

## Touching the Language of Citizenship in Ondaatje's Anil's Ghost

Sandeep Sanghera

*Mexico City*

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**CLCWeb Volume 6 Issue 3 (September 2004) Article 9****Sandeep Sanghera,****"Touching the Language of Citizenship in Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*"**<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol6/iss3/9>>

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**Abstract:** Sandeep Sanghera, in her paper "Touching the Language of Citizenship in Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*" discusses questions which make Ondaatje's novel a text about postmodern identity: who is this woman Anil who lives mostly in the West, travels on a British passport, works for an international organization, and no longer has any real ties to her first home? In the paper, these questions are examined via the languages Anil adopts and abandons in the novel. Sanghera elaborates on the question of foreign-ness represented by the protagonist of the novel; however, this foreign-ness is examined in the particular context concerning the substance of family and kinship as well as language and nation. Sanghera's analysis represents the questions and thoughts of readers who are themselves migrants between languages and homes.

## Sandeep SANGHERA

### The Motif of the Collector and History in Ondaatje's Work

Sri Lanka is the "wife of many marriages" writes Ondaatje in his *Running in the Family* (64). An island that "seduced all of Europe," it has been courted by many conquerors who, over time, have "stepped ashore and claimed everything with the power of their sword or bible or language" (64). With each courting and conquering, its identity has changed. And names are important as we learn with Sarath and Anil's hunt to locate Sailor's. The island's name has gone from Serendip to Ratnapida, meaning the "island of gems" and then from Taprobane to Zeloan (*Running in the Family* 64). And then variations on the last, Zeloan, its spelling changing from Zeilan to Seyllan to Ceilon to Ceylon. All that coming to a full stop (for now) with its present day name of Sri Lanka, a "tear," a "pendant off the ear of India" (*Running in the Family* 147, 63). Each name marks a "marriage" and each "marriage" marks the arrival of ships that "spilled their nationalities" onto its shores (*Running in the Family* 64). And that marks the muddling up of identity politics for that spilling, over many generations, eventually leading to almost everyone on that island being "vaguely related" with "Sinhalese, Tamil, Dutch, British, Burgher blood in them" all (*Running in the Family* 41). Identity, here, gets layered and that continued layering undermines the notion of the national subject. Just who and what is a Sri Lankan? "God alone, knows, your Excellency," answers Emil Daniels when asked that very question by a visiting British governor in the 1920s (*Running in the Family* 41) and this sentiment is echoed in the 1990s by Ondaatje himself in an interview for the magazine, *New Letters*: "It's pretty mixed," he says, "there was [this] sort of intermarrying -- who knows what was going on" (Ondaatje qtd. in Presson 87).

Playing god then, Ondaatje tackles this confusion in a manner what Ajay Heble calls an inability to "articulate" one's own citizenship (190). And Ondaatje does the tackling in interesting ways; he does so via language. In *Anil's Ghost*, he presents Anil Tissera who, after a fifteen-year absence, returns to the land of her birth no longer able to speak the first language she learned. Ondaatje then posits the question, just who is Anil? Is she a foreigner? If so, is she American for that is where she studied and lives "mostly" or is she British for that is the passport she carries (*Anil's Ghost* 57)? Or as a representative of an international human rights centre based in Geneva, is she a mish-mash citizen of all things Western? In that context then, how does Sri Lanka fit in since, after all, that was her first home? That was the space where she first learned to walk and talk. So could she be hyphenated? But then is she a Sri Lankan-American or a Sri Lankan-Brit or is she just a generic Eastern-Western mix? Maybe she is a Sri Lankan returnee? Could she be just plain Sri Lankan? Or in having left and now no longer able to speak her mother tongue does that make her no longer Sri Lankan as well? Again and again, Anil's citizenship is examined in ways in which it is coveted and relinquished, conferred and revoked. And, again and again, all that is looked at via the lens of language for language proves to be *the* thing that either invites people into or ousts them from national homes.

"The last Sinhala word I lost / was *vatura*," writes Ondaatje in "Wells": "The word for water./ Forest water. The water in a kiss. The tears / I gave to my ayah Rosalin on leaving/ the first home of my life. // More water for her than any other / that fled my eyes again / this year, remembering her,/ a lost almost-mother in those years / of thirsty love" (*Handwriting* 50). And in *Anil's Ghost*, her "last conversation in Sinhala," writes Anil, "was the distressed chat she'd had with [her ayah], Lalitha ... that ended with her crying about missing egg *rulang* and curd with jaggery ... [and Lalitha] weeping, it felt, at the far ends of the world" (*Anil's Ghost* 145, 142). This last, tear-filled talk in her mother tongue is a costly one. Anil spends seven days eating little to save up enough money to place this call to Colombo. A month later, she falls under the "spell" of her "future, and soon-to-be, and eventually ex-husband" who enters her life "in bangles and on stilts" and, in doing so, symbolizes Sri Lanka to Anil (142). It is into his accepting ears then, that she spills words of longing for that place. She "whisper[s] her desire for jaggery ... [for] jackfruit... refers to a specific barber in Bambalapitiya" (141). And is "understood." And that -- being understood -- makes all the "difference" (141). With her man, Anil needs neither to explain nor justify her longing for Sri

Lanka. Because it is a longing that is felt, just as much, by him as well. It is shared. And that sharing does more than just knit husband and wife. Through intimate talk of intimate Sri Lankan spots, the two citizens themselves to the land they have left. In Ondaatje's words, they take "their country with them to [the] new place" (Ondaatje qtd. in Bush 240). With words, they bring Sri Lanka to London and with words, they hold onto that island.

The problem arises, however, when the man who once entered Anil's life "in bangles and on stilts," leaves. Anil and her husband's talks, albeit intimate, did take place within the "smoke of one bad marriage" (142). And that marriage burns to an end. Once "good-bye[s]" are said, Anil "emerge[s] with no partner. Cloudless at last" (144, 145). But she emerges having let go of more than just her man. In divorcing him, Anil loses the only one with whom she could speak of Sri Lanka. In leaving, he takes with him that sort of intimate talk which had linked Anil to that island: "with his departure, there was no longer any need to remember favorite barbers and restaurants along the Galle Road" (145). So she stops doing so. While her ex returns to Colombo to presumably walk along the very roads they once reminisced, Anil lets go of those same roads. He turns to Sri Lanka and she turns away. And that -- her turning away from her motherland -- is clearly tied up with letting go of her man. She never says his name out loud again, "she no longer [speaks] Sinhala to anyone" (145), and she no longer talks of Sri Lanka. All that is left is the sarong her parents send her every Christmas, the news clippings of swim meets, and her marginal missing of fans: "the island no longer [holds] her" (11). Citizenship is consciously let go. Anil then turns "fully to the place she [finds] herself in" (145). And that place is the field, the classroom, and the lab where bodies are exhumed for and examined. She settles into her studies, drawing her books close to her. In doing so, she settles into other languages as well: "I know the name of several bones in Spanish," she tells her lover Cullis, happily tired and slurring her words, " *omoplato* is this. Shoulder blade" -- the curve of shoulders, in fact, prove significant in locating language and, through that, securing for oneself citizenship; but more on that later -- " *maxilar* -- your upper jaw bone. *Occipital* -- the bone at the back of the skull"; and so on. " *Cubito. Omoplato. Occipital* " (34). Anil stands, clearly now, "alongside the language of science," she "practically memoriz[es]" Spitz and Fisher (145). She speaks this new language while falling asleep and even once asleep, "deep in the white linen bed," her hand continues to "move constantly as if brushing earth away" -- as if, that is, still digging and searching for bones -- for the words for bone (34). And standing not just "alongside the language of science" Anil now stands clearly on the side of English as well (145). English and not Sinhalese is now the language that roots her. And that is evidenced by her taking to Sri Lanka -- an island whose language she can no longer speak -- her girlfriend Leaf's American postcard. Suspicious of Sarath's alliances -- "her mind circling around" him -- she spins the postcard "between her thumbs" and rereads it to make herself "feel better" (28). Having returned to the land of her birth, Anil now turns to the English words of an "American bird" -- "some communication from the West" -- to ground her (29, 28). Anil's choices and transformation now explain her earlier conscious shifting of citizenship where she "had courted foreignness" (54) and it spotlights it through language where feeling "completed abroad," Anil speaks "just English" now (54, 36).

After fifteen years, Anil returns to Sri Lanka as an outsider who now turns to the Western world -- to its English words -- to center her. But the island does not quite let go of Anil. Initially, she is conferred citizenship by those who overlook her now knowing only "a little" Sinhala and attempt, instead, to write her back into the land she has left (9). "You were born here, no?" says the official who accompanies Anil from Katunayake airport to Colombo (9). "You have friends here, no?" Finally, he crowns her the "prodigal" daughter who has returned after fifteen years. But Anil flatly refuses all that, stating she has no friends there -- "not really" -- and is "not a prodigal ... not at all" (10). Later, this link to the island is again brought up and again it is just as quickly dismissed by Anil: "So -- you are the swimmer!" are Sarath's first words of greeting to her --- words that are later echoed by Dr. Perera (16). That early (watery) celebrity citizens Anil to Sri Lanka. Although she has long been gone, her name lives on and that -- her name remembered -- matters poignantly for it is remembered in a place where names routinely, tragically go missing. Even Palipana's own name is erased from the latest edition of the Sinhala encyclopaedia. Ultimately,

that remembering points to her still belonging and although Anil acknowledges her Sri Lankan birth, she ignores this early celebrity and, in doing so, dismisses the citizenship that such celebrity affords her. "Not a swimmer," she tells Sarath, "right. Right," he answers backing off (17). Then as if to punctuate this fact, she later takes "two steps forward on the sharp stones and [dives into the river] with a belly flop" (48).

Others initially confer citizenship upon Anil who returns to the land of her birth no longer speaking Sinhalese. Soon, her citizenship -- once granted by the people -- is revoked by them as well. And this revoking is made public. Anil is asked to give a talk on poisoning and snakebite to an audience of local health professionals who could just as easily give the talk themselves and who, in fact, would be more fluent in it as it speaks of their space and not hers. After all, she left Sri Lanka fifteen years ago and now returns, dismissing the very things that root her to the island. And she does all that dismissing in the language of a "visiting journalist" speaking of "vainglorious government[s]" (27). Anil knows that the choice of subject for the talk is "intentional"; she knows it is an attempt to "level the playing field between the foreign-trained and the locally trained" and, in doing so, spotlight her status as a "foreign celebrity" who is no more knowledgeable or talented than the local experts (25). And all that serves to clearly place her outside of Sri Lanka. Anil's new citizenship -- as a foreigner -- is then neatly summed up by Chitra Abeysekera who greets her as that "woman from Geneva" (71). This revoking of Anil's Sri Lankan citizenship takes place most poignantly, however, when she is ousted out of the most intimate of spaces and is ousted clearly via language, that is, via her inability to speak Sinhalese. Anil pays a visit to her ayah, Lalitha, with whom, fifteen years ago, she had her "last conversation" in the first language she learned (145). She returns able to speak only "a little" and to "write" only "some" Sinhala (9, 36). A language in which they once wept, standing at "far ends" of the earth, is now a language "lost" with the two standing face to face (142, 22). Initially, both Anil and Lalitha transcend that linguistic divide through touch. They reach for each other and, in that reaching, communicate their affection. The "old woman was weeping; she put her hands out and ran them over Anil's hair. Anil held her arms. ... She kissed Lalitha on both cheeks, having to bend down to her because she was small and frail." The two then sit down and that "lost language" sits down between them. Anil holds her ayah's hand in silence. Lalitha, in turn, can only point at a picture of her granddaughter to explain to Anil her relation to the woman with the "stern eyes" who witnesses their "sentimental moment" (22). The granddaughter speaks to her grandmother "loudly" in Tamil but her speaking it "loudly" when Lalitha is only "whispering" hints, perhaps, at that linguistic move being deliberate. Speaking in Tamil, the granddaughter chooses to speak intentionally a language from which Anil is even further removed from than Sinhalese. And she makes no offer to translate for Anil. In doing both, she uses language and the withholding of language to write Anil out of Lalitha's home. And that -- writing Anil out of the home of one "old woman" -- translates into writing Anil off the island (22).

The loss of language surfaces as an "ache" inside Anil (22), an ache which no one can translate for it is an ache that the body simply feels and where "there are no words" (7). But translation, up to now, is precisely what Anil has relied on. Aware that she is moving around the island with "only one arm of language," she turns to Sarath who serves as her Sinhalese-speaking right hand (54). It is Sarath who explains that she is a doctor to the man the two of them find crucified to tarmac (111). Sarath says "something to [Gunesena] over his shoulder and the man tentatively [gives] her his left hand ... Anil soak[s] a handkerchief in the saline solution and squeeze[s] it onto his palm, the bridge nail still in it" (112). Later, when she spots the same "markers of occupation" in a "squatting" Ananda as she had earlier in Sailor and wants to confirm that it is so, it is to Sarath she turns to translate her desire to touch the artist (166). "Sarath explain[s] ... Anil [takes] hold of Ananda's ankle in both hands. She presse[s] her thumbs into the muscle and cartilage, move[s] them up a few inches above his ankle bone. There [is] a dry laugh from Ananda. Then down to the heel again." And finally, it is to Sarath that she must turn to communicate even the simplest of gratitude: "Please, will you thank him ... [thank Ananda]" (179). Although Anil, here, relies on Sarath translating, there is a growing desire for her to move beyond such translation and to speak for herself. When she comes across Ananda carrying the skeleton of Sailor in his arms, she can only "nod imperceptibly [at him] to show there [is] no anger in her" (170). But she is unable to

explain that her need to touch this unnamed man is a need shared by both of them. Like these thoughts, there is so much more that is left unsaid such as when Anil wished she could have told Ananda "what Sailor's bone measurements meant in terms of posture and size. And he -- God knows what insights he had" (170). But having "long forgotten" not only the words but the "subtleties of the language" the two once shared" (170), she cannot. Now, there is only a nod to signify the absence of anger and these forgotten subtleties could be *the* key. If remembered and reclaimed, they could take Anil beyond language -- beyond the literal use of words -- and into a space where, through such subtleties, she could, in fact, communicate. And so, ironically, Anil could speak without having to say any words. Finding those subtleties then is equivalent to finding a kind of new tongue and finding that tongue could just open up the door to Sri Lanka's national home. Subtleties then are crucial; by learning the Sri Lankan language of subtleties, Anil could recitizen herself to the land she left. Before these subtleties can be learned, they must first be found. And found they are, in the body of the Sinhalese alphabet. In *Running in the Family*, Ondaatje writes of the subtlety and softness of written Sinhalese, "the most beautiful alphabet ... the first alphabet" he -- and presumably Anil -- "ever copied" (83). Ondaatje draws the "self-portrait of language ... How to write" (*Running in the Family* 83) where the "physicality of language" Hutcheon 310) shows up quite clearly in *Anil's Ghost* as well (310). There, the curling softness of the Sinhalese alphabet translates itself onto the actual, *physical* body of the Sri Lankan as well, drawing, in effect, the "self-portrait" of a Sri-Lankan citizen. Like the letters which curve to resemble a "sickle, spoon, eyelid, ... a lover's spine," there is a curve to the way in which characters move (83). And that curve surfaces, most clearly, in the form of the "Asian nod" (*Anil's Ghost* 16).

In the novel, this Asian nod appears again and again. For instance, Anil asks Gunesena if he lives near the place they are driving through. He answers by "roll[ing] his head slightly ... a tactful yes and no" (113). At one point she enquires after Sarath's wife and the rest-house owner answers that she is very "nice," but with a "nod for proof, then a slight tilt of [the] head, a J stroke, to suggest possible hesitance in his own judgment" (57). And later on first meeting Sarath's teacher, Anil notes that Palipana's head "kept tilting as if trying to catch whatever was passing in the air around him" (85). Not just confined to the movement of the head, the "Asian nod" surfaces also in the ways in which words are said. Sarath's "Right ... Right," spoken with a "drawl" and said "twice," is "like the ... nod" (16). It is an "official and hesitant agreement for courtesy's sake but include[s] the suggestion that things [are] on hold" (16). In its curling movement then, the "Asian nod" gives a response that hints simultaneously at a "yes," a "no," and even a "maybe." Nothing is said directly and that is the Sri Lankan language of subtleties. Against this backdrop -- against the subtlety and softness of the Asian nod which echoes, in its circularity, written Sinhalese -- stands a very taut Anil. She "nod[s] exaggeratedly" and, at the age of sixteen, refuses adamantly adding even the curl of the letter *e* to her name ... a curl suggested by an "astrologer-soothsayer" (26, 136). The *e*, in *Anile*, would have allowed the "fury to curve away" and the masculine edge to ease. But Anil, in refusing it, insists on standing tall, "taut and furious" instead (136). From then on, she moves through life like the final letter *l* in her name. Anil is "governed by verticals ... [by] the straight line" (*Running in the Family* 83). After all, "she'd hunted down [her] desired name like a specific lover she had seen and wanted, tempted by nothing else along the way" (*Anil's Ghost* 68). And she had gotten it, bargaining the name out of the hands of her brother. Likewise in Sri Lanka, Anil expects "clearly marked roads to the source of most mysteries" and so "obsessive[ly] tunnel[s] toward discovery" (69) where this is exemplified most by her search for absolutes -- for Truth -- on an island where "truth bounce[s] between gossip and vengeance. [Where] rumour slip[s] into every car and barbershop" (54). Where the search for truth involves "commissions and the favours of ministers ... involve[s] waiting politely for hours in ... office lobbies" (55). And where, when found, truth is not of any interest if "given directly, without ... diversions and subtexts ... without waltzing backwards," without that subtle, Asian nod of the head (55). And after all that, truth, in fact, may not even exist at all: "We have never had [it]. Not even with your work on bones," Palipana tells her, "Most of the time in our world, [it] is just opinion" (102). Still Anil, who cannot yet speak the language of subtleties, tunnels towards it, "banging through ancient concrete with a mallet" (66), trying to reach it. Believing stubbornly that once found, "truth shall set you

free" while, all the while, Sarath tells her it is only "a flame against a sleeping lake of petrol" (102, 156). Anil's insistence on a Truth and her straight-line search for it in a place where there are no straight lines and maybe there is no truth ends up, again and again, writing her out of Sri Lanka's national home: "Doors that [she thinks] should be open, are closed" (44), Anil goes to "offices" and "can't get in" (44). She is not a citizen.

Finally, Anil begins to see that she is in a space where things constantly curl. Like the Sinhalese alphabet and the Asian nod, there is a curve to it all. And that becomes most pronounced and maybe most poignant when Anil's search for another absolute -- an Enemy -- circles back to her. Riding with Sarath and Ananda, "two hours before Ratnapura," the three are stopped by a roadblock. A "hand snake[s] into the jeep and snap[s] its fingers." Anil's identity card is handed over. It seems to give the soldiers "trouble," perhaps they are wondering just what country she is a citizen of? Next, her shoulder bag is emptied out "noisily" and the battery is pulled out of the back of her alarm clock and her "packets of batteries still sealed in plastic" are collected as well. The soldier then "walk[s] away and signal[s] them on." And with that, Anil becomes, in a way, a provider of arms. "The batteries are essential for making homemade bombs," Sarath tells her (162-63). Anil knows that and so she knows as well that her earlier insistence on drawing a line: "I don't know which side you are on," she once said to Sarath -- does not hold on an island where there are no lines (53). Here, there is "terror everywhere, from all sides ... like being in a room with three suitors, all of whom [have] blood on their hands" (154). Here, one does not know "who [is] killing who[m]" (48). Or, for that matter, who is healing whom. While "dancing to a furious love song that can drum out loss" (182), Anil, herself, finally curls (182). She "throw[s] her head back, her hair a black plume, back almost to the level of her waist. Throws her arms too, to hold the ground ... backward into the air ... pivot[s] her hip ... send[s] her feet over her ... her loose skirt having no time to discover gravity and drop[s] before she is on the ground again" (181). This is a new Anil. Sarath "watches a person he has never seen. A girl insane, a druid in moonlight, a thief in oil. This is not the Anil he knows" (181). This Anil, who studies the bones of others, finally turns to her own body and locates a curve within her and in locating it, she becomes that curve. Dancing, she does a back flip: Anil, for the first time, echoes the place that she is in. The "way a person [takes] on and recognize[s] in himself the smile of a lover" (*Running in the Family* 54), Anil takes on and recognizes in herself the curve around her. She curls. And she curls in a place -- a space -- where the Sinhalese alphabet -- "almost sickle, spoon, eyelid" ... curls ... where that Asian nod slowly circles and Sarath's drawl, which is like that nod, slowly curves too ... where Truth circles and circles ... and where the search for an Enemy curves back to Anil (83).

As Catherine Bush puts it, here is that point "where body and landscape merge" (245). The new Anil then turns to the bodies of others and locates, in them, that same curve as well. And in their curves, she finds language. And that -- curves housing words -- others have known all along: "Years ago [Sarath] and Palipana entered unknown rock darkneses, lit a match and saw hints of colour ... [saw] the rock carving from another century of [a] woman bending ... Palipana's arm follow[ed] the line of the mother's back bowed in affection or grief. An unseen child. All the gestures of motherhood harnessed. A muffled scream in her posture" (156, 157). Anil turns to the curve of shoulders and not backs but finds in those shoulders that same language as well, the language of loss and love. And that is a language Anil has known all along, has known long before her return to Sri Lanka. On an excavation, much earlier, in Guatemala, she saw: "a woman sitting within [a] grave ... on her haunches, her legs under her as if in formal prayer, elbows in her lap, looking down at the remains of two bodies ... a husband and a brother ... lost ... during an abduction a year earlier. Now it seemed as if the men were asleep beside each other on a mat in the afternoon ... There are no words Anil knows that can describe, even for just herself, the woman's face. But the grief of love in that shoulder she will not forget, still remembers" (7). In Sri Lanka, her memory of Guatemala re-surfaces. Shoulders are spotted again and again but now they are touched. And that touch communicates. In the Emergency Services, a nurse approaches Gamini and touches him on the shoulder; "when he [does not] move she [keeps] her hand there. Anil [is] to remember all this very well. He [gets] up then, pocket[s] the book, and touche[s] one of the other patients and disappear[s] with him" (38). In the rest-house at Bandarawela, Sarath touches Anil's shoulder, takes

the earphones from her, places them on his head and listens to cello (59). And Anil touches his brother's. Sitting by the breakwater along Galle Face Green, Anil touches Gamini's shoulder. Gamini brings "his hand up for a moment and then his head slip[s] away and soon she [sees] he has fallen asleep. His skull, his uncombed hair, the weight of his tiredness on her lap" (133). Hands are repeatedly laid on the curve of the shoulders of others and through that sort of "sweet touch from [this] world" (307), a softness is spoken without saying any words. And when Ananda finally touches Anil, this last touch is, perhaps, the most profound of all.

Ondaatje's fiction, writes Karen Smythe, provides a "linguistic density that evokes an almost physical response," it is "writing that can tingle the senses" (3). True, but in *Anil's Ghost*, with Ananda and Anil, the reverse is almost true. In this novel, a physical response -- his hand on her shoulder -- brings forth that linguistic density where his touch calls up her story. And that -- the body housing a person's history -- Ondaatje has written about before: "My body," he writes in *Running in the Family*, "must remember everything, this brief insect bite, smell of wet fruit, the slow snail light, rain, rain, and underneath the hint of colours a sound of furious wet birds ... dark trees, the mildewed garden wall, the slow air pinned down by rain" (202). In *Anil's Ghost*, Ananda's touch exhumes and brings to the surface -- brings to the pores -- all the memory that has been buried deep in Anil's body. His touch curls her back into her past. It takes her back to "Lalitha ... her mother, somewhere further back in her lost childhood" (187). The touch takes her back before the language of subtleties was lost and Sri Lankan citizenship and belonging was given up ... back before her settling on English as her only tongue ... before her putting a stop to talk of "favourite barbers and restaurants along the Galle Road," back before the "spell" of her unnamed ex-husband, before the entrance and exit of her lover Cullis, back before her life in America and her British passport, and finally way, way back before Anil's return to Sri Lanka as that "woman from Geneva" (145, 142, 71). Ananda kneads away Anil's tears and with his hand on the curve of her shoulder, "touche[s] her in a way" that curves her back to her childhood (187). That curve back deposits her in a time and a place when she spoke Sinhalese and was Sri Lankan. It is not just a touch that takes Anil into the past, it also roots simultaneously her in the present. It citizens Anil clearly to the Sri Lanka she stands in now. And it does so, by taking her beyond the bounds of a single language so that Anil emerges able to speak every tongue: "when his hand had been on her shoulder ... she felt she could speak in any language, he would understand the purpose of any gesture" (197). Ananda, then, "touches [her] into [all] words" (*Running in the Family* 22). And Ananda's touch then re-citizens Anil who later stands before an audience of military and police personnel and gives a "citizen's evidence" (272). "I think you murdered hundreds of us," she tells them. "*Hundreds of us*," Sarath thinks to himself. "Fifteen years away and she is finally *us*" (272). Finally, there is no more running away from the place she belongs.

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Author's profile: Sandeep Sanghera immigrated to Canada in 1975 from India and she has lived since in Vancouver, Kyoto, and Toronto. A free-lance editor, Sanghera's areas of interest include Caribbean poetry, expatriate Canadian writings, and literature from India. She has published her work in *Kansai Time Out* (1999) and *The Hart House Literary Review* (2001). Sanghera is at work on her first novel examining the echoes of Indian classical dance and flamenco. E-mail: <[sksanghera@hotmail.com](mailto:sksanghera@hotmail.com)>.