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Landscape, Race and Memory: Biographical mapping of the routes of British Asian landscape values

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ABSTRACT This paper examines the migration routes of British Asian women living in London. The research presented here shows that British Asians connect with a myriad of landscapes abroad including East Africa, India and Pakistan. These connections to past landscapes are mapped and considered here as valued environments of British Asian women in Britain. Through the mapping of their biographies, it is apparent that memories of other landscapes are embedded in environmental practices in Britain, therefore contribute to making the landscape in Britain inclusive and meaningful in the context of the South Asian migration. The maps of migration show the heterogeneity of landscapes experienced by the British Asian women. Memories of other lands manifest themselves in the U.K. The second section of the paper illustrates the effect of these memories on the South Asian home itself in the process of shaping diasporic geographies of belonging and being within the U.K.

KEY WORDS: South Asians, landscape, mapping, post-colonial, memory, race.

Mapping out South Asian migration

The presence of South Asians in Britain results from Britain's early colonial expansion and rule and the subsequent post-colonial migration of peoples across the colonies and to the heart of colony – Britain. Within colonial narrative, the Asians are *others* within the Empire and British national identity (Said 1978). However, when living within the heart of the metropolis (London) their presence is evidence of the multi-locatedness of Britishness, and its complex identities. Using a post-colonial lens, Britishness is not only a culture of governance in India and other colonies, but also represents the national culture of British citizenship. Britishness is a mobile nationalism rendering the experience of migrant British subjects beyond the conventional paradigmatic structures of national identity. The South Asian population attains a fluid citizenry from their geographical mobility through other national landscapes governed by Britain, during Imperial rule. British Asians have migrated, as

colonial labour and post-colonial British subjects, across several continents including Asia, Africa, Europe and North America, particularly during the 19th and 20th centuries. Through their migration and settlement in new territories, South Asians they have been simultaneously bounded into structures of various colonial nations, territories and environments. As mobile subjects within these territories they are and have been marginalized from inclusion in these various national cultures resulting in their many hybrid connections with the citizenship of many nations. The community possesses an evolving consciousness of being a “post-national” of a colony, feeling an unfixed territorial nationalism beyond legal citizenships, and the national borders of India, East Africa and England. This creates diasporic subjectivity as spatially and temporally in dynamic flux. This dynamism contrasts with the classic ‘fixing’ of racial identity to a singular territory within racial theory, dominant in the colonial period, through which post-colonial diasporic communities living in the West, have been figured in historical, political and cultural discourse.

To understand the cultural impact of migration and settlement in Britain it is important to explore the effect of this geographical mobility on British national identity and cultures of landscape. By examining British Asian contacts with landscapes and environments in the migratory journey we can consider the value of other landscapes to their sense of Britishness. Mapping out South Asian migration routes and thus their multiple citizenships is the aim of this first section. The women’s biographies ground the research in their lived experience and geographical connections with nations and landscapes. The second section considers the effect of this geographical mobility on securing aesthetic and material connecting points to other natures and landscape in the home in Britain. These include organic practices in

the home and environmental values expressed in domestic cultures. These are recognised here as aesthetic and textural links to past environments and landscapes. The maps produced here, reaffirm the necessity for cultural theorists to continue to move beyond essentialist understandings of race, that have emerged through a colonial past (Fanon 1959; Fanon 1961; Fanon 1967). Like other diasporas, British Asians do not figure as an essential race-group, they instead constitute as a political or cultural network, in different moments and in various configurations. Many writers have examined these networks, formed through global media and communication, and the possibility of global ethnoscapes (eg. Appadurai, 1996). Here, ethnicity is considered in its local context; grounded in the landscape of the homes of post-colonial migrant women.

In this research, the maps are formed through oral testimonies that have been recorded, of the experience of migration experienced by South Asian women. Embedded within these narrations are environmental connections and attachments to nation and region, and the stories situated in lived landscapes. For the women in the study, marginalised from the national landscape of Britain (Agyeman 1990; Malik 1992), *other* landscapes, and ecologies become sites of affirming individual and collective identities, and points British identity (Tolia-Kelly 2001; Tolia-Kelly 2002). These testimonies of migration are used to formulate maps of migration and descriptions which contextualise South Asian positioning within their residence in England. The inscription of these other landscapes within the cultures of the everyday enables the valued environmental relationships, and connections to lived landscapes of the past, to be recovered. In recording the variety of landscapes that British Asians have encountered in their migratory route, the maps are essential records of

identification are examined in the considering of the material cultures of gardening and the organic. As cultures which provide direct contact with territory, and soil in the home, they are important in grounding a sense of British Asianess. The role of memory in this process is important in grounding a culture of landscape as being a minds eye image of past environments.

Research Methodology

The research materials were gathered while working with groups of British Asian women in North-West London, over a period of twenty weeks. Other attempts at group work within the Asian community have failed (Burgess 1996) because of the perceived reluctance of the British Asian groups to committing to a series of sessions with researchers and a lack of trust. My history of working within the Boroughs of Harrow and Brent enabled me to recruit mixed groups of British Asian women. The decision to limit the research to women was to enable women's voices, normally marginalized within and without the British Asian community to be recorded in academic writing. Many feminist geographers have paved the way in conducting research with excluded members of society using reflexive and empowering research methods [Barbour, 1999 #3; Dwyer, 1993 #36; England, 1994 #30; Patai, 1991 #35; Rose, 1997 #58; Valentine, 1997 #38; Wilkinson, 1999 #6]. Mohammed [2001 #953] is especially eloquent on the complex positioning of the Asian researcher working with Asian women. Here, I do not claim any cultural authority, but to simply acknowledge that my positioning within the community which has allowed me access, and a sense of common ground in terms of diasporic identification. The nature of the group methods used to situate the women's geographical knowledge and values within their biographies allowed me to record intense, intimate, and emotional

connections not normally engaged with. However, there are dangers that this situatedness could create “separate”, and “essential” understandings of lives that are not linked dialectically to social systems of knowledge, power and lived experience (Harvey 1992). The in-depth group method in combination with a home interview effectively aimed to allow the women to become conscious creators of their own identification within a set of social spaces including their homes, which offered a material rather than abstract context. These contexts ensured that the transcripts formed a record of the group’s social understanding and values in situ of their homes and community groups.

The groups’ sharing of their biographical testimonies in the first stage allowed me to develop understanding of complex values, practices and codes among mixed Hindu, Muslim, Gujarati, Pakistani and Bangladeshi, groups of working class and middle-class women, with added caste differences. Within the process I remained reflexive and my own biography was not hidden. The group dynamic allowed a dynamic response to the research agenda, and thus shaped it. The second stage of research included an interview at home, led by the individual woman herself. This enabled her to talk through the importance of certain materials as triggers for environmental memories. These interviews allowed women to reflect on actual biographical landscape connections rather than abstract ideas. Specific objects and textures (visual, material, organic) held meaning through their presence in the home, and were not separate from the political, economic, and social negotiations of post-colonial identity in Britain. They were critical in enfranchising them to the new territory of citizenship (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981; Mehta and Belk 1991). The women’s focus on cultures of nature and grounding is represented in section two of this paper.

Telling tales : journeying through British Asian landscapes

The research process mapped the lives of twenty two women. The social context of the migration stories led the women to talk through each other's past lives, and the places, landscapes and natures they missed, loved or simply valued. Here are have included two biographies which reflect the stories behind the maps produced from the biography sessions in stage one. (This material forms the data for Figures 1 and 2). These biographies are the lived context for the women's current geographical relationships centred in Britain, connecting them across the globe.

Beena - Born India 1933, arrived U.K. 1990.

Beena - "The British have scattered our people across the whole globe. Isn't that right"

Beena's migration route is simple. She came to the U.K. in the 1990s from India and her identity is embedded in remembered landscapes of India and Bangladesh. Her migration route arises from the race politics of partition and communalism in the Punjab. Beena was born in 1933, in Hoshaipur (North West of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh), India. As a Muslim in a Hindu state she was vulnerable during partition. Her father was a doctor of medicine and owned a lot of land. She recalls her small hometown of Charshankar very fondly, especially the lush mango groves and banana plantations. They lived in a seven-story building owned by her father. He also owned land in Madaripur, Bangladesh, and she made many journeys with him when he visited to oversee it. Beena was married at 14, but her husband died at an early age, leaving her and her children destitute. As a woman, she had not inherited land from

her father, and her husband had been a professional with no capital. She worked for a while breaking rocks and other labouring. Then she set up a business selling sugar and dry goods. To aid her family, a cousin rented her land to farm until her children became of age. In 1989, Beena became a Member of Parliament for Faisalbad, serving under Benizeer Bhutto (before she became Prime Minister of Pakistan). When things went badly for Bhutto, she fled to Pakistan, with her whole family. She came to the U.K. 10 years ago, followed eventually by her children. Beena has no means of return to India because she is at risk of political persecution. Whilst in England, she complains of a reduced social network compounded by unemployment.

Shanta - born in Jinja (Uganda) in 1938, arrived London 1985.

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 were quiet with few cars. She describes a fondly remembered, idyllic childhood. After marriage, she left Jinja (Uganda) to go to Nairobi (Kenya). Shanta flew for the first time, to Malawi in 1972, when she was married. Here, the more conservative Hindu community constrained women to focus on domestic life and responsibilities. Shanta describes herself as being frightened and disempowered as a new bride entering Malawi society; her values were scrutinised on a daily basis as were the clothes that she wore, her make-up, and the way she ran her household. The family lived in Blantyre, the suburbs to the commercial capital of Limbe. They lived opposite the President's home. Shanta describes a contented life; Malawi had only one main shopping street, but had the luxuries of middle class living. She remembers quite distinctly that leisure time was really enjoyable because of their regular family picnics trips to Lake Malawi. She describes it as a beautiful place

where there are the 'Thick falls'. This is her ideal place; the gramophone is on, the children are playing in the water and food is plentiful. Shanta moved to England in the 1985. On returning to Malawi recently on holiday, she found things had changed. The Lake was infected with bilharzia and the beaches were littered and ruined. She found the two-hour journey to the Lake quite arduous because of the intense heat and humidity.

The journeys undertaken by these two women show the diversity of the women's experiences but also the strength of the community. The strength of connection is enough to resist erasure through the experiences of forgetting, settling, and distancing in Britain (Clifford 1997, 255). The migratory journey is a point of commonality, holding them together in their description of themselves as 'Asians', but represents the geographical breadth and scope of the diaspora. Within the group, Shanta's testimony about Lake Malawi resulted in other women recalling Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe), and Lake Nakuru (Kenya). The women shared these experiences as if they were common. The weather, the heat and the significance of family leisure trips were factors in treating each other's recollections as similar and the same. Group discussion brings to life the significance of the migration routes in the everyday politics of being and belonging. The process of talking through these remembered territories and environments created a group collage of memories and identifications with these places and moments, which formed a shared 'territory of culture' (Tolia-Kelly 2001). Individual stories resonated with the group as a whole, serving to map the group's commonalities through the experience of migration. Together, the women trace places of emotional and psychological importance, these were tinged with

nostalgia and sometimes expressed symbolic landscapes rather than a real site of experience.

Map 1 - Women's migration routes

Map 2 - Parental Migration Routes

Maps 1 and **2**, show the women's migration routes to London in a period when the British Empire was contracting. They represent the relationships between colonial subjects and the spectrum of countries controlled by the British state. The routes signify the effect economic and labour policies of the colonial administrators between the continents of Africa, Asia and Europe, as well as the mobility of Asian males in this period. The maps show a set of active associations for the women with different landscapes through which they navigate, negotiate, and "arrive". In **Map 1**, a triangular pattern is shown of travel between India to East Africa to the U.K - some have migrated directly to the U.K. from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India, and others from East Africa to Europe. This is very different to other 'double migrants' (Bhachu 1985). Indian migration was limited to two or three states. At that time the women from Pakistan and Bangladesh arrived to join men already settled here (Anwar 1979; Anwar 1985). Within Africa, the routes are limited to Uganda, Kenya, and Malawi. (Tanzania was also a common place of residence, but is not represented in this particular sample of individuals).

Map 2 records the women's parents' migration patterns to East Africa during the 1930s and 1940s. Grandparents journeyed there from 1880 onwards, but mostly came in the 1920s and 1930s. 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. The role of Asian migrants in this period of time was to carve our new economic landscapes in East Africa. The Asians were deemed to be a source of entrepreneurship and were positioned as racial superiors to the Black African population (Brah). The politics of their race-positioning influenced the geographies of their cultural and environmental experiences and practices. Landscapes in the colonies were shaped and figured through the particular identity-positioning of Asians, within colonial discourse. These in turn influence race-geographies, post-colony, in Britain.

Social Memory and British Asian identities.

Whilst living in Britain the women's current lives are dialectically linked to their past environments as indicated in the maps above. Connections with these environments are woven into the fabric of everyday living. The following section of discussion reveals how their environmental memories of Asia and East Africa operate in their senses of being here.

Shazia – When I go back home, I become what I used to be.

Darshna – What else is there apart from your family?

Shazia – It's the air. . . 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 thatbut for me you know the heat, the smell, when I get off the plane I feel Ahhh . . .

When I come back, I tell Lalit (her 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.

Here Shazia is talking through a sense of remembers a connection with the physical landscape of India. In contrast the landscape in Britain is alienating; the air is cold and the streets less densely populated. Her comparison reflects a physical alienation from British social landscape, and the air itself and is underlined with a sense of marginality from social intercourse on the street.

For British Asians there is a complex relationship with British nation identity. Historically, their racialised positioning within Empire and beyond has figured them as outside British political identity: the Black-English subjugated and marginalized by exclusive, and partial nationalist politics (Gilroy 1987; Gilroy 1993). For these groups the preserving of social memory becomes a political act. Remembering the landscape and the air itself contribute to a grounded sense of self, located within memories of past environments. Social memory acts as an adhesive force, sustained through rituals, and everyday cultural practices. These sensory triggers in the everyday make a past territory tangible. Individual recollections often have resonance amongst the whole group. Social memory in the South Asian diaspora, is constitutive a collage of stories, embedded in environments and landscapes, thus forming a ‘territory’ of cultural history and identity. In the absence of formal historical inclusion, memorialisation and heritage in this form are increasingly part of the imaginative realm and are maintained through the sensual, iconographic, textural, and aural signifiers within domestic visual

and material cultures. Textures in the home become connecting points back to past landscapes, as well being a source of reflection of stories about Asian history and landscapes. Here, the textures referenced include soil, plants and childhood gardens which are often sources of links to landscapes abroad and a medium for sustaining a sense of self identity.

Memory, Landscape and *Placing*

Psychologists have considered the location of memory in our construction of self and have traced the mechanisms and processes of memory within the context of life stages, trauma and socialisation (Conway 1997). Memory frames, and folds into our contact with environments in a myriad of ways, sustaining our sense of the past, fracturing our sense of place now, and offers a continuous source of dialogue between multiple space-times. Memory is effectively part of the landscape (Lowenthal and Prince 1965; Lowenthal 1979; Lowenthal 1985), however it sits as a dynamic and powerful tool for the creation, sustenance and disruption of our sense of self within everyday geographies. Texturally, the scent, sound, taste, and texture of memory contextualise our body experiences within past experiences of dwelling, environment and places of being. Home for migrant groups is a transitory experience, therefore a site-specific study of memories located in the space of home-making, and enfranchisement to the territory of Britain, allows for the study of memories which operate as significant in the creation of a rooting and belonging in Britain, for British Asians. By considering the dynamic force of memory as a *placing* mechanism we can establish a conceptual frame for understanding post-colonial identity as it is figured through place, nature and landscape. Textures in the home signify memory and can be interrogated as a store of cultural co-ordinates of actual routes of identification, for the

British Asian diaspora. The biographical migration flows, mapped in section one are critical in understanding geographical connections that relate to the negotiation of modern diasporic identities. The process of *placing* is involved in the figuring of identity for migrants. 'Placing' has been theorised by phenomenological and humanist geographers [Relph, 1976 #142] to address the way that we *live* and *be* within environment, including sensory engagements with the environment. Placing through the senses offers us a matrix of textures through we situate ourselves and in turn are ourselves *positioned*. Sensory memory thickens these matrices of sensory engagement by the presence of other time-spaces that assist in our being, dwelling and identification with place, home, and landscape. Sensory memories as expressed here, are not simply contexts to memory, but are dialogic connections with the dialectics of post-colonial social memory as expressed in contemporary environments.

This dialectical relationship between memory and *placing* is critical for diasporic groups who have migrated through varied landscapes, but who have also varied political connections with territory and national identity. By using the refractory qualities that materials of cultures offer I have attempted to *place* post-colonial migrants within a matrix of valued connections that actively connect individuals with place, nature and landscape. The site of a red rose cultivated in a domestic garden in Britain can uncover the geographical co-ordinates through which identity is constituted. A rose can refract a memory of a past home, or a connection to a symbolised sense of past national affiliation to Kenya, but also be central in a present home, in securing a sense of British Asianess (see Tolia-Kelly 2001). Manjula, below describes her memory of the East African landscape signified through a rose plant. The loss of connection with the rose reflects the distance and loss of contact with the

gardens left behind. Remembering this black rose, links her back to a collage of narratives about planting practices, the colours and the landscape of plantations in Africa.

Manjula – ‘ We had a beautiful house in Kampala. We had huge gardens all round. We had so many guava trees and mango trees and all. 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, I was so looking forward to seeing it again, with the new lawn and the new roses ’.

For many migrant communities material possessions are lost or left behind in the process of migration. The effect of this loss results in any preserved cultures in the U.K. are imbued with an enhanced meaning and value. As remnants of the past home, or bought as souvenirs after settlement in Britain, these have a significant role in the process of *location, belonging* and *placing* for this group.

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. . . Still in my mind I believed it was temporary because I couldn’t see another life for my parents starting anewI thought, so there would always be a home (in Kenya) but it never happenedYou 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."

The women's parents left countries where they had built their lives and businesses, from clearing land to developing new markets and building economies. For some of the families the shock was too much to bear. Individuals dealt with this in different ways. 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.

sensory memories and landscape.

There are a myriad of sensual memories we carry around with us that resonate with past environments, people and events. Scents, sounds, tastes, aesthetics and textures, are evoked through remembering the past. These body-memories (Edgerton 1995) are refracted through contact with materials in the present. They operate as a gateway into other environments, moments and social experiences. A sphere of sensual references that reflect past events and sensory textures are recalled when talking through the practices of gardening and contact with soil, plants, flowers and food. Thus sensory memories trigger a collective connectedness to a 'territory of culture' which is shared within a collective group of South Asians who have travelled separately in their journey to Britain. The multi-sensory nature of these connections are important elements of geographical cultures of being (Urry 1990; Macnaghten and Urry 1998) and contribute to processes of identification with place, environment and landscapes of belonging. The memories of past environments are mobile and transportable (Bohlin 1998; Lovell 1998) as a *portmanteau* (Crosby, 1986) of cultural memory.

This is where domestic cultures create a set of historical narratives which act as both a store of refractive memorials of past stories, and gateways to body-memories.

For many of the women, the effect of migration is evident in their attitudes and relationships with nature and climate; the heat of the sun, the dryness of the air and the brightness of the sky are vivid memories as migration has taken them out of this ecological context. The environmental differences between equatorial cities in the African savannah, dry tropical forests and Indian desert and coastal biomes are evidenced in their descriptions. Arrival and adjustment are just as much about adjustment to climate as they are about making a home in a new nation. The shift in physical environment influences them psychologically and physically; the weather is a feature of their isolation and a feature of the obstacles they have to overcome to sustain day to day living. The women's ecological engagements highlight an orientation towards particular environmental textures. A set of ecological aesthetics can be traced through their connectedness. The women's recollections include those intimate connections with kitchen-gardens and more formal national landscapes. Their narratives describe real, imaginary and symbolic relationships with natural textures. These memories are transplanted to the practices of cultivating gardens in their homes in Britain. Often, this important process of rooting is replicating the practices of planting abroad in places such as Kenya, India, Uganda.

These recollections re-create and import 'other' environments into England, but also re-contextualise organic icons of life in another place. These narratives express the complicatedness of migration and dislocation, they can also reflect the pleasure that the women get from plants, trees and landscape in England; English roses are

reminders of roses in Uganda, or *fuschias* triggers for memories of *bougainvilleas* in Africa and India. In the testimonies of the women, certain plants, trees and textures reoccur - *papaya, guava, mango, palms, bougainvilleas, jasmine, gardenias, hibiscus* flowers, and the colour of the soil are particular landscape icons which are metonyms for other continental ecologies. These reflect the experience of growing up in Indian sub-continent or Africa prior to living in London, as well their active engagement with English plants and flowers in England and abroad, for quite often plants abroad were introduced by the British. The women in the group cultivate African and Indian species too. In East Africa gardening was not only a pleasurable pastime, but very important to the women's sense of their feminine role in contributing to the household larder, as well as considered as creative and aesthetically improving to the fabric of the home. This is a culture of ensuring a culture of fecundity in the home landscape. Below is an example of how the ecology and environment are recalled, some gardens are no longer actively cultivated, but neglected. The women try to recreate these remembered ecological textures in their own gardens in England. On visiting the women's homes, the women talked of attempts at recreating past gardens through growing palms, guavas, sweetcorn, and flowers. These practices are attempts at planting materials that they engaged with in their past homes, this process was evidence of a need to cultivate a new landscape in Britain relevant to their experience of migration.

Bhanu - "In Kenya, I used to grow many things in my garden, not here. I tried here once, a coconut tree. It didn't grow very much, it grew up to there (12 inches) and after some time it dies off. In Kenya we had ferns and some flowering plants, like Bird of Paradise plant which is very popular in Kenya. And some others . my father

himself, had grown pomegranate, paw paws, guavas, mangos, even a coconut tree. . . We used to get lovely fruit like custard apples, sitaful. It was a big garden. I think I have gone on my fathers side. I like it. Yes I grow Kenyan flowers like I used to grow geraniums, and Begonia, those are the ones I always bring (back).”

Mobility seems to enhance the need for a familiar landscape sometimes even particular plants and trees. Lalita has the greatest geographical mobility, having travelled globally with her husbands multinational firm. Lalita tells the group 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, 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. The mini palm tree for Lalita 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; it has a productive and reflective presence. Lalita’s palm in this picture is a plastic version of the original minipalm she had in her home. The fact that it is plastic preserves it from deterioration and sustains its primary use in that it provides the necessary colour, and texture and form which makes her feel at home.

Figure 3 – Lalita's Minipalm

The aesthetics of flowering plants and gardens are symbolic memorialised relationships with a 'foreign' ecology which resonate with a sense of loss. Elevated to the status of 'hyper-real'; these ecologies become embossed, exaggerated and enriched with a luminosity of colour, through the lens of distance. The body-memories of past contact with scents, tastes and touch, ensure a heightened sensitivity to the characteristics and aesthetics of the past. The colours in the women's memories are vibrant and defined, the smells are pungent and immediate, and these evocations are pervasive in the women's everyday sightings of similar vegetation. Jasmine is an example of a scent that permeates throughout the women's memories of India, and East Africa. The women recall 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 deemed irreplaceable as the women have made efforts to grow the flowering plant here; the flower heads in memories were smaller, and the scent always more pungent. The pungent, intense scent of ripening guavas has a similar effect. Manjula is reminded the life on the tea estates in Uganda, where there was a strong smell of fresh guava each morning outside her kitchen window.

Manjula 'Oh it has very dark green leaves, and it has a nice lemony, sweet and lime mixed smell. Guava is very strong. 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.'

These remembered homely textures become a form of sustenance, intimate local ecologies like this are celebrated by Mabey (1980, 37) as being integral to human culture in ensuring human well-being. Local textures in the forms of specific trees, plants as well as the specific local flora and fauna are essential to feelings of belonging and senses of locality. These valued environmental memories bridge cultures of well being and include food cultures of sweet potatoes; green banana, sweetcorn, grilled aubergine, and cassava. Food bridges the geographical distance between *here* and *there*. The importing of vegetables such as cassava offers a direct material connection to the soil of East Africa. It is an organic memento of a land that was 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 fruit remembered; rough sackcloth, soft woods and the boxing materials are productive for the re-memorialisation of past landscapes. The scent of a mango is a trigger for the 'real' remembered smell; its own smell is sometimes occluded by the pungent memories that the women hold in relation to all the mango varieties available in East Africa, and the Indian sub-continent.

The texture, colour and smell of soils are also remembered by the women in their narratives as having properties not available in the soil here. There is romantic consideration, a romanticised earth. Below is an example of where places are conflated; the soil of Kenya then becomes a memory of Uganda. Shazia's memory is of Kenya's rich fertile soil, which has a scent when wet, on memory of this Bharti is transported back to the Uganda. There is an elevation, a reverence and a feeling of the sublime which is repeated in the other women's experiences.

Shazia – ‘I think 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. . . Is it only in Uganda that it's red? Because in Kenya it's . . .’

Bharti –“But in Uganda it's even 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!’

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.’

In the women’s memories the soil is remembered as fertile, almost magical, where papaya trees could not help but sprout, growing was easy, digging was easy, and gardening was not laborious. It is always the case that the soil in England cannot match up. The soil in England is hard work, and difficult. This is symbolic of their struggle to settle; their skin colour and bodies occluding an easy identification with Britishness.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper I have mapped the Landscapes of migration for South Asian women, which reflect the encountered landscapes and environments of a racialised post-colonial group, living in the U.K. Mapping these migratory geographies holds an important place in recognising factors which influence landscape values of migratory

populations in the U.K. The connections with these geographies of migration are continually figured in day to day life by the South Asian population where memories of landscapes constitute social narratives of heritage and cultural identity. Most importantly memories of past landscapes have an impact on landscapes in Britain. The British landscape is itself shifting in relation to this process of the presencing of these physical memories. The practice of gardening has become an expression of Asianess in England, this has materialised the biographical experiences and ecological knowledges of the women who have moved into suburban scene. The landscaping of this scene is inscribed with echoes of past ecological memories. These subtle expressions of migration through garden texture and aesthetics are counter to 'native' planting as expressed in contemporary writings about preservation of a native planting aesthetic (Buchan 1998; Thomas 1998). These ecological paradigms of 'native' and 'non-native' species are politicised further in debates on ecological racism (Agyeman 1990; Agyeman 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. When South Asians migrated here, they came with their own imagined ecological portmanteau (Crosby, 1986). These reflect cultures of remembering and reconnecting with the soil, land and ecology of other nations. An ecological oral history is inscribed in the urban landscape and of suburbia, as part of reinscribing multisensory memories at home in England. These inscriptions include those national iconographies of identification and the intimate textures of the local 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 textures in the geographical imagination and memory of

diasporic groups can contribute greatly to understanding the process making home. Bright colours and familiar scents contribute to the cultivation of familiar landscapes on the domestic scale. The planting of begonias, roses, jasmine, and coriander, in their different ways, are enfranchising environmental practices. They bound the women in an *embodied* way to an unalienated sense of being *in-place*. The gardens represent the women's new hybrid cultures. They store icons of the past, but also root the women firmly in the territory of Britain.

Social memories presented here, are a means of routing diasporic groups, but also illustrate the continuing influence of landscape and intimate ecologies on identification with places. Migration, (of plant and human species) disrupts essentialist notions of dwelling, belonging and *native species*. For migratory groups however, experiences of nature are equally significant in their identification with local natures and national landscapes, as are their relationships with heritage narratives. As a result new local ecologies emerge and are expressed through cultural practice as a process resettlement, and re-rooting. They are material expressions of British Asian memory and cultures of enfranchisement. Body-memories are shards of *other* environments, evoked in the practices of everyday living collage together as a landscape of nostalgia, but also as a memory-history of Imperial landscapes, intimately experienced by post-colonial populations in the U.K.

This relationship between past lived environments, imagined and idealised ones and present lived landscapes have been termed a *triadic* relationship, pertinent to a post-colonial positioning theorised by Brah (1996) and Safran (1991). Materials of culture such as organic materials in the home, resonate points of both geographic, and

historical identification, which are significant in the affirmation of racialised identities in the British South Asian community. These materials of connection represent nodal points in a biographical journey which, in turn, are symbolic of the political dynamic of making home 'elsewhere'. These materials of culture are often situated as materials of negotiation of citizenship, belonging and national identity, in the process of 'centring' and 'positioning', after migration. They act as points of resistance to exclusive dominant cultures as well as offering points of engagement to an enfranchising idyll located in the past. These are memories which have shaped contemporary post-colonial domestic landscapes in Britain, materially. Privileging these cultural materials and practices in geographical research offer researchers a means through which to examine the value of *landscape* itself to post-colonial communities living in Britain. Landscape memory, as embedded in domestic cultures are presented here essential components of an attainable and inclusive approach to landscape research with post-migratory communities.

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[Barbour 1999 #3; Dwyer, 1993 #36; England, 1994 #30; Patai, 1991 #35; Rose, 1997 #58; Valentine, 1997 #38; Wilkinson, 1999 #6].