from Tuesday 2 January – Friday 5 January 2001
in the Sherwell Gallery,
University of Plymouth - Admission Free

Melanie Carvalho and Divya Tolia-Kelly will be speaking at the RGS-IBG Conference on Thursday 4 January in Module 3 of the Social and Cultural Geography Research Group Session (14.30-16.00) on 'Visual Cultures and Geographies of Identity'

This show is sponsored by Ecumene and is part of a larger project conducted by the artist with financial support from the London Arts Board

ECUMENE

LONDON
ARTS BOARD

APPENDIX 5 – ‘Landscapes of Home’ Womens’ Descriptions and Paintings by Melanie Cavarlho

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Appendix 5.1 – Chandan (AWRC)

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Appendix 5.2 – Harsha (AWRC)

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Appendix 5.3 – Kajal (AWRC)

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Appendix 5.4 – Kanta (AWRC)

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Describe below, in writing, or a drawing, or however you like, the landscape that best represents your idea of **home**.

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Appendix 5.5 – Kokila (AWRC)

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Appendix 5.6 – Puja (AWRC)

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Appendix 5.7 – Sarabjit (AWRC)

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Appendix 5.8 – Shilpa (AWRC)

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Describe below, in writing, or a drawing, or however you like, the landscape that best represents your idea of **home**.

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Appendix 5.9 – Zubeida (AWRC)

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Describe below, in writing, or a drawing, or however you like, the landscape that best represents your idea of **home**.

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Appendix 5.10 – Hansa (Sangat)

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Appendix 5.11 – Lalita (Sangat)

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Appendix 5.12 – Manjula (Sangat)

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Appendix 5.13 – Neela (Sangat)

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Appendix 5.14 – Shanta (Sangat)

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Appendix 5.15 – Shazia (Sangat)

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